

~ AGRICULTURE ~

Agriculture is a national security issue aside from its fundamental importance to our way of life in America. Food and other agricultural products are essential to just about everything we do and must therefore remain under US control and must not be concentrated in the hands of a wealthy few.

According to the USDA, about 37.6 million acres of agricultural land was in the hands of foreign owners as of 12/31/20. Domestically there are very wealthy individuals who are buying up large amounts of farm and grazing land. This drives up land prices and concentrates farm and ranch ownership into the hands of a few wealthy individuals. Once that happens, the small to medium size farm, the typical family farm, has much less chance of competing and getting a fair price for what they produce.

Large “agribusiness” corporations are controlling agriculture in other ways as well. In recent decades it has become difficult for farmers to provide their own seed. Instead they must buy a patented seed from a company that retains ownership, in effect, of the genetics of that seed. The Creator has provided life to our world including the seed that grows our food. No natural food product should be allowed to be patented nor genetically modified to force farmers to use their fungicides and pesticides that has been linked to cancers and contaminates the foods we eat. It is wrong wrong to give ownership of that to some corporation to the disadvantage of the average farmer who is just trying to keep his family afloat and the consumers healthy.

A small number of companies control most of the meat processing in the US. Some of those companies are not even American owned. If one or two of these large producers is compromised in some way, for example by a bacterial contamination, there is suddenly a shortage and the average person suffers the consequences. Also, the concentration of production into so few hands decreases competition and limits the freedom of smaller producers to compete. That is not a free market. These large producers also squeeze the farmer and rancher to make more with less. Smaller meat producers are also further limited by regulations that are better designed for larger companies.

Another issue is that farmers and ranchers are subject to government appropriating their land for other uses such as placement of pipelines. If an oil pipeline placed in this manner were to leak, the farm land can be ruined for many years, and the farmer has little recourse.

All of this is happening when the average age of farmers is increasing. Young people are not going into agriculture in the numbers we need for sustaining farms and ranches. Add to this the fact that agricultural states are experiencing skyrocketing rates of suicide much greater than the national average. In 2018 the national average was 14.8 suicide deaths per 100,000 population while in South Dakota that number was 18 per 100,000 population according to the South Dakota Department of Health. There has also been a more than 10 year long trend of increasing bankruptcies among farmers according to the Farm Bureau. This was slowed a bit by the support payments of 2020 and 2021, but that support will not continue. We need action on a large scale that will make agriculture an attractive choice of career for young people.

The agricultural planning for our state and country must provide a supportive environment for the medical and financial health of our farmers and ranchers.

Another complicating factor is climate change. Agricultural land will be lost because of climate change. We need urgent public action to mitigate that loss and continue to find ways to make the remaining land more productive in sustainable ways. Crops need to be made more resilient to changing climate extremes. More funding of biological research is needed for this. The entire world will be looking to us to provide food. This is a tremendous market opportunity for our farmers and ranchers, but we need rational and fair policies to allow the average farmer and rancher to benefit. Farmers are going bankrupt at an alarming rate. The suicide rate among farmers is completely unacceptable. We urgently need to change course to help correct these issues.

~ Vote for a rational agriculture policy that is fair to all and not just the wealthy few. ~

VOTE TAMARA LESNAR 4 US SENATE

~ Click on the link below to donate and support agriculture policy that serves the interests of the people. ~

<https://www.raisethemoney.com/politics/tlesnar>