

Farm Aid 2021: Media Backgrounder

Farm Aid 2021 will take place Saturday, September 25, at Xfinity Theatre in Hartford, Connecticut, marking the second time that Farm Aid has brought its music and food festival to the state. Farm Aid 2018 was also at Xfinity Theatre in Hartford.

The festival includes performances by:

- Willie Nelson & Family, Farm Aid President and Founder
- John Mellencamp, Board Member and Co-Founder
- Dave Matthews, Board Member, & Tim Reynolds
- Margo Price, Board Member
- Tyler Childers
- Nathaniel Rateliff and The Night Sweats
- Bettye LaVette
- Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real
- Jamey Johnson
- Allison Russell
- Particle Kid
- Ian Mellencamp
- Wisdom Indian Dancers



Neil Young, Board Member and Co-Founder, will not play at Farm Aid 2021. Sturgill Simpson will not play Farm Aid 2021 due to laryngitis.

Tickets for Farm Aid 2021 are available for purchase at LiveNation.com. Prices range from \$65 to \$305.

Farm Aid 2021 will broadcast live on Circle Network, SiriusXM and FarmAid.org. The program will include music from the day and videos that tell the stories of New England farmers.

- Circle Network will begin livestreaming Farm Aid 2021 at 2 p.m. ET on Circle All Access' Facebook page, with a live, on-air broadcast beginning at 8 p.m. ET. To find Circle in your area, visit www.circleallaccess.com/watch-circle.
- The Farm Aid 2021 webcast at www.farmaid.org will begin at 2 p.m. ET.
- Beginning at 12 p.m. ET, SiriusXM subscribers will be able to listen to Farm Aid 2021 live on SiriusXM's Willie's Roadhouse (channel 59) and Dave Matthews Band Radio (channel 30) via SiriusXM radios and on the SXM App.

Farm Aid 2021 includes:

- **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 the food they put on our tables.
- **HOMEGROWN Concessions®:** Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Concessions® features a diverse, fresh menu with ingredients that are sustainably produced by family farmers, using ecological practices, with a fair price paid to the farmers. HOMEGROWN Concessions® has fed more than 300,000 festivalgoers since being introduced at Farm Aid 2007. Backstage, artists and crew enjoy HOMEGROWN Catering with the same criteria. Farm Aid uses all compostable service ware and promotes and supports composting in the venue with a goal of zero waste.
- **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, then attend demonstrations to learn agrarian skills and celebrate the culture of agriculture in the HOMEGROWN Skills tent.

Festivalgoers can access the entire Farm Aid experience through the **official Farm Aid 2021 mobile app**, which will be available in early September for iPhone and Android devices. Fans will be able to use the app to engage in several ways: They can get details about the HOMEGROWN Concessions® menu; learn the stories of local farmers; and make a personalized schedule of music, workshops and artist briefings for the day. For more information, visit [Farmaid.org/app](https://farmaid.org/app).

COVID-19 Considerations

- Farm Aid is excited to be returning to live performances after our virtual festival in 2020, and we're thrilled that Hartford is welcoming us back. We're grateful to the management and staff at Xfinity Theatre for working hand-in-hand with us to ensure the safety of our artists, crew, volunteers, farmers and fans.
- Venue and Farm Aid staff are staying up to date on the latest CDC guidance and industry best practices to limit the transmission of COVID-19. We are taking various precautions, including seeking advice from public health experts, enhanced sanitation protocols and streamlining operations to prevent unnecessary crowding. We will monitor the situation closely and will update protocols as warranted leading up to the festival.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of festivalgoers and artists, Farm Aid announced new safety protocols on August 17 for EVERYONE attending Farm Aid 2021 on Saturday, September 25. All attendees, staff and volunteers of Farm Aid 2021 will be required to show proof of full vaccination OR proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 48 hours prior to entering Xfinity Theatre. Additionally, Farm Aid encourages all guests to wear a mask for the duration of the event. For those areas of the venue that are indoors, please note the City of Hartford currently mandates that masks must be worn indoors.

