



## 40 Years of Taking Action for Family Farmers and the Good Food Movement.



### FARM AID 1985 CHAMPAIGN, IL

On September 22, Farm Aid was held in Champaign, Illinois. With 54 acts performing to a crowd of 78,000, the event was then the country's largest combined rock and country event in history. The first Farm Aid concert raised millions of dollars and drew enormous attention to the plight of America's family farmers. Soon after the concert, farmers began calling the phone number that had appeared on TV screens that day; what started out as a donation phone number became the national hotline we still have today: 1-800-FARM-AID.

# 1985

### October 4, 1985

Neil Young took out a full-page ad in USA Today calling for action with an open letter asking President Ronald Reagan, "Will the family farm in America die as a result of your administration?"

### CHILLICOTHE MISSOURI BLOCKADE

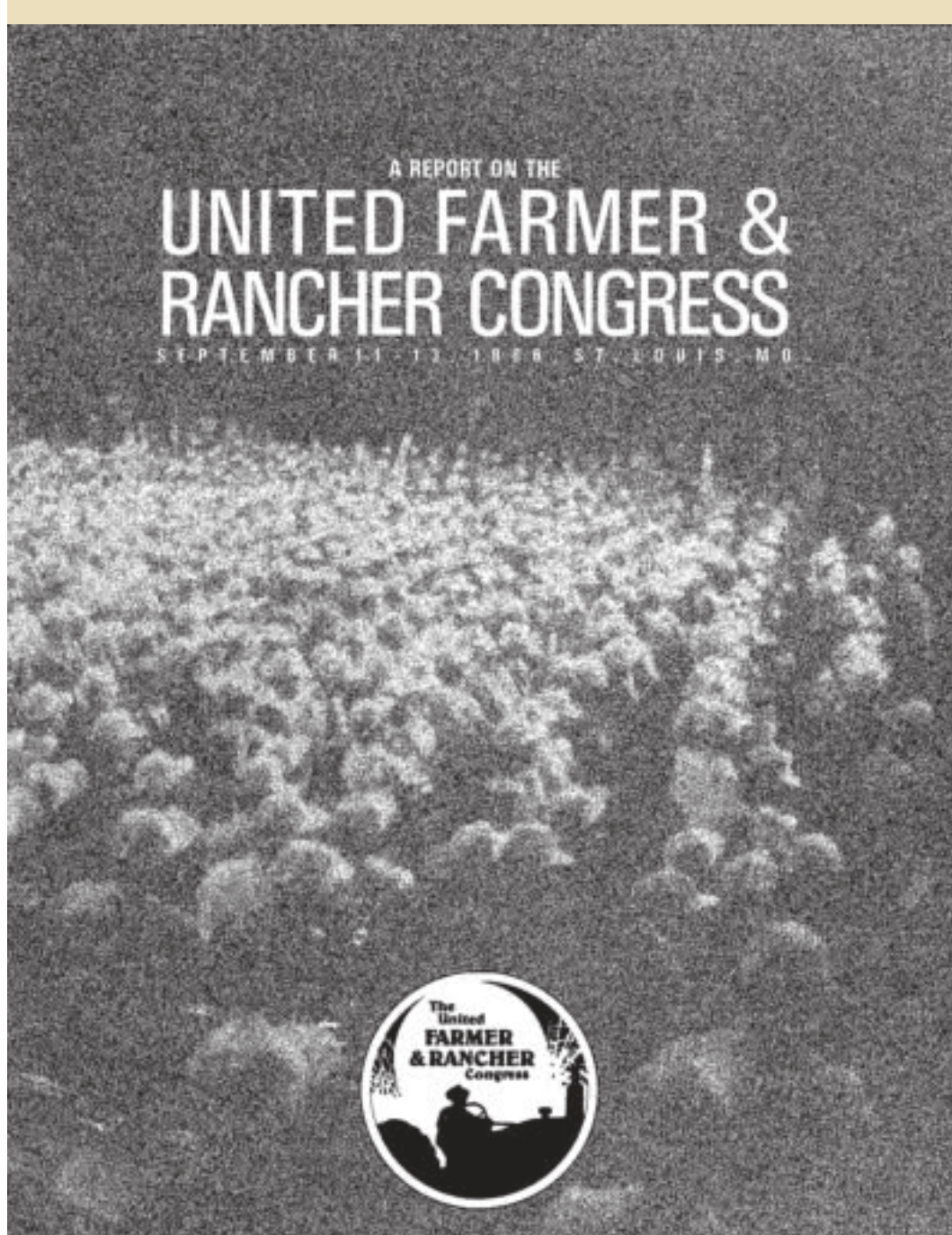
In May 1986, John Mellencamp joined the Missouri Rural Crisis Center and 14,000 family farmers who had been blockading a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmers Home Administration office in Chillicothe, Missouri, in protest of unfair lending practices. The blockade lasted 145 days.



