

National Law School Farm Bill Research Consortium

The National Law School Farm Bill Research Consortium unites leading food, agriculture, and environmental programs spanning seven law schools and the Food Law Student Network. The mission of the Consortium is to leverage and expand the expertise of Consortium partners by learning together and conducting coordinated research on various facets of the farm bill, identifying and proposing policy changes to improve future farm bills, and building a shared platform to engage in public debate around federal food and agriculture policy. In addition, the project provides law students throughout the country with research opportunities through the Food Law Student Network.

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

- ◆ Harvard Law School, Food Law and Policy Clinic
- ◆ Harvard Law School, Environmental Policy Initiative and Emmett Environmental Law Clinic
- ◆ Harvard Law School, Health Law and Policy Clinic
- ◆ Drake Law School Agricultural Law Center
- ◆ UCLA Law School, Resnick Program for Food Law and Policy
- ◆ Vermont Law School, Center for Agriculture and Food Systems
- ◆ Yale Law School, Environmental Protection Clinic
- ◆ Duke Law School, Environmental Law & Policy Clinic
- ◆ Pace University Elizabeth Haub School of Law, Food Law Initiative

BACKGROUND

Every five to seven years Congress passes omnibus legislation known as the “farm bill” authorizing a broad array of programs and services that shape virtually every aspect of the American food and agricultural systems. The farm bill grew out of Depression-era agricultural policies, and though it is regularly updated, critics contend that contemporary farm bills fail 1) to provide adequate affordable and healthy food, 2) to sufficiently protect our environment, and 3) to meet the needs of low-income and minority communities. Substantively engaging with the farm bill—and identifying viable steps toward reform—is difficult because the legislation is long, complex, and highly specialized. For this reason, the Consortium brings together a variety of academic and clinical programs with expertise in food, agriculture, nutrition and the environment to provide research and recommendations that cut across traditional boundaries in order to promote the ideas proposed by expert organizations as well as seek novel solutions.

PROJECT GOALS

- ◆ **Publish** a joint policy report with the Consortium’s key findings and proposals for future farm bills.
- ◆ **Publish** ancillary research in the form of journal articles, reports, op-eds, and other mediums.
- ◆ **Engage** students across the country through the Food Law Student Network in order to provide hands-on learning experiences to train the next generation of food lawyers.
- ◆ **Build** collegiality and strength in the food law academic community by forging an unprecedented base of support and thought leadership on the farm bill within this community.
- ◆ **Amplify** each partner’s knowledge of the key issues in the farm bill and ability to influence policy and public debate around the farm bill.

TIMELINE

Fall 2016: Consortium partners conduct background research and draft memos including policy solutions for plenary consideration for inclusion in joint report.

Spring 2017: Drafting by Consortium of report chapters, consensus policy recommendations.

Fall 2017: Publication and launch of joint report; hosting of national convening to share findings; publication of ancillary materials by Consortium partners.

