

Family Farms

- The most important issue facing Congress on Agriculture is conversion from its present, subsidized, energy intensive large scale factory model, into a more regional and soil sustainable model. That means supporting the family farmer.
- Perhaps surprising to some, but family farmers have told me that they want to be recognized for what they do, not what they don't do. They are not comfortable with agriculture policy heavily dependent on subsidies, especially when those subsidies tend to favor the corporate farm, making it even harder for them to compete. They appreciate a free market.
- The primary goal of agricultural policies should be providing food for all people and assuring that farming is sustainable and economically feasible. We must also look at reducing poverty among farm workers and farmers, both in this country and abroad.
- We must create fair playing fields for all, especially local and family owned farms. In particular, we must place limits on the size of Federal commodities payments and subsidies, which now go disproportionately to the largest corporately owned farms.
- Smaller, family, local farms can actually be part of the solution to global warming.
- I will encourage practices that recouple the production of meat to the land. If cattle waste is put back into the soil locally, it reduces the use of chemical fertilizer on feed production, benefits the soil locally, and the cost of the disposal of that waste.
- Products grown and marketed locally are part of the solution, and that's where family farms come into play.
- Increasing participation in the niche markets for organically grown fruits and vegetables are a natural for smaller, family farms.