# 1986

### UNITED FARMER AND RANCHER CONGRESS

In September 1986, Farm Aid organized the United Farmer and Rancher Congress in St. Louis, an unprecedented gathering of nearly three thousand farmers from across the country to create a united platform for farm policy that coalesced support for family farm agriculture.



### JUNE 18, 1987

Willie Nelson and John Mellencamp joined Senator Tom Harkin to testify before the U.S. Senate about the family farm crisis and corporate monopolies expanding in agriculture.



# 1987

### FARM CREDIT LAW REFORM

A massive campaign for farm credit law reform, led by Farm Aid and its partners the National Family Farm Coalition, National Farmers Union, the Western Organization of Resource Councils and the Farmers Legal Action Group, saw victory as Congress passed The Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, saving thousands of family farms from foreclosure. Willie Nelson followed up on this victory with letters to nearly 90,000 family farm borrowers to tell them where they could find financial and legal counsel.

# 1990

### ORGANIC FOODS PRODUCTION ACT

After years of Farm Aid advocating for organic farmers, Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act, establishing a certification program for organic farms that commit to environmental stewardship, animal welfare and food grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, antibiotics or genetic engineering. In 2002, the final USDA regulations were issued, after Farm Aid and many thousands of organic advocates weighed in for rules with integrity.



# 1992

### SOUTHERN FARMER CARAVAN

Farm Aid supported a caravan of Southern farmers to USDA in Washington, D.C., organized by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, to raise awareness around the issue of land loss by Black farmers in America due to discrimination in lending practices.

### U.S. HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The U.S. House Agriculture Committee held a meeting in Ames, Iowa, preceding the Farm Aid concert. Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp and Neil Young spoke out about the issues facing family farmers.

### WIDESPREAD FLOODING

A devastating flood swallowed entire towns whole, leaving thousands of Midwestern families homeless and demolishing thousands of farms. The floods spurred Farm Aid to create the Family Farm Disaster Fund, which continues to respond when natural disasters ravage farming regions in America.

# 1993

### rBGH BAN

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Monsanto's Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), a controversial genetically engineered hormone used to boost milk production. Farm Aid advocated for a ban of rBGH and supported efforts to label rBGH-free dairy products so that eaters could have transparency and make their own food choices.



# 1994

### EMERGENCY HAY LIFT

A severe drought in the Southeast spurred Farm Aid to organize a farmer-to-farmer emergency hay lift to bring donated hay to starving livestock in the region. It was the first of several hay lifts Farm Aid has organized.







# FARM AID

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### PIGFORD V. GLICKMAN

USDA settled Pigford v. Glickman, the largest class-action lawsuit in U.S. history brought by Black farmers, addressing decades of blatant racial discrimination in the agency. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives, a Farm Aid grantee and partner since 1985, was critical to the case's success.

# 1997

### DECLARATION ON GENETIC ENGINEERING

Farm Aid organized the first of two farmer summits on genetically engineered seeds, resulting in the Farmers' Declaration on Genetic Engineering in Agriculture, which called for a moratorium on genetically engineered seeds, and creating the Farmer to Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering.

# 1999

### HEALTHY EATING GUIDE

Farm Aid published and widely distributed *10 Ways to Ensure Healthy Food for You and Your Family*, a guide showing consumers how to support family farmers and secure good food for their families and communities.



# 2005

### KATRINA AID

When hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma devastated the Gulf Coast states, Farm Aid mobilized to respond to the emergency needs of family farmers. Within days of Katrina's impact, Farm Aid sent emergency grants and truckloads of donated food to farm families in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi and sponsored five trainings to enable farmers to access federal disaster programs. By year's end, Farm Aid made grants of \$230,000 to local family farm service organizations that deliver aid to farm families.

### FARM AID: A SONG FOR AMERICA

For its 20th anniversary, Farm Aid published *Farm Aid: A Song for America*, a book featuring dozens of essays and hundred of photographs that tell the inspirational story of Farm Aid and family farm agriculture.

