







## Invest in data collection, reporting, and research on farmland tenure, ownership and transition

- Authorize mandatory, recurring funding for land-access related data gathering, including the Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land survey.
- Collect nationwide data on farmland concentration, consolidation, and foreign ownership, as well as specific barriers and data for Socially Disadvantaged and Economically Distressed producers.
- Build in increased transparency for USDA data collection on land access trends, including mandatory reporting to relevant advisory bodies, such as the Equity Commission and Commission on Farm Transitions.
- Increase tracking and disclosure of foreign land investments.

### % of young farmers Diverse and BIPOC who would benefit from a USDA program that could help them.

Equitable and culturally appropriate outreach to young and BIPOC farmers, in addition to reduced application requirements and streamlined processes, would help more farmers benefit from federal programs.

Federal policy should provide support to ensure land access opportunities set farmers up for success. This includes increased technical assistance, as well as support for climate resiliency.

Current and comprehensive data is critically important to understanding the challenges farmers face related to land access and transition. We urge policymakers to ensure the data collection components of the 2018 Farm Bill are fully implemented and to continue to invest in recurring data collection, reporting, and research on farmland tenure, ownership, and transition to better understand the large-scale trends and challenges related to land access for young, BIPOC farmers and the next generation as a whole.

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## A STORY FROM THE FIELD

House Agriculture Committee Farm Bill Hearing on Credit Access  
Testimony from Julia Asherman

*On July 14th, 2022, Julia Asherman, owner and operator of Rag & Frass Farm in Georgia, testified at a House Agriculture Committee farm bill hearing on credit access. Julia spoke to the challenges many beginning farmers face when trying to access credit through the USDA and FSA, such as lengthy application processes and student loan debt. Below are excerpts from Julia's written testimony. Julia's full testimony is available online through the House Agriculture Committee website at [agriculture.house.gov](https://agriculture.house.gov).*

My name is Julia Asherman and I am the owner and operator of Rag & Frass Farm, which I started in late 2012. I farm three acres of certified organic vegetables and specialty cut flowers in rural central GA. I employ five people, three full time and two part time, year round. We grow and sell 12 months a year, and I do this with no off-farm income. Until this year, when I had a baby, I worked seven days a week. Now I work six days a week. Farming is mentally and physically challenging but I am pleased that I found my calling, and hope my testimony is helpful to your policy decisions and to other farmers...

I stuck with the paperwork, the county loan officers, and did my homework enough that I could make it work, and sufficiently negotiate the deal with both the seller and lender. However, most farmers are busy and use their time strategically. Any program that requires significant frustrating paperwork and a lot of effort, for what is essentially a gamble, is not really geared toward being accessible to most farmers, most of the year...Having the right documents and records at your fingertips during the right time of year is a must, to make everything come together. Even then, a lot depends on the loan agent's understanding of the type of operation you run. Beginning farmers often do things differently from the farmers my loan officers are used to working with: we are more likely to be organic or sustainable; we are more likely to be diversified; we are more likely to be smaller scale (with more focus on specialty crops); we are more likely to be direct market; we are more likely to be women, queer, people of color; and we are more likely to be first generation.

Luckily, I was able to successfully navigate the timeline. I was able to secure a lease in addition to a sales contract, and this was because the seller was motivated to sell. The property was on the market for a while, it was not in a desirable or populated area, and the condition of the buildings was poor. I was the only person interested in it, and that was great for me and the seller. If I had been trying to buy a property in better condition, in a different area or facing any type of development pressure, it would be unlikely that the seller would wait for me and my FSA process, which took months. The current process is slow, with many steps going back and forth, and no pre-approval. Farmers easily lose out on potential properties by not being able to act fast. I have known several farmers who have not been able to use FSA loans to purchase for this reason...