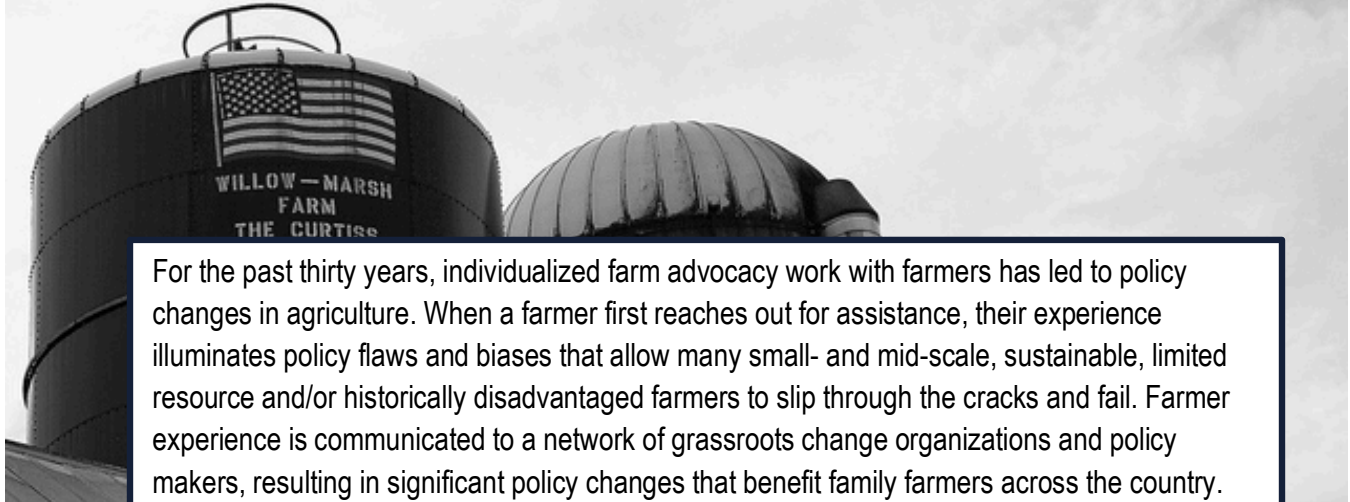


# Individualized Farm Advocacy and Policy Changes for Family Farmers



For the past thirty years, individualized farm advocacy work with farmers has led to policy changes in agriculture. When a farmer first reaches out for assistance, their experience illuminates policy flaws and biases that allow many small- and mid-scale, sustainable, limited resource and/or historically disadvantaged farmers to slip through the cracks and fail. Farmer experience is communicated to a network of grassroots change organizations and policy makers, resulting in significant policy changes that benefit family farmers across the country. This list provides many critical outcomes of this individualized farm advocacy work in action.

## CHANGES TO USDA LOAN ADMINISTRATION

- Creation of the National Appeals Division
- Right for farmer to buy or lease farm back if feasible at the current value
- County committees as advisors, not having final decisions on loans
- Elimination of discretion in lending decisions
- Right of farmers to request their loan files
- Notification within 10 days if additional information is needed
- Right of notification of servicing and restructuring options
- Notification of decision and all reasons for denial
- Notification of past due
- USDA tracking of the time a loan takes from application to payment
- Transparency in county committee elections
- Set-aside of funding for socially-disadvantaged farmers within loan programs.
- Increased funding for Direct and Guaranteed loans
- Permanent authorization of Chapter 12 bankruptcy
- Ability to restructure loan when distressed rather than in default or delinquent
- Limit of collateral to 150% of loan value on the initial loan (in restructuring can take all assets available)
- In eligibility, elimination of ineligibility for delinquencies “beyond the farmer’s control.”

## CHANGES TO OTHER USDA PROGRAMS

- Change of Adjusted Gross Income policy to new Whole Farm Revenue Protection
- Livestock Indemnity Program change to include contract growers
- Organic price added to crop insurance

- Direct market value added to Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
- Increased cost-share for socially-disadvantaged farmers in EQIP
- Waiving of fees for socially-disadvantaged farmers in NAP insurance
- Addition of new crops to program eligibility to increase diversification

## CREATION OF NEW USDA PROGRAMS

- 2501 Program (Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program)
- Micro-loan program

## CONTRACT AGRICULTURE REFORM

- Right for farmers to opt out of binding arbitration
- Right for farmers to share their contracts with their attorneys, accountants and spouses
- Requirement of 3-year contract guarantee in USDA direct or guaranteed loans
- Right of farmers to see their birds being weighed
- 90-day notice before being cut off
- Creation of the Proposed GIPSA rule
  - Protection from retaliation
  - Definition of competitive injury
  - Rules on tournament payments

## LEGAL ACTION

- *Pigford v. Glickman* (Black farmer class action suit)
- *Love v. Vilsack* (Female farmer class action suit)
- *Garcia v. Vilsack* (Hispanic farmer class action suit)
- *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* (Native American farmer class action suit)