# 2007

### HOMEGROWN CONCESSIONS

Farm Aid officially introduced HOMEGROWN Concessions at the concert at Randall's Island, New York, providing family farm food to concertgoers. It also hosted the first HOMEGROWN Village, featuring interactive exhibits about soil, water, energy, food and farmers. The following year, Farm Aid launched HOMEGROWN.org, an online community of people interested in all things HOMEGROWN: growing, cooking, crafting, brewing, preserving, building, making and creating.



# 2008

### FARMER RESOURCE NETWORK

Farm Aid Board Members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Dave Matthews wrote an open letter, urging Congress to invest in family farmers as they considered the details of a \$700 billion economic recovery package. Farm Aid followed up on their demand by publishing *Rebuilding America's Economy with Family Farm-Centered Food Systems* in June 2010, a report calling for investment in family farms to revitalize and restore America's economy.



### DAIRY CRISIS

Crisis hit American dairy farms as milk prices plummeted. In response, Willie Nelson and Farm Aid staff met with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, bringing him more than 13,000 petitions from farmers and eaters across the country. Meanwhile, Farm Aid teamed up with dairy farmers from eight states to hold a rally to call attention to unfair dairy prices in Manchester, Iowa. Farm Aid also launched its Action Center to engage the public and farmers in advocating for food and farm policy changes.

