

# Farm Bill 2023 is Coming!

## How Can LWV Support a Sustainable and Equitable Food System in the Face of Climate Change?

The Farm Bill of 2023 will influence farm, nutrition, and trade policy for the next 4-8 years. This is a critical time to address climate change and the food system. Here's what you need to know:

### History

**1930s** - During the Dust Bowl, poor agricultural practices and drought led to catastrophic erosion of soil.

*"A Nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself"*  
- Franklin D Roosevelt

- 1933 Farm Bill Legislation established price supports and soil conservation services.
- Hunger relief followed in 1939 with first food stamp program.

#### After World War II, 1950s-1970s

- Increased mechanization and reliance on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides
- Sec of Agriculture Earl Butz (years 1971-1976) promoted increased industrialization, consolidation of smaller farms, and emphasis on exports. "Get Big or Get Out"
- CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) replaced many traditional family farms and ranches.
- Financial supports (subsidies/insurances) changed to assure maximum production of commodity crops, resulting in monoculture and increased specialization with damage to public health and the environment.

**1964** - Food Stamp Program established, converted to SNAP in 2008.

**1970s+** - Organic movement grew but still today receives little funding.

**1984+** - Conservation programs authorized but without adequate annual appropriations.

**2000s** - Introduction of tax credits for ethanol production from corn exceeds \$6B/year.

**2020+** Momentum, driven by climate change concerns and human health, is building to transition to climate smart/regenerative agriculture and other needed changes to the Farm Bill.

