

# FACT SHEETS

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# Addressing Climate Change Through Animal Agriculture

**Raising animals for food sustainably, as well as growing all of our food sustainably, will create an agricultural system that is regenerative and a partner in combating climate change.**

By Harry Rhodes, Executive Director

At FACT we believe that we must transform how we produce food in order to address the climate crisis. This means shifting away from the energy-intensive and harmful industrial system of raising animals. It requires holding all polluters accountable, including factory farms. Finally, it must address the centuries of racial injustice that have created the current system of farming.

Changing weather patterns are impacting all of us. Farmers are facing many challenges when dealing with volatile weather. Overall, extreme temperatures can be hard on the animals that live outdoors, and on the farmers and farm workers who work hard to keep their animals safe and healthy. Extreme storms, wildfires, and drought are all making it more difficult to be a farmer or rancher. Yet, farmers and ranchers are finding ways to be resilient.

Many of the methods adopted by farmers and ranchers can help improve the environment and combat climate change by creating healthy ecosystems that include animals raised for food. They can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce pollution, and create healthy soils. Regenerative approaches to farming can return carbon to the earth and return lands to permanent cover instead of tilled fields. Regenerative approaches to raising animals are healthier for animals and reduce the need for antibiotics, which is driving the public health crisis of antibiotic resistance.

**Solutions to climate change must be rooted in justice so that all communities can thrive and none are sacrificed.**

Many key solutions to climate change in agriculture, such as agroforestry and regionally appropriate highly managed pasture, come from Indigenous communities that have created systems to produce food and manage resources that maintain their productivity for centuries. This stands in contrast to the conventional agriculture system that is helping drive the world toward a climate crisis. At the same time, Indigenous communities have been stripped of their land and resources and Indigenous agricultural knowledge has been actively suppressed.

Going forward, efforts to mitigate climate change should actively address this history and support Indigenous sovereignty.



## Toward a More Humane, Environmentally Friendly Agriculture

Raising animals for food sustainably, as well as growing all of our food sustainably, will create an agricultural system that is regenerative and a partner in combating climate change. This is the agricultural transformation that we envision at FACT.

You can read FACT's complete Climate Change Position Paper online at [foodanimalconcernstrust.org/s/Climate.pdf](https://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/s/Climate.pdf). This includes policy recommendations to address climate change.

## FACT's Work to Promote Climate Resilient Policies

This year, as we promote climate resilient policies, we are working with many partners for a transformative Farm Bill. We are members of some of these organizations and are working with them to include key provisions in the 2023 Farm Bill. Some of those provisions include:

- Funding the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative.
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- Creating a new grant program to support small-scale meat and poultry processing infrastructure.

We are also working with the HEAL Food Alliance to promote a more equitable Farm Bill, with the focus on legislation that:

- Secures dignity and fairness for food chain workers.
- Provides opportunities for all producers, especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) producers who have historically been denied access to many farm bill programs.
- Invests in communities, not corporations.
- Nourishes people.
- Ensures the survival of ecosystems and our planet.

Finally, as part of these efforts that focus on the Farm Bill, FACT staff and farmers participated in the Rally for Resilience in Washington DC this March. You will read more about this rally on page 4 of the FACT Sheets.

# Meet FACT's New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome Felicia Bell and A-Dae Romero-Briones to FACT's Board of Directors.

Felicia Bell has worked as a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist at the National Center for Appropriate Technology Gulf States regional office in Jackson, Mississippi since 2013. Bell, a fourth-generation farmer and founding member of RD&S Farm, LLC, is fascinated by traditional agriculture strategies of all cultures, especially African farming methods and techniques. She was born into agriculture, and what most people today would refer to as homesteading. Her family sustained themselves from the land with food and by-products.

Bell's deep-rooted values in helping others as a producer have been the driving force in her assisting communities. Over many years, she has learned several appropriate technologies (i.e., methods and practices) to assist small-scale producers with resourceful and inexpensive solutions to lessen cost burdens and increase the viability of farm enterprises. These experiences have warranted Bell rewarding opportunities through sustainable agriculture project development, Board of Directors' assignments, and contractual agreements.



Bell believes that everyone deserves the right to access healthy foods, and with the collective effort of small sustainable farmers across the country, this can become a reality.



A-dae (Kiowa/Cochiti) was born and raised in Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico and comes from the Toyekoyah/Komalty Family from Hog Creek, Oklahoma on the Kiowa side. Ms. Romero-Briones works as Vice President of Programs and Research for First Nations Development Institute and Co-founder of the California Tribal Fund. She is formerly the Director of Community Development for Pulama Lana'i. She is also the co-founder and former Executive Director of non-profit for Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico. Mrs. Romero-Briones worked for the University of Arkansas' Indigenous Food and Agricultural Initiative while she was getting her LLM in Food and Agricultural Law. She wrote extensively about Food Safety, the Produce Safety rule and tribes, and the protection of tribal traditional foods.