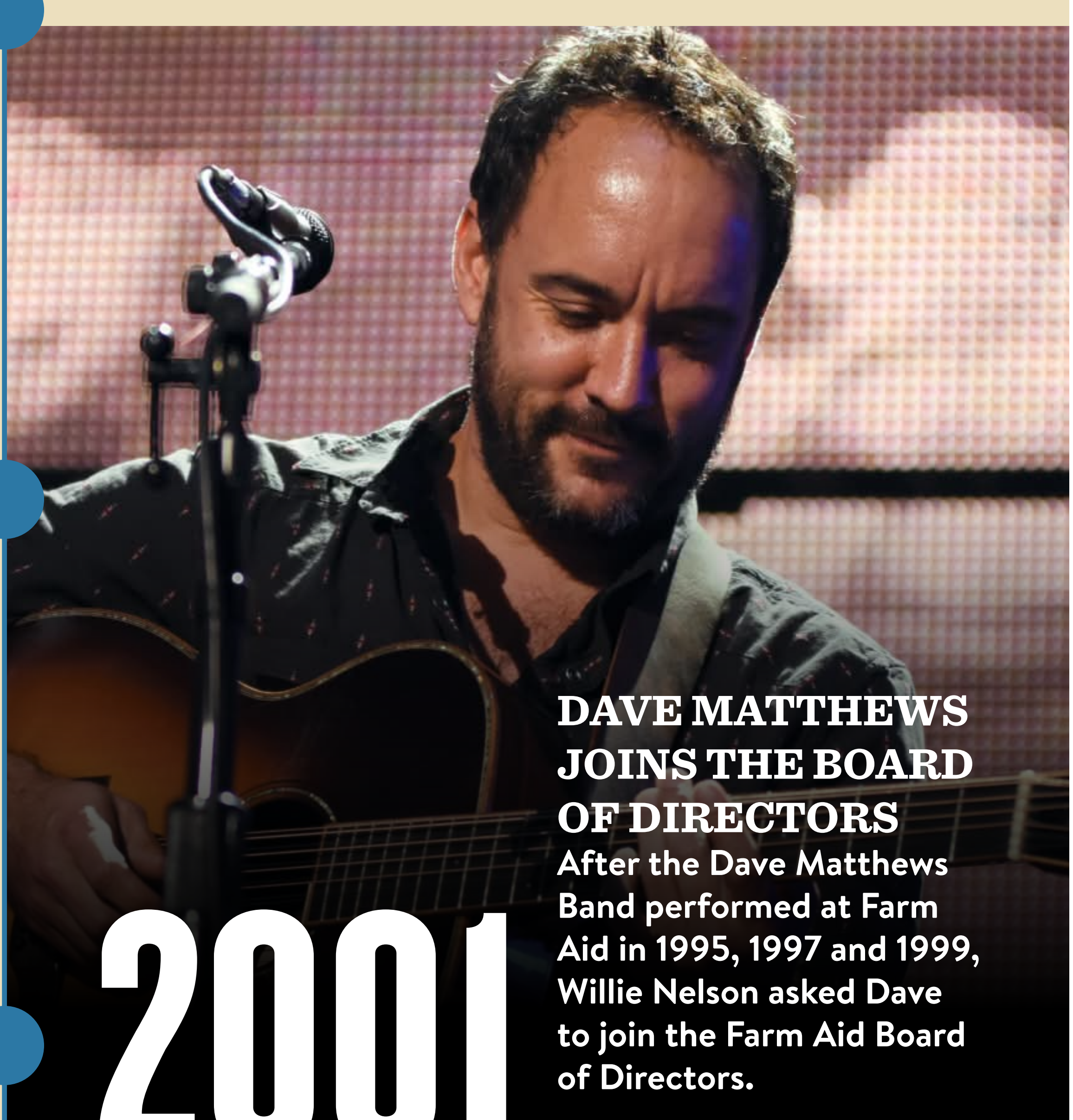


# 1995

### FACTORY FARM PROTEST

On April 1, 1995, Willie Nelson joined farmers to protest a huge factory hog farm in Lincoln

Township, Missouri. The event was a rallying cry for farmers and communities angered by corporate abuse in agriculture, threats to food safety, pollution to the environment and the loss of family hog farmers. The event launched the Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment, a multi-state collaborative effort to stop factory farming that continues to stand strong against corporate control.



### DAVE MATTHEWS JOINS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After the Dave Matthews Band performed at Farm Aid in 1995, 1997 and 1999, Willie Nelson asked Dave to join the Farm Aid Board of Directors.

# 2001

# 2004

### KENYON COLLEGE FARM TO CAFETERIA CONFERENCE

Sparked by a suggestion from Neil Young, Farm Aid sponsored a national Farm to Cafeteria Conference at Kenyon College, where Neil's daughter was a student organizer working to change the college's food system. The meeting brought together students, farmers, nutritionists and food service professionals to discuss ways to bring fresh, family farm food into schools and other institutions.







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### USDA AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WORKSHOPS

By the end of 2010, the USDA and U.S. Department of Justice hosted five unprecedented workshops examining competition issues and antitrust enforcement in agriculture. Farm Aid participated in these sessions, highlighting the voices of family farmers and providing assistance so family farmers could attend the workshops. Farm Aid Board Artists sent a public letter calling on the USDA and the Justice Department to act immediately to stand up for family farmers.

# 2011

### SUPER BOWL XLVI

Farm Aid's HOMEGROWN Concessions® brought HOMEGROWN Chili to Super Bowl XLVI at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. HOMEGROWN pork, beef and vegetarian chili was served and the vegetarian version was the first organic item offered to all fans at a Super Bowl.



# 2013



# 2010

### NATIONAL GATHERING OF FARM ADVOCATES

Farm Aid partnered with Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI) to host the first annual National Gathering of Farm Advocates at the National Agricultural Hall of Fame in Bonner Springs, Kansas two days prior to the concert. This meeting brought Farm Advocates together to learn and share new developments in agricultural credit and finance. The gathering also sparked a haylift to assist farmers in drought-stricken parts of the country.



# 2012

### SURPRISE PERFORMANCE BY PETE SEEGER

At Farm Aid 2013, a crowd of more than 25,000 enjoyed a surprise performance by Pete Seeger, who joined the Farm Aid Board artists on stage to perform "This Land is Your Land." To the cheers of anti-fracking activists and family farm supporters in the audience, Seeger added his own line, "New York was made to be frack-free!" It was Seeger's last public performance before his death.

# 2014



September 11, 2014

### LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

Farm Aid hosted Looking Back and Moving Forward, Together, a landmark gathering of farm and civil rights leaders from across the country focused on the legacy of civil rights organizing, Black land loss, and power-building in the Southeast. The gathering inspired new thinking about racial justice in food and agriculture, the power of community organizing and the need for the farmer voice to come forward in defining a new vision for food and agriculture.

January 29, 2015

### TEXAS DROUGHT SUMMIT

Farm Aid partnered with Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, National Center for Appropriate Technology, and the Farmers' Legal Action Group to host the Texas Drought Summit. The meeting brought together farmers, ranchers and farm service providers to focus on immediate needs and long-term resilience strategies in a region facing prolonged climate extremes.

# 2015

### FARM AID 30

Farm Aid's 30th anniversary was held in Chicago on September 19, before a crowd of 27,000. A pre-concert event gathered farmers, activists, farm advocates and civic leaders from across the country to reflect upon what the family farm movement has accomplished over 30 years to understand where we are today and how positive change is made.

### GRAMMY FOUNDATION HONOR

Kicking off its 30th year, Farm Aid was honored in February by the GRAMMY Foundation® for its legacy of harnessing the power of music for social change.

