

Religious Working Group on the Farm Bill

From God's initial command to be good stewards of creation to the Prophets' call for justice among governments and nations, people of faith in every age are called together to work for the common good. Inspired by Jesus' command to care for poor and hungry people, we join together to support policies that promote economic justice, strengthen rural communities at home and around the world, care for the land as God's creation, foster right relations among nations and achieve an end to hunger.

Broad reform of U.S. food and farm policy, including adjustments to the commodity payment programs, is important to progress against hunger and poverty in this country and around the world. The current system should be changed in ways that would strengthen communities in rural America, ensure all Americans an adequate, nutritious diet, provide better and more targeted support for U.S. farm families of modest means, and conserve the land for present and future generations. In addition, such changes are necessary to unlock the ability of small-holder farmers in developing countries, who comprise the majority of the world's hungry people, to improve their livelihoods and escape poverty.

The Working Group will urge Congress to take the opportunity presented by the reauthorization of the Farm Bill to prioritize policies that reduce hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world. To this end we support the following principles for the 2007 farm bill.

Principles

The 2007 farm bill should:

Increase investments that combat rural poverty and strengthen rural communities

Strengthen and expand programs that reduce hunger and improve nutrition in the United States

Strengthen and increase investment in policies that promote conservation and good stewardship of the land

Provide transitions for farmers to alternative forms of support that are more equitable and do not distort trade in ways that fuel hunger and poverty

Protect the health and safety of farmworkers

Expand research related to alternative and renewable forms of energy

Improve and expand international food aid in ways that encourage local food security

Bread for the World

Church World Service

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

National Council of Churches

Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office

United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops