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Attitudes

The goal of increasing sustainability in agriculture attracts overwhelming support, as do specific policy proposals to achieve it.

- The majority of voters nationwide (57%) are at least “somewhat” confident that the United States will be able to produce enough healthy food to feed the population for future generations, while 43% say that they are “just a little” or “not at all” confident. [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
- Nearly nine in ten voters (88%) say that it should be a “somewhat” or “very” high priority to make sure that food is produced in a sustainable way that ensures the availability of healthy food today and in the future. [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
- More than four in five voters (84%) agree that we need to do more to maintain soil health and water quality so that we can feed future generations. [[Walton Family Foundation](#), July 2022]

- Majorities of voters support each of the specific proposals below to encourage climate-friendly and sustainable agriculture. [[Walton Family Foundation](#), July 2022]
 - Providing crop insurance discounts to farmers who implement practices to conserve water and protect our land - 80% support
 - Increasing the total farm subsidies or aid that farmers can receive if they implement more sustainable practices - 76%
 - Requiring farmers to implement practices that protect our land, water and health - 76%
 - Collecting more information to help food companies and consumers understand the environmental impact of food - 74%
 - Creating a federal research program to help farmers understand how to move to more climate-friendly farming practices - 72%

When forced to choose, Americans value long-term sustainability even on par with affordability as a priority for agricultural policy.

- By a 54%-45% margin, voters agree more with a statement that “the agriculture industry has a responsibility to produce food in a sustainable way that ensures America will be able to produce healthy food for future generations” over a competing statement that “the agriculture industry has a responsibility to produce enough food to feed the American population now while keeping the cost of food down.” [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
 - Recent inflation appears to have naturally increased voters’ prioritization of affordability, as voters were even more likely to prioritize the agriculture industry’s responsibility to produce food sustainably (70%) over its responsibility to produce food affordably (30%) in 2015.

Funding to reduce carbon emissions from agriculture ranks among the most popular and least polarizing actions that the federal government can take to reduce climate pollution.

- In general, a large majority of voters (76%) say that the government should encourage farmers to use climate-friendly practices. [[Walton Family Foundation](#), July 2022]
- More than four in five voters (85%) support federal funding to help farmers improve practices to protect and restore the soil so that it absorbs and stores more carbon. [[Yale + GMU](#), Oct. 2023]
 - Of six climate-friendly policy proposals that Yale and GMU tested in their poll, this proposal earned by far the most support from Republicans (75%).
- Roughly three-quarters of voters (77%) feel favorably about the Inflation Reduction Act “providing \$19.5 billion to help farmers and ranchers reduce the

amount of climate pollution they produce by expanding conservation programs and other climate-smart agriculture practices.” [\[Climate Action Campaign, July 2023\]](#)

- This provision of the Inflation Reduction Act is supported by the vast majority of Democrats (97%), as well as seven in ten independents (72%) and the majority of Republicans (57%).

Americans have low familiarity with the Farm Bill, but prioritize funding it when they know what it contains.

- Only around one-quarter of voters (27%) say that they are at least “somewhat” familiar with the Farm Bill, and even fewer (20%) said that they were familiar with it in 2018. [\[Johns Hopkins, March 2023\]](#)
- After learning what the Farm Bill contains (“policies covering a range of food and agriculture topics, including funding for crop insurance for farmers, conservation programs, support for new and beginning farmers, rural development initiatives, nutrition programs, and SNAP, formerly called Food Stamps”), the majority of voters (54%) say that funding for the Farm Bill should be increased. [\[Johns Hopkins, March 2023\]](#)
 - An additional 39% say that Farm Bill funding should stay the same, while only 7% say that Farm Bill funding should be *decreased*.

Messaging + Language

“Climate-smart agriculture practices” are popular.

- In August 2023 polls of Michigan (statewide) and five competitive U.S. House districts across the country, LCV found that 56%-65% of voters across geographies felt favorably about “climate-smart agriculture practices” while only 11%-24% felt unfavorably about the term. [\[LCV, Aug. 2023\]](#)

Messaging in favor of climate-smart agriculture funding is particularly persuasive when it focuses on ensuring a “safe and reliable” food supply. Validation from farmers also resonates, especially with right-of-center audiences.

- In a test of several statements in support of climate-smart agriculture funding, the Climate Action Campaign found that nearly every major subgroup of voters chose the **Safe & Reliable Food Supply** statement below as the most persuasive. The **Farmer Demand** statement also ranked among the most persuasive for both independents and Republicans. [\[Climate Action Campaign, July 2023\]](#)
 - **Safe & Reliable Food Supply:** *“This funding will be used for programs that provide crucial protections to ensure the U.S. food system remains safe and reliable. Extreme weather associated with climate change, such*

as droughts and floods, wreak havoc on farmers and endanger our country's food security. These conservation programs are an important investment in maintaining a stable and strong food supply."

- **Farmer Demand:** *"Current conservation programs are underfunded and cannot meet the demand from all the farmers who want to participate in them. The popularity of these programs with farmers demonstrates how valuable they are. We should be listening to farmers about what they say they need and should do everything we can to support them as an economic backbone and foundation of our food supply."*

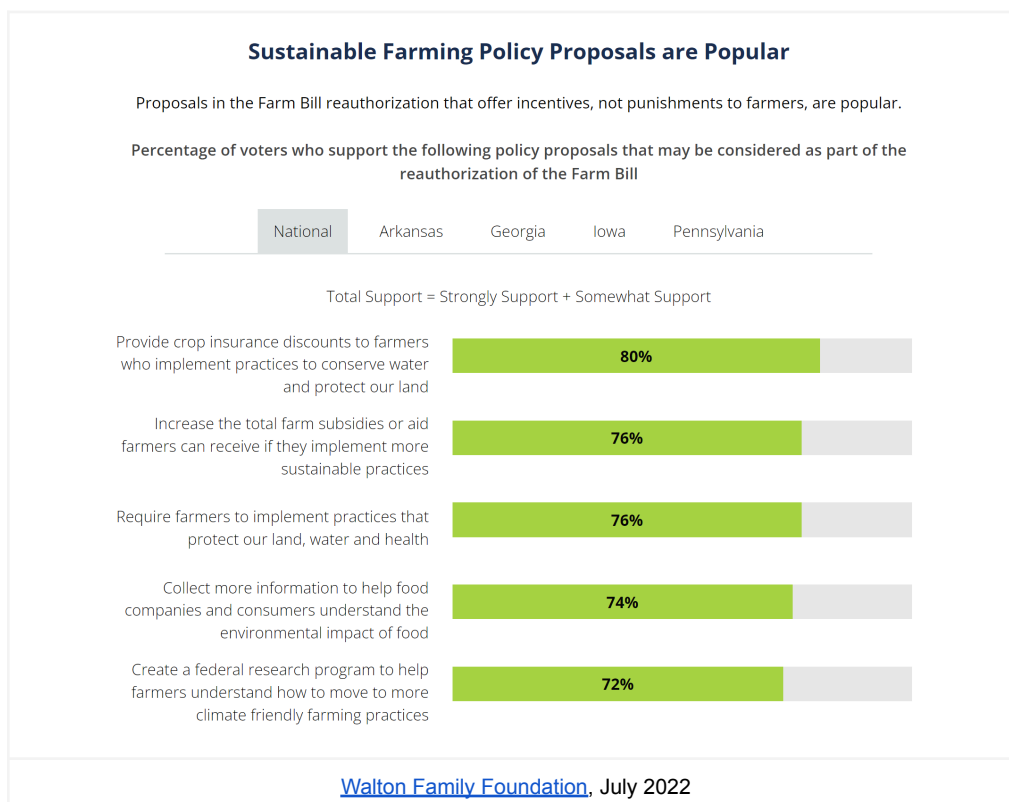
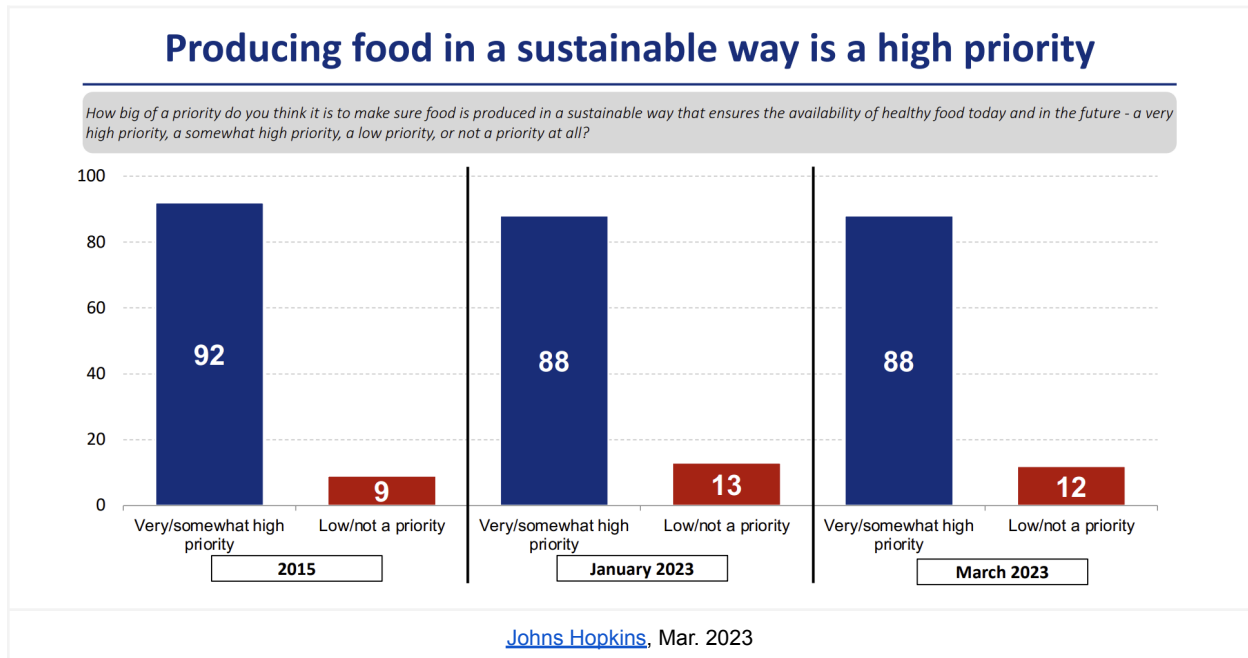
There is much more good will toward small, mid-sized, or family farms than corporate farms.

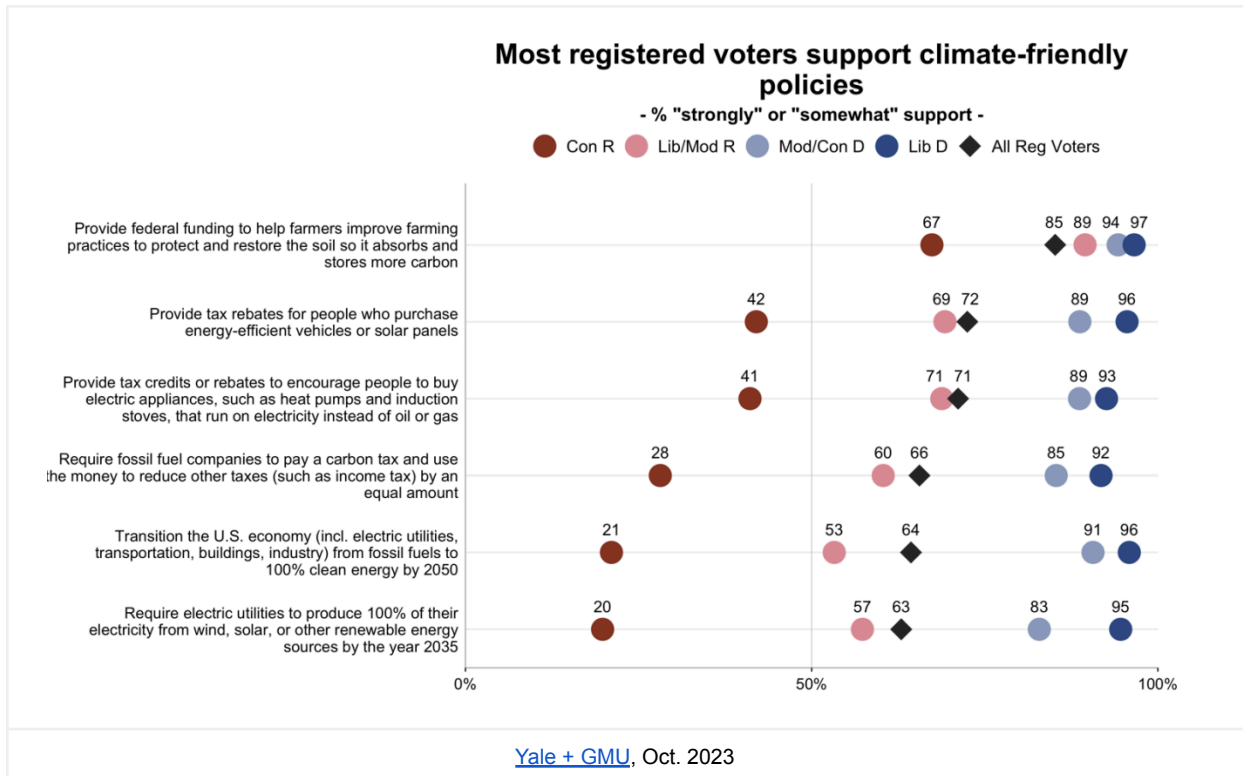
- The majority of voters (57%) say that the United States should be providing more funding and support to "small and mid-sized agricultural producers," while only about one-third (35%) say that the United States should be providing more funding and support to "corporate agribusiness." [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
- In August 2023 polls of Michigan (statewide) and five competitive U.S. House districts across the country, LCV found that 81%-91% of voters across geographies felt favorably about "family farms" while only 13%-32% felt favorably about "corporate farms." [[LCV](#), Aug. 2023]

Few Americans know what "regenerative agriculture," "agroecology", or "Food Not Feed" mean, but the public is inclined to support these concepts after learning about them.

- Only around three in ten five voters (28%) say that they are at least somewhat familiar with "regenerative agriculture," but they support it by an 89%-11% margin after reading that regenerative agriculture "seeks to build upon and restore natural ecosystems and includes reducing disturbance of the soil, minimizing chemical inputs, and increasing crop and animal diversity." [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
- Only around three in ten voters (28%) say that they are at least somewhat familiar with the term "Food not Feed," but they support it by an 83%-17% margin after learning that Food not Feed is "a campaign that includes a broad coalition of farmers, consumers, healthcare professionals, small businesses, and advocates striving to change the current industrial agricultural landscape from prioritizing feed for animals to prioritizing healthy and sustainable food for Americans." [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]
- Just under one in five voters (18%) say that they are at least somewhat familiar with "agroecology," but they support it by an 83%-17% margin after reading that agroecology "is a scientific and practical application of ecological concepts in farming to improve the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while also addressing the need for socially equitable food systems." [[Johns Hopkins](#), March 2023]

Charts





Additional Resources

[Polls: Climate-Smart Agriculture in Key House Districts \(LCV, Sep. 2023\)](#)

[Communicating on Funding for Climate-Smart Agriculture Programs \(Climate Action Campaign, Aug. 2023\)](#)

[Voters in Key Farm Bill States Support New Approaches to the Food and Farm Bill \(Union of Concerned Scientists, Jul. 2023\)](#)

[Public Opinion Poll: Vast Majority of Voters Prioritize Sustainable Food Production, Aligning Agricultural Policies to Support Healthy Food \(Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Apr. 2023\)](#)

[Farm Bill Reauthorization and Sustainable Agriculture Practices \(Walton Family Foundation, July 2022\)](#)