Farm Aid's Ongoing Commitment

- Farm Aid 2021 will showcase the true diversity and strength of family farmers in this country. A thriving movement — especially of young farmers; Black, brown, Indigenous farmers and People of Color (BIPOC); and women farmers — is leading the way for conversations, strategies and change to create a more democratic farm and food system that can sustain us.
- Now more than ever, people are aware of the fragility of and injustices embedded in our farm and food system, and the urgency to build a democratic, diverse and resilient family farm-centered agriculture system.
- Family farmers play an essential role as an economic driver and cultural foundation for America's rural communities. They provide practical solutions to some of our most pressing challenges, with the potential to improve and sustain rural economies, mitigate climate change and steward our soil and water, and provide good food for 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 corporate 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 by connecting them with the people and resources that support farmers in crisis;
 - Who are just beginning get started on the land;
 - Employ sustainable and regenerative practices that care for the soil and water;
 - By standing with BIPOC farmers against discrimination.
- Farm Aid has raised more than \$60 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 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.

Farm Aid and Current Issues

Racial Justice

- Our farm and food system is rooted in, and remains deeply entwined with, racism and injustice. Farm Aid stands in solidarity with BIPOC communities working for justice in the face of systemic racism and violence. Our vision of a transformed America in which family farmers and eaters are partners in a thriving farm and food system that benefits all is not possible without actively being part of the struggle for racial equity and justice.
- The survival of thousands of farms owned by farmers of color is at immediate risk. Since June, three U.S. District Courts (in Wisconsin, Florida and Tennessee) have issued rulings that immediately halted the USDA's farmer of color debt forgiveness program, authorized by Congress in the American Rescue Plan of 2021. Farm Aid has partnered with Rural Coalition and more than 26 other farmer-focused organizations to support the resumption of this crucial program. This relief is a long-overdue investment in socially disadvantaged rural communities that will begin to level the playing field, making agriculture more viable to those who have been shut out from opportunities to grow, while their white counterparts have advanced for generations. This is an investment in communities, local economies, and working lands that will pay dividends to all Americans for generations to come.
- Farm Aid celebrates the incredible gifts and rich heritages of this land's many Indigenous farmers and is deepening our relationship with and commitments to Indigenous leaders at the forefront of the revival of Native foodways.

COVID-19 Pandemic

- During COVID, we were all reminded that family farmers are essential workers. Throughout the pandemic, they worked tirelessly to feed and support their communities, while COVID-19 laid bare the ways in which our industrialized food and farm system fails us. Now more than ever, we know that an investment in family farm-centered agriculture is an investment in a future that benefits all of us.

New England Agriculture Fast Facts

- Connecticut is home to 5,500 farms.¹ Between 2012 and 2017, net cash farm income in the state increased by a dramatic 328% percent to an average of nearly \$15,000 per farm.²
- New England is home to 32,300 farms across six states — Connecticut, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.³ According to a study using data from 2012, agriculture contributed \$41.5 million to regional total sales and generated 225,668 jobs in the region.⁴ Agriculture in the northeastern United States is characterized by being diverse, value-added oriented, and economically important to the population. Leading sectors include greenhouses, commercial fishing, commercial logging and dairy.⁵
- 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 nearly \$1.8 million to 70 organizations in the region, including \$103,100 to assist farmers and ranchers in times of crisis including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Northeast is a hotbed for innovative progress in agriculture, including local and regional food systems, organic production and the regenerative agriculture methods of the Indigenous Americans who farmed this land first. While farmland in the Northeast is nearly all owned by white landowners, the Northeast is a hive of activity for activists and organizations that seek to diversify farmland ownership and management to bring about racial equity for BIPOC producers. Of the nine states that the USDA notes as the top states for new and beginning farmers⁶, three states are in the Northeast (Maine, Rhode Island and New Hampshire). The Northeast has among the highest proportion of female-operated farms in the U.S.⁷

¹ USDA NASS. (2017.) Connecticut Historical Highlights 2017 and Earlier Census Years. *2017 Census of Agriculture*.

² USDA NASS. (2017.) Net Cash Farm Income of the Operations and Operators: 2017 and 2012, Table 5. *2017 Census of Agriculture*.

³ USDA NASS. (2019.) *2019 Agricultural Statistics Annual Bulletin New England*.

⁴ https://newenglandforestry.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/outreach_reports_7_2768804440.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.