

# Farm Aid 2018: Media Backgrounder

**Farm Aid 2018 is Saturday, Sept. 22, at XFINITY Theatre in Hartford, Connecticut,** marking only the first time Farm Aid has brought its music and food festival to the state, and the fourth Farm Aid festival in the Northeast region.

**Farm Aid 2018 features performances by:** *(More artists to be announced)*

Willie Nelson, Farm Aid President and Founder  
John Mellencamp, Board Member and Co-Founder  
Neil Young, Board Member and Co-Founder  
Dave Matthews (with Tim Reynolds), Board Member  
Chris Stapleton  
Sturgill Simpson  
Kacey Musgraves  
Margo Price  
Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats  
Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real  
Particle Kid



**Tickets for Farm Aid 2018** sold out in less than four hours! To learn more about this year's festival visit [farmaid.org/festival](http://farmaid.org/festival).

**Farm Aid 2018 is an all-day music and food festival featuring:**

- **Generous Artists:** A unique blend of artists from many genres donate their performances and come at their own expense to stand with family farmers and celebrate good food.
- **HOMEGROWN Concessions®:** Pioneering a change in food for the music business, HOMEGROWN Concessions® features family farm food according to Farm Aid's criteria: sustainably produced by family farmers, using ecological practices, with a fair price paid to the farmers. HOMEGROWN Concessions® has fed more than 260,000 festivalgoers since its introduction at Farm Aid in 2007. Backstage, artists and crew enjoy HOMEGROWN Catering with the same family farm standards. We use compostable serviceware and promote and facilitate composting for the venue with a goal of zero waste.
- **The HOMEGROWN Village:** Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Village features hands-on activities about soil, water, energy, food and farming. Festivalgoers can hear farmers and artists discuss pressing issues and share inspiring stories on the FarmYard Stage and attend demonstrations to learn agrarian skills and celebrate the culture of agriculture in the HOMEGROWN Skills tent.

Attendees can access the entire Farm Aid experience through the **official Farm Aid 2018 mobile app**, which will become available in early August for iPhone and Android devices. Fans will be able to view the entire Farm Aid 2018 schedule and make their own personalized schedule of music, workshops and artist briefings for the day.

## Farm Aid's Ongoing Commitment

- Family farmers play a vital role as an economic driver for America's rural communities. Family farmers provide practical solutions to some of our most pressing challenges, including the economy and job creation, the environment and climate change, and our health. Farm Aid galvanizes family farmers, artists, activists, advocates and eaters in support of a farm and food system that is good for the soil, water, people and communities — not one focused on the profits of a few.

- Since 1985, Farm Aid has stood with family farmers, providing resources in times of need and growing a network of advocates committed to keeping family farmers on the land. Farm Aid helps farmers navigate challenges and connects farmers with people and resources that get beginning farmers on the land, support farmers seeking new practices that care for the soil and water and keep those already growing good food right where they should be.
- Right now, the farm economy is in distress, with farmers experiencing a 53 percent drop in net farm income since 2013. Median farm income earned by farm households is predicted to be -\$1,316 in 2018. As a result, farmers and farm families are experiencing increased stress. A 2016 CDC study found that people who work in agriculture die by suicide at a rate higher than any other occupation. Right now, family farmers are endangered.
- Farm Aid has raised more than \$53 million to help farmers thrive through direct services like our farmer hotline; to expand the reach of the Good Food Movement by making connections between farmers and eaters; to take action to change the dominant system of industrial agriculture through policy advocacy and organizing; and to promote food from family farms through the annual Farm Aid festival, publications, our website, videos and more.

## Why Connecticut?

- Connecticut is home to 6,000 farms. Between 2007 and 2016, the state added 1,084 farms, a 22 percent increase and a rare bright spot in the country.<sup>1</sup> Between 2007 and 2012, net cash farm income in the state dropped by a dramatic 83 percent to an average of just \$4,300 per farm.<sup>2</sup>
- Despite its small size, Connecticut agriculture ranks third in New England in farm sales. Agriculture contributes up to \$4 billion to the state economy, generates 21,000 jobs and provides environmental and social benefits that significantly enhance Connecticut residents' quality of life.<sup>3</sup>
- Farm Aid has a long history of granting to and working with farm organizations in the Northeast region, including Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York. Since 1985, Farm Aid has granted more than \$1.4 million to 56 organizations in the region, including \$29,100 granted to assist farmers and ranchers in times of crisis.
- Recent Farm Aid grantees in the region include, the Conservation Law Foundation in Boston, MA; GrowNYC in New York, NY; Land For Good in Keene, NH; Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association in Unity, ME; National Young Farmers Coalition, Hudson, NY; New Entry Sustainable Farming Project in Lowell, MA; Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) in Kingston, NY; The Carrot Project in Boston, MA; and Real Food Challenge in Cambridge, MA.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA NASS. (2012.) [Connecticut: Historical Highlights 2012 and Earlier Census Years](#). 2012 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> USDA NASS. (2012.) Net Cash Farm Income of the Operations and Operators: 2012 and 2007, Table 5. 2012 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>3</sup> Lopez, R. A., Boehm, R., Pineda, M., Gunther, P., & Carstensen, F. (2017.) [Economic Impacts of Connecticut's Agricultural Industry: Update 2015](#). Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy Outreach Report No. 47. University of Connecticut.