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## **FARM AID URGES EATERS TO JOIN FARMERS, ADVOCATES TO FIGHT CORPORATE POWER**

### ***2024 Festival Highlights Farmer Efforts to Strengthen Community Food Systems***

**SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.** — In a food landscape largely controlled by corporations, Farm Aid 2024 showcased farmers who are creating community-based food systems that improve food access and quality, boost farmer income and local economies, and promote healthier soil and water.

At the sold-out event at Broadview Stage at Saratoga Performing Arts Center, a diverse group of farmers and food producers shared the ways they work in their communities to develop a more democratic farm and food system that is healthy, safe, equitable and accessible. What they say they need is more support from our country's eaters, as well as from our elected representatives in local, state and federal government.

Farm Aid's leadership and artist board members Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, Neil Young, Dave Matthews and Margo Price highlighted the resilience and generosity of these producers, calling on the country to harness our collective strength to counter corporate dominance in our food system.

"Farmers are doing right by their communities, just as they always have," said Farm Aid President and Founder Willie Nelson, "but if we're going to get the food system we need, we all have to work together to support their efforts."

For months, the Farm Aid team has been conducting listening sessions with rural residents, family farmers, farm advocates, labor leaders and community organizers. These efforts culminated in a daylong forum on Friday, where participants developed strategies to build community power, fight false narratives about farming and rural America, and build rural and urban coalitions to increase equity for farmers, workers and eaters.

"There are multiple injustices embedded in our farm and food system, but we've learned from so many other movements that people overcome injustices only if we demand and create a different path forward," said Farm Aid Executive Director Carolyn Mugar.

On Friday, local and regional community members were honored with the Spirit of Farm Aid award for their dedication to the organization and family farmers. Awardees included Live Nation Regional Vice President and General Manager John Huff; Legends Hospitality's Director of Purchasing for Live Nation Carl Fiorentino; champions of GrowNYC youthmarkets Bob Lewis, Tom Strumolo and Gio Edwards; Breezy Hill Orchard farmer Elizabeth Ryan; and composting experts Anne and Derek Bedarf.

Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Village engaged festivalgoers in hands-on activities about climate, soil, water, energy, food and farming. Activities included identifying wild plants that are good for the local habitat, learning about

cover crops, visiting with heritage breed livestock and poultry, and much more. Attendees also heard from artists and farmers on the FarmYard Stage about pressing issues like food access, soil health and climate change.

Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Concessions® served food throughout the venue with ingredients that were produced by family farmers who utilize ecological production practices and received a fair price. The menu, served by Legends Hospitality and a number of local and returning food vendors, featured locally sourced and organic ingredients. Diverse menu choices included stuffed russet potatoes, curried chicken salad sandwiches, beef on weck, pork chop sandwiches, cold soba noodles, grilled street corn, burgers, hot dogs and sausages. Desserts included fruit hand pies, cookies, ice cream sandwiches and fresh apples and plums.

Farm Aid 2024 was livestreamed on [FarmAid.org](https://www.farmaid.org) and [Farm Aid's YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) channel. SiriusXM subscribers also had the ability to listen to the full festival on SiriusXM's [Willie's Roadhouse](https://www.siriusxm.com/channel/61) (channel 61) and [Dave Matthews Band Radio](https://www.siriusxm.com/channel/30) (channel 30) via SiriusXM radio and on the Sirius XM app. The live coverage included backstage interviews with artists and family farmers, hosted by SiriusXM's Dallas Wayne, Ari Fink and Joey Black. This marks the 15th year that SiriusXM has carried the show on satellite radio.

Sponsors of Farm Aid 2024 included Tractor Beverage Co., Patagonia Workwear, Organic Valley, REI Co-op, Taste NY, Native American Agriculture Fund and Frontier Co-op.

Farm Aid's annual online memorabilia auction was also launched on Saturday. Collectors and fans still have a chance to bid on rare and unique items, including guitars from Gibson and Epiphone, posters, books, albums, art and other memorabilia signed by artists at Farm Aid 2024. The auction is hosted at [farmaid.org/auction](https://farmaid.org/auction) and will close on Friday, Oct. 4. All proceeds from the sale of items support Farm Aid's mission.

Farm Aid's mission is to build a vibrant, family farm-centered system of agriculture in America. Farm Aid artists and board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews and Margo Price host an annual festival to raise funds to support Farm Aid's work with family farmers and to inspire people to choose family farm food. For more than 35 years, Farm Aid, with the support of the artists who contribute their performances each year, has raised nearly \$80 million to support programs that help farmers thrive, expand the reach of the Good Food Movement, take action to change the dominant system of industrial agriculture and promote food from family farms.