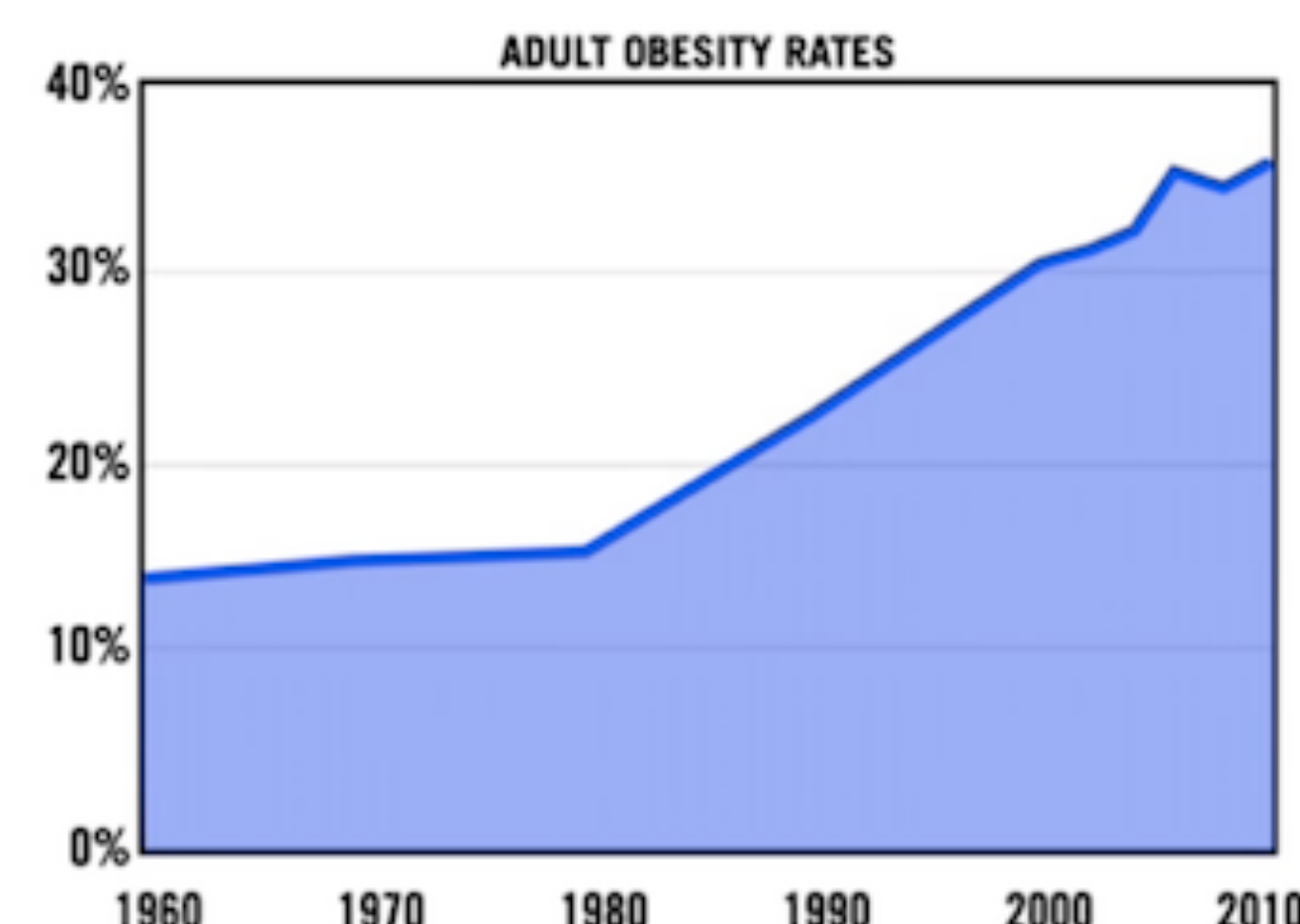
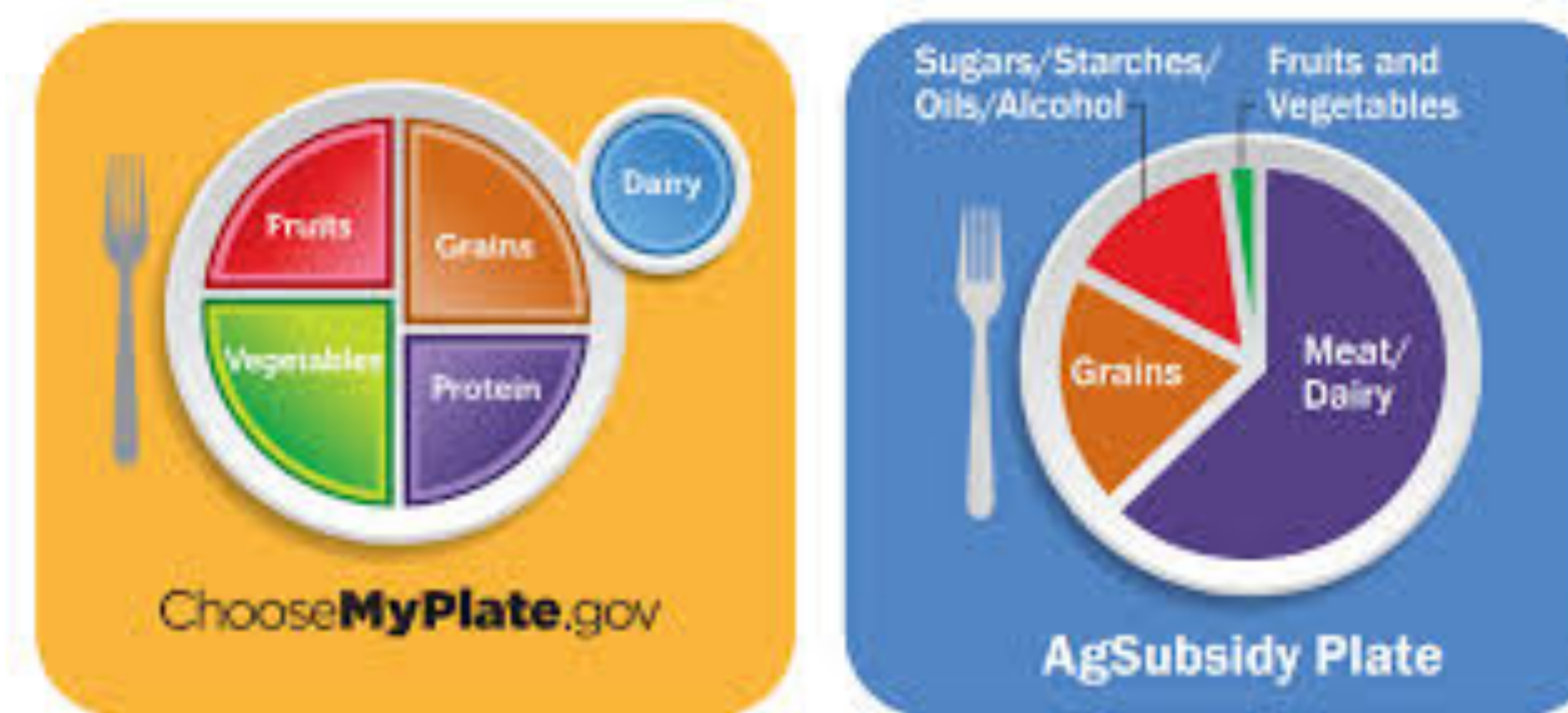
### Concerns

