

April 22, 2024

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
FDA, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Heinrich, Chairman Harris, Ranking Member Hoeven, and Ranking Member Bishop:

We are writing in support of \$30 million for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), within the Conservation Technical Assistance section of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriation.

Grazing-based farm and ranch operations improve the profitability for producers across the nation. Grass-based agriculture is an important strategy for introducing new farmers and ranchers into livestock management because they can be low upfront-capital operations that nonetheless generate good income. Well managed grazing of livestock can help new and established farmers and ranchers alike thrive and stay in their rural communities.

Effectively managed grasslands also protect water quality, improve soil health, and provide a good habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Operations that keep cover on the ground year-round increase water retention and reduce the impacts of flooding.

Maximizing the benefits of well-managed grazing lands takes knowledge and skill. Grazing planning, technical assistance and peer-to-peer education are important. Counties with dedicated grazing staff and strong farmer networks show marked increases in the use of rotational or prescribed grazing and other beneficial grazing practices.

The key missing piece is robust national funding for technical assistance, training, and outreach. We are enormously grateful that after a hiatus in GLCI funding of over a dozen years, your subcommittees started the job of restoring funding and bringing GLCI back to life in the FY 2022 appropriations bill, which led to immediate support for grazers on the ground. We are equally grateful that support for GLCI continued in FY 2023 and FY 2024. To build on those investments and the value they bring to grazers, we urge you to now to restore the program's historic funding levels and ensure that farmers and ranchers in all states receive the technical help that is needed for positive outcomes.

We request that you support \$30 million in funding for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative for FY 2025.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition	National Wildlife Federation
American Bird Conservancy	Organic Farming Research Foundation
Carbon180	Rural Advancement Foundation
Certified Naturally Grown	International
Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship	Slow Food USA
Farm Aid	Soil and Water Conservation Society
Food Animal Concerns Trust	Union of Concerned Scientists
Izaak Walton League of America	Wallace Center at Winrock International
National Bison Association	World Wildlife Fund
National Center for Appropriate Technology	Xerces Society for Invertebrate
National Farmers Union	Conservation
National Young Farmers Coalition	

Regional Organizations

Center for Rural Affairs
Climate Land Leaders
Green Lands Blue Waters
Land Stewardship Project
Marbleseed
Mississippi River Network
Oregon Tilt
Quivira Coalition
Savanna Institute

Farmers and Ranchers

All Grass Farms, IL
Dailey Farms, IL
DuChick Ranch, IL
Funks Grove Heritage Fruits & Grains, IL
Hazzard Free Farm, IL
Heartland Farms, IL
Hickory Flat Cattle Co., IL
JEDs Farm, IL
J N' J Cattle Co., IL
Main Street Pastures, IL
Pasture Grazed, IL
Primrose Farm, IL
Ryder Family Farm, IL
Schuette Seeds, IL
Whildin Family Farm, IL
Churchill Farms, IN
Good Shepard Farm, IN
Grand View Farm, IA
Joia Food & Fiber Farm, IA
Mud Ridge Ranch, IA
Resilient Farms, IA
Buller Brothers Cattle, LA
Owl Hill Farm, MA
Tallgrass Farm, MI
Hay Shakers Farm, MN
Medicine Creek Farm, MN
Veronica Farm & Gardens, MN
CPH 1 Inc, MO
Polks Folly Farm, NM
Jones Corona Ranch, NM
Here We Are Farm, NY
The Vanstrom Homestead, NY
Sawyers Creek Farm, NC
Eleven Fifteen Livestock, OK
Moomaw Family Farm, OR
Fiddle Creek Dairy, PA
Juniata View Farm, PA
Painterland Sisters, PA
Pittsburgh Highland Farm, PA
The Walnut Hill Farm, PA
Willow Run Farmstead, PA
The McDuffie Farm, SC
Brattset Family Farm, WI
Kieckhoefer Family Farm, WI
Olivia Tincani & CO., WY

State Based Organizations

California

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association
California Climate Agriculture Network
California FarmLink
CCOF
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology
Ecological Farming Association
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
National Hmong American Farmers
Wild Farm Alliance

Colorado

Colorado Farm & Food Alliance
Nourish Colorado

Florida

Florida Organic Growers

Georgia

AgriUnity

Illinois

Food Works
Glaciers End
Illinois Grazing Lands Coalition
Illinois Stewardship Alliance

Iowa

Practical Farmers of Iowa
Women, Food, and Agriculture Network

Kansas

Kansas Rural Center

Maine

Maine Farmland Trust

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardener's Association

Maryland

Clagett Farm – Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Massachusetts

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership

Michigan

Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance

Minnesota

Catholic Rural Life
Friends of the Mississippi River
Hmong National Development, Inc
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
MAFO
MN Grazing Lands Conservation Association
Renewing the Countryside
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

Mississippi

Unlimited Community Agricultural Cooperative

Missouri

Cultivate Kansas City
Missouri Coalition for the Environment

Montana

Montana Organic Association
Norther Plains Resource Council

Nebraska

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
No More Empty Pots

New Hampshire

Land For Good
Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New Hampshire

New Jersey

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New Jersey

New Mexico

Amigos Bravos
Farm To Table – New Mexico
The National Center for Frontier
Communities
New Mexico food & Agriculture Policy
Council
New Mexico Healthy Soils Working Group

New York

Agrotecy
New York Grazing Coalition
Northeast Organic Farming Association of
New York

North Dakota

Norther Plains Sustainable Agriculture
Society

Ohio

Ohio Ecological Food & Farming
Association

Oklahoma

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Oregon

FoodCorps
Northwest Center for Alternatives to
Pesticides
Oregon Climate and Action Network
Organic Seed Alliance

Pennsylvania

PASA Sustainable Agriculture
Pennsylvania Farmers Union

Rhode Island

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
Rhode Island
Rhode Island Food Policy Council

South Dakota

Dakota Rural Action

Texas

C.A.S.A del Llano

Vermont

Northeast Organic Farming Association of
Vermont

Virginia

Virginia Association for Biological Farming

Wisconsin

Cultivating the Commons
Driftless Area Land Conservancy
Glacierland Resource Conservation &
Development Council, Inc.
GrassWorks, Inc.
League of Women Voters: Upper
Mississippi River Inter-league Organization

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Sauk County Land Resources Development
Council
Savanna Institute
Water and Land Solutions, LLC
Wisconsin Division of the Izaak Walton
League of America