A U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Ms. Romero-Briones received her Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy from Princeton University, and received a Juris Doctorate from Arizona State University's College of Law, and LLM in Food and Agricultural Law from the University of Arkansas. President Obama recognized A-dae as a White House Champion of Change in Agriculture. She formerly sat on the National Organic Standards Board (2016-2021) and the Sustainable Ag and Food Systems Funders Policy Committee and former Chair of the Funders for Regenerative Agriculture. She is a member of the California Foodshed Funders group, and board member at the Isleton Museum.

A-dae joined FACT because she believes animals and their contribution to human and ecological life is critical and often negated to the needs of human populations. From the very beginning of creation, animals have guided, comforted, fed, clothed, tested, and evolved with human communities. Animals are very much part of the human story as we are part of the animal story. While animals have been historically relegated to a function of a human food supply chain, A-dae believes they are so much more. They are part of the story of sustainability/regeneration and have a unique ability to teach humankind about how to care for our environments and world.





# FACT Farmers Go To Washington

## Farmers to Congress: We Need Climate Solutions in the 2023 Farm Bill

By Samantha Gasson and Larissa McKenna,  
FACT’s Humane Farming Program team

FACT’s Humane Farming Program team had an exciting trip this March, we went to Washington, D.C. And we brought over a dozen farmers with us.

If you’re like Samantha, images of strolls around the museums and leisurely walks down the Mall underneath blooming cherry trees spring to mind. If you’re like Larissa, it’s memories of her time living in our capital city. But we went to D.C. with an entirely different trip in mind. **We went to rally, march, and advocate - and to bring farmer voices to the table as part of the Rally for Resilience.**

Some of you may be familiar with the original farmer’s march (also referred to as Tractorcade) that took place in early 1979. Back then, nearly 3,000 farmers drove their tractors for days to reach our nation’s capital to bring attention to the farm crisis and urge support for family farms.

The March 2023 rally was reminiscent of the 1979 mobilization (although this time with electric tractors!). Hundreds of farmers came together from across the country with a unified request for Congress – make

climate change policy a priority in the 2023 Farm Bill! Our key asks included:

- Farmer-Led Climate Solutions
- Racial Justice in the Farm Bill
- Communities, not Corporations

The three-day event included a rally, concert, march, press conference, and meetings with members of Congress. FACT worked hand-in-hand planning the events with many like-minded organizations, including the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Farm Aid, Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) – USA, HEAL Food Alliance, Kiss the Ground/Regenerate America, among others. It was truly a collaborative effort and generated lots of energy and momentum heading into “Farm Bill Season.”

**Hundreds of farmers came together from across the country with a united request for Congress - make climate change a priority in the 2023 Farm Bill**

One of the best parts was that we brought 13 amazing farmers from different parts of the country to D.C. They participated in 18 meetings with Congressional offices and the USDA - sharing the challenges they are facing on their operations due to climate change, and offering solutions. We urged policymakers to support grazing, local meat processing, and climate solutions in the 2023 Farm Bill.



Farmer Sharon from Fawn Crossing Farm in Virginia, one of the FACT farmers at the rally said:

“I came home physically tired but so excited, energized and empowered to continue working hard right alongside all the other small independent farmers across the country. We may not be neighbors in physical reality but we are all neighbors in our hearts and souls.”

Farmers and ranchers are awesome advocates for farm policy - and there is so much more we need to do to ensure that the next farm bill supports and invests in regenerative agriculture. If you're interested in learning more about the 2023 Farm Bill and how you can advocate for humane farmers like the ones in our network, sign up for our farmer newsletter at [foodanimalconcernstrust.org](https://foodanimalconcernstrust.org).



FACT farmers Mike Guebert (Terra Farma in Corbett, OR) and Chris Muse (Muse 3 Farm in Greensburg, LA) are among those holding the banner and leading the march (Photo credit: Farm Aid).



Scott Stirrup (Bull City Farm in Rougemont, NC), Beverly Blackwell Bowen (Blackwell's Farm in Reidsville, NC) and FACT's Samantha Gasson before their meeting with Senator Tillis' office.

“Over the course of five years, rotational grazing helped us to double the amount of organic matter in our soils.”



## All Grass Farm: Building Climate Resilient Practices

With land in Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin, All Grass Farms is all that and more: a diversified, pasture-centric operation full of plants, animals, beneficial insects and wildlife. Cliff McConville, Anna Lipinska and the rest of the farm team raise grass-fed/grass-finished beef cattle, dairy cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, sheep and organic vegetables. Cliff was also a mentor in FACT's mentorship program.

They “rotate” or move their animals frequently through the different pastures and are careful not to overgraze, allowing enough vegetation to remain, giving the land time to rest and recover. The farmers use many other regenerative conservation practices such as grazing cover crops, using non-synthetic organic methods to control pests and weeds, and enhancing wildlife habitat by planting trees and hedgerows around their property.

Their practices are making a measurable difference. Back in 2016, before they started grazing on one of their fields, they took a baseline test of their soil organic matter content. It came back at 2% organic matter. Fast forward to 2021 – after five years of rotationally grazing their cows on that field, their organic matter had doubled to 4%. They also found an abundance of earth worms and living organisms in the ground. **Well managed rotational grazing improves the soil health.**

Going forward, they plan keep doing what they're doing, adapting as needed. They are committed to always maintaining excellent ground cover (upwards of 6 to 8 inches of grass) which will retain soil moisture and protect against times of drought. In addition, they have planted tree cover for shade (and food) for their animals, and are working to reduce compaction and improve drainage in their fields.