Conventional agriculture practices continue to cause massive loss of topsoil, water and air pollution, land degradation, decrease in carbon sequestration, green house gas emissions, and flooding. USDA provides insufficient funding on technical support for transitioning to climate-smart agriculture and conservation. *Two-thirds of requests from farmers for assistance are denied.* Conversion of grasslands/forests/marshlands to mono-crop production continues.



Meat and poultry production in CAFOs is energy intensive, produces massive amounts of manure/waste, creates air and water pollution, including methane emissions, over-uses antibiotics and hormones, relies on corn/soy monoculture production for feed, are breeding grounds for zoonotic disease, and engages in inhumane treatment of animals.

The US government agricultural subsidies do not support the healthy diet recommended by the USDA. "Specialty crops" of fruits and vegetables (as opposed to commodity crops: corn, wheat, soy, cotton, & rice) receive only 1% of federal financial support.

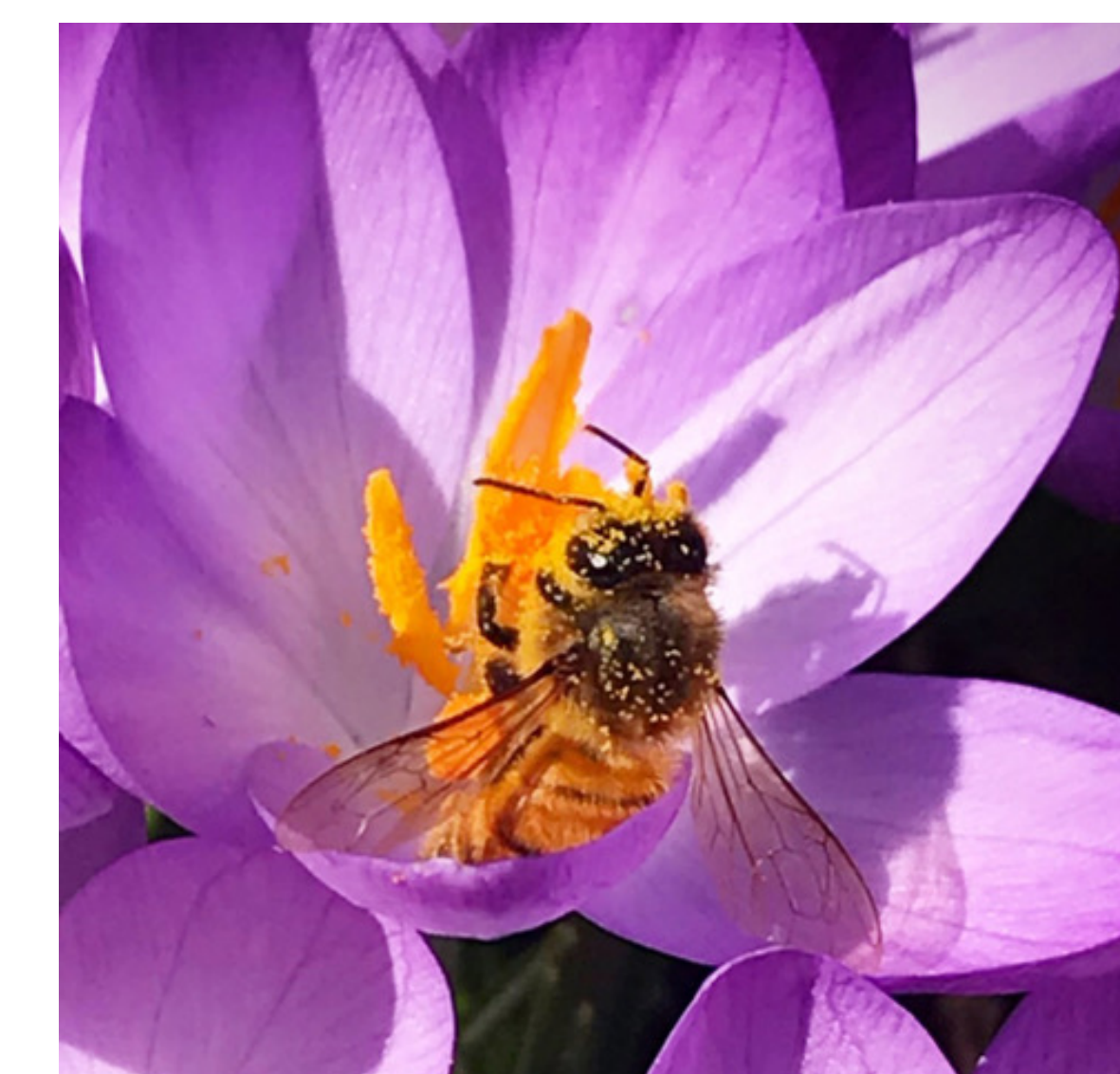


Nutrition: **fed but not nourished**. Heart disease, diabetes and cancer are all linked to carrying increased extra pounds. Cheap commodity sweeteners and oils are one factor in the rise of obesity, health problems, and healthcare costs in the US.

### Possible Solutions

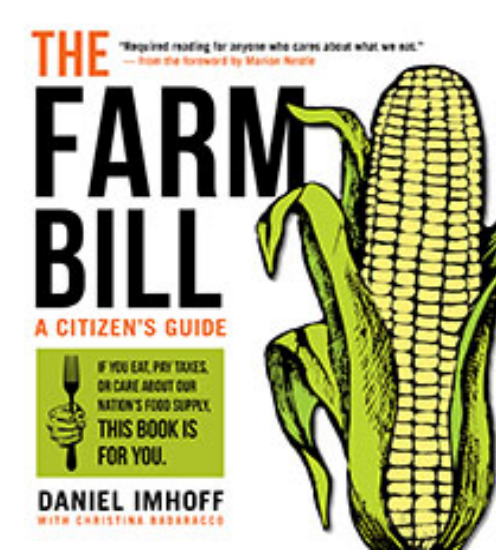
- Link financial subsidies/insurance to implementation of climate smart/regenerative farming practices.
- Expand Conservation Stewardship Program and fully fund it.
- Increase subsidies for fruit and vegetable crops, while decreasing subsidies for commodity crops, to support family farms, increase organic foods, and improve public health.
- Include Food Waste programs in Farm Bill.
- Fund Farm to School lunch programs.

### Legislation We Are Following




Agriculture Resilience Act S.1337/HR 2803  
Farm System Reform Act S. 2332/HR 4421  
Pollinator Protection Act HR 4079

### Resources



- [www.cancerprogressreport.org](http://www.cancerprogressreport.org)
- [www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill)
- [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)
- [www.epa.gov/faca/frcc](http://www.epa.gov/faca/frcc)
- [www.epa.gov/npdes/animal-feeding-operations-afos](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/animal-feeding-operations-afos)
- [www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/opinion/factory-farming-chicken.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/opinion/factory-farming-chicken.html)
- [www.epa.gov/npdes/animal-feeding-operations-afos](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/animal-feeding-operations-afos)



### How Can League Members Get Involved to Influence the Farm Bill?

- Join the Climate Interest Group, Food, Soil and Agriculture Committee: use QR code
- Learn how the Farm Bill impacts your community
- Members can ask their legislators to advocate for sustainable and equitable solutions with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees who are responsible for the 2023 Farm Bill:  
<https://agriculture.house.gov/about/members.htm>  
<https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/about/membership>