# 2016

### FARM AID AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Between 2015 and 2022, Farm Aid increasingly partnered with groups such as the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN), and many others to fight for climate adaptation and mitigation policies that benefit rural communities and family farmers.

May 18, 2017

### PREMIERE OF FARM AID'S DOCUMENTARY FILM: "HOMEPPLACE UNDER FIRE"

Farm Aid co-founder John Mellencamp hosted the premiere of Farm Aid's first documentary film at Duke University. "Homeplace Under Fire" celebrates the farmers, farm wives and rural leaders who refused to stand by and watch their communities be destroyed during the 1980s Farm Crisis. Because of them, thousands of farmers are alive and on their land today.



# 2017

After tripling emergency grants to farmers in 2017, Farm Aid responds to sharply declining farm income nationwide by tripling that amount again in 2018.

September 22, 2018

### Hartford, CT

Farm Aid's pre-festival event, On the Road to Resilience: Moving from Individual Crisis to Collective Power, inspired farmers' and farm advocates' strength to persevere and explored strategies for resilience through speakers, sessions and activities that call upon our compassion and ingenuity in tough times.



# 2018





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APRIL 11, 2020

## AT HOME WITH FARM AID

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 and its shutdowns of markets that family farmers depend on, Farm Aid leapt into action to produce “At Home with Farm Aid” on April 11, featuring Farm Aid board artists Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews and Willie Nelson with his sons Lukas and Micah Nelson. The virtual concert raised more than \$500,000, which Farm Aid quickly distributed to farmers impacted by COVID-19. As a result of At Home with Farm Aid, Farm Aid launched the national COVID-19 Farmer Resilience Initiative, working with more than 130 local, state and regional organizations in all 50 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands to deliver immediate farmer relief efforts and longer-term resilience strategies.

# 2019

## FARM AID’S FAMILY FARM DISASTER FUND

In response to the flooding in Iowa and Nebraska, Farm Aid raised \$175,000 for the Family Farm Disaster Fund

# 2020



# 2021

April 8, 2021

## MARGO PRICE JOINS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Grammy-nominated artist Margo Price and lifelong family-farm advocate Annie Nelson were unanimously elected to Farm Aid’s Board of Directors, joining founders Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews and other dedicated supporters.

September 26, 2020

## FARM AID 2020 ON THE ROAD

Farm Aid 2020 On the Road, held virtually on September 26 and MC’d by Jon Batiste, featured 22 artists and highlighted the resilience of diverse family farmers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and calls for racial justice.

September 25, 2021 HARTFORD, CT

## FARM AID FESTIVAL HARTFORD

In 2021, Farm Aid highlighted diverse farmers in New England, focusing on farmers of color to amplify often overlooked voices in agriculture.



# 2022

November 2022

## FARM AID LAUNCHES SPANISH-LANGUAGE HOTLINE SUPPORT

By the end of 2022, Farm Aid’s hotline had six operators—including a Spanish-speaking operator—the largest team in its history.



September 24, 2022

## RALEIGH, NC

With a focus on North Carolina, the 2022 festival showcased how farmers are leading the way to mitigate climate change and fight against environmental racism.



March 7, 2023

## FARMERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION: A RALLY FOR RESILIENCE

In early March, hundreds of farmers and allies convened in Washington, D.C., for ‘Farmers for Climate Action: A Rally for Resilience.’ Over 50 organizations hosted a rally featuring inspiring speakers and music, including a performance by Farm Aid board artist John Mellencamp. The masses of farmers and climate advocates then marched down Pennsylvania Avenue advocating for farmer-led climate solutions, racial justice and prioritizing communities over corporations in the 2023 Farm Bill.



# 2023

## FARM AID LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

In December 2024, Carolyn Mugar—Farm Aid’s founding Executive Director since 1985—announced that she was stepping down from her role as ED. Willie Nelson expressed deep gratitude for her leadership. On January 1, 2025, Shorlette Ammons and Jennifer Fahy assumed co-leadership of the organization.



# 2024

## CREATION OF THE DISTRESSED BORROWERS ASSISTANCE NETWORK

In September, Farm Aid launched the Distressed Borrowers Assistance Network (DBAN), partnering with USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), RAFL, the University of Arkansas, Alcorn State University’s Policy Center and the University of Minnesota to deliver personalized support for financially distressed farmers.

# 2025



## 40TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL IN MINNEAPOLIS

On September 20, Farm Aid celebrated its 40th anniversary at the University of Minnesota’s Huntington Bank Stadium—its first-ever festival in Minnesota—marking a return to a college football venue reminiscent of its early years.