

*A Declaration for a New Direction for American Agriculture and  
Agricultural Trade  
September 7, 2003*

We stand together at the dawn of the 21st century. We stand together as farmers, workers, religious and development organizations, environmentalists and concerned citizens calling for a comprehensive re-examination of the impact of global trade policy on food security, farmers' livelihoods, and local, sustainable food production. We demand trade agreements that put the good of the people before the trade of goods; trade agreements that value social justice over private profits. The outcomes of these agreements in all participating countries must be access by all to safe, affordable food; access to the resources and technology needed to ensure domestic food security and sustainable livelihoods; an end to environmental degradation associated with food production; and democratic participation by citizens in making decisions about domestic food production.

The World Trade Organization's Ministerial in Cancun, Mexico this month helps to decide who will plant crops and who will be uprooted, and in many cases who will eat and who will starve in the global free trade of food. This is a time to affirm that agricultural trade must support human rights and livelihoods, not overrun or destroy them.

Environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture is central to each nation's ability to feed its citizens today and for generations to come.

The challenge to adequately feed the world's inhabitants ultimately depends upon recognizing the fundamental connections between food security and food sovereignty, the health and well-being of human societies, and an intact and healthy environment capable of sustaining food production. Indeed, the future of the planet itself depends on how we as a world community meet the global demands for safe, sufficient, sustainable and accessible food for all. We believe that rational and fair trade policies can move our world toward an era of social justice, environmental and economic sustainability, and a generally more peaceful and productive era.

We affirm that international trade agreements must be designed to defend and support these principles:

- Access to safe, affordable food is a universal human right; widespread hunger cannot be acceptable in a world where food is abundant.
- Food production cannot come at the degradation of soil, water, air and biodiversity.
- Family farmers and ranchers around the world must be assured economic justice through fair prices for their production.
- Farm laborers must be assured economic justice through fair wages and contracts.

- All family scale producers, and especially indigenous, minority, immigrant and other excluded farm sectors must be assured access to land and to a system of agriculture that supports, protects and sustains their culture and communities.

- Corporate profits cannot come at the expense of the livelihoods of farmers and workers in the U.S. or other countries, nor at the expense of access to and diversity of the global seed supply.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations representing U.S. farm, labor, religious, development, consumer and environmental interests issue the following call for action:

To Our Elected Officials:

We place in you a trust that you will carry out the will of the people for the common good. Therefore, we hold you accountable to:

- Support policies which secure family farmers' livelihoods by fair prices for their products and increased capacity to influence decision-making about food systems;

- Support measures that safeguard the health of rural communities and the right of farm laborers to fair wages, contracts, and safe working conditions;

- Support policies that safeguard the capacity to produce food without environmental degradation both domestically and abroad;

- Support trade agreements that honor each nation's right to establish their own food security through food sovereignty;

- Support trade agreements that recognize agriculture as a fundamentally unique industry that requires independent negotiating frameworks emphasizing global cooperation to achieve mutual goals.

To Our Trade Representative Robert Zoellick:

As a world leader, the United States has responsibility to work towards global trade agreements that reflect the basic values of fairness, independence, democracy, and social and economic justice. Therefore, as our trade representative in the global trade negotiations, we urge that you:

- Support trade policies that ensure that family farmers and ranchers around the world receive a fair price for their products;

- Support trade policies that ensure that the wages and working conditions of farm laborers in every nation meet accepted international standards;

- Support trade policies that prioritize the need for long term social, economic and environmental stability and vitality of rural communities over the desire of agribusiness corporations, many based in the United States, to dominate world food production and processing;

- End the pricing and dumping of agricultural commodities at below the cost of production, thereby preventing the displacement and destruction of farmers and rural communities in the U.S. and around the world;

- Press for public information to be made available in each country regarding the cost of production for each export crop;

- Support trade policies that address the growing problem of world-wide agricultural marketplace concentration that distorts agricultural markets and prices;

- Support trade policies that reduce the need for taxpayer subsidies by increasing the marketplace value of agricultural products, thereby raising the standards of living and contributing to the stability and economic development of rural communities world-wide;

- Support public sector funding for agriculture that enables all countries to pursue domestic goals of greater social equity, rural development, and environmental protection.

#### To Our Allies Around the Globe Fighting for Fair and Just Trade Agreements:

The ever-increasing globalization of communication and economic activity offers all of us the increased opportunity and obligation to work together toward a common vision for fair and just global trade that truly serves our mutual interests of a safe, secure food supply. Therefore we pledge:

- To work with you toward fair international trade agreements that secure farmers' livelihoods and promote rural economic development, environmental protection, and democratic participation in decision-making about food systems;

- To work together as American institutions to educate all Americans about the need to redesign international trade agreements to support and promote rural development, poverty reduction, sustainable agricultural development and food security for all, not only in the United States but across the globe.

#### Signers

FARM AID

AFL-CIO

American Corn Growers Association

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment

Center of Concern

Citizens Trade Campaign

Communication Workers of America

Community Food Security Coalition

Consumer's Choice Council

Defenders of Wildlife

The Episcopal Church, USA

Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund

Friends of the Earth

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

National Council of Churches of Christ

National Family Farm Coalition

National Farmers Union  
Oxfam America  
Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office  
Public Citizen  
Rural Coalition/Coalicion Rural  
Soybean Producers of America  
United Auto Workers  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United Steelworkers of America  
Western Organization of Resource Councils