**Through all of these intentional, climate-smart practices, Cliff and Anna are building resiliency on their operation.**



# FACT and Food Companies' Role in Safe and Healthy Food

FACT continues to pressure companies to adopt policies that protect the health of people and animals.

By Steve Roach and Madeleine Kleven,  
FACT's Safe and Healthy Food Team

When you choose to purchase meat that is humanely raised or raised without routine antibiotics, you are helping to create a market for better products – products that come from healthy animals. The same thing happens when a restaurant or grocery chain creates a policy requiring suppliers to meet certain standards. All food companies set standards for their suppliers, whether it is for food quality, freshness, or safety. FACT works with, cajoles, and pressures companies to set standards that make food safer and healthier, and from animals raised in a more humane manner.

But we cannot do this alone. We rely on a network of allied organizations to urge companies to adopt changes, and most importantly we rely on you and our supporters to help us put pressure on companies.

## Take Action

We are currently calling on Starbucks, the second largest U.S. restaurant chain, to prohibit pork suppliers from using the carcinogen, carbadox. When pigs are fed carbadox, cancer-causing residues can contaminate the meat, workers are exposed to the drug, and it also gets into streams and rivers when pig manure washes off of fields. Carbadox is used in giant pig facilities to make pigs grow faster and to manage the diarrhea that occurs when baby pigs are taken away from their moms before they are ready for solid food and placed in crowded dirty pens. Carbadox is terrible for consumers, workers, pigs, and the environment.

**FACT works with, cajoles, and pressures companies to set standards that make food safer and healthier, and from animals raised in a more humane manner.**

We would love to have your help with our carbadox campaign. You can email Starbucks using our Action Alert system on our website at [foodanimalconcernstrust.org/take-action](http://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/take-action). You can also send a letter to the Starbucks CEO at:  
**CEO Laxman Narasimhan, Starbucks Corporation, 2401 Utah Ave. South, Suite 800, Seattle, WA 98134**  
or call **800-782-7282**. It would be wonderful if you would share our action alert on social media. If you contact the company, the message should be the same:



## NO MORE GROCERY GAMES

Overuse of antibiotics in farming is creating deadly superbugs.

*"Starbucks don't poison your customers, prohibit the use of the carcinogen carbadox by your pork suppliers."*

We have repeatedly contacted Starbucks to ask about carbadox use by their pork suppliers, but have not received a response. We first reached out to the top ten restaurant chains that serve pork. Only

Chipotle and Panera let us know they prohibit the use of carbadox by their pork suppliers. We met with McDonald's but they did not commit to do anything about this dangerous feed additive. Since at least half of the pigs in the U.S. are fed carbadox, if a company that serves pork does not prohibit

its use it is likely they are serving some pork with dangerous carbadox residues. Starbucks promotes itself as a health-conscious company but using carbadox to produce food is the opposite of healthy.

## Other Corporate Campaigns

FACT continues to work to get companies to reduce the amount of antibiotics used to produce meat because antibiotic overuse creates difficult to treat superbugs and helps giant meat companies raise animals in incredibly unhealthy conditions. For over 20 years, FACT has worked with food companies to set policies reducing antibiotic overuse. Our work in the early 2000s, helped get McDonald's, the world's largest restaurant chain, to prohibit using medically important antibiotics to make chickens grow faster.



This early work with McDonald's and other fast food chains helped get the big chicken producers Tyson Foods and Perdue to begin raising chicken without antibiotics.

Then in 2015, FACT along with several allied organization released the first *Chain Reaction* report and scorecard which ranked restaurant chains on their policies for antibiotic use by their meat suppliers. We combined the reports with active campaigns, worked with investor organizations, and did outreach to companies. **Now, after six *Chain Reaction* reports, most chicken raised in the U.S. is raised without medically important antibiotics.**

Last year, we released the first *Superbugs in Stock* report which ranked the twelve largest grocery chains on their antibiotics policies. Grocery chains are huge meat buyers and sellers in the U.S. and their policies have a significant impact on the market. These efforts are ongoing. Despite our success with chicken, antibiotic overuse is still rampant in pork and beef production. In each case it is tied to unhealthy conditions on the huge livestock raising facilities where most animals live. We have also worked with the giant turkey and pork producer, Hormel to get them to be more transparent about how much antibiotics they use.



*Steve Roach campaigning outside McDonald's.*

### **Greenwashing**

One challenge is 'greenwashing' – when a company claims to be taking action to get customer support but is not doing what they claim. For example, in 2018 through a lot of effort, FACT and our allies got McDonald's to commit to setting antibiotic use reduction targets in their beef supply by 2020. The company missed their 2020 deadline, and did not come out with replacement antibiotic use targets until last December. The only problem is that the targets, as far as we can tell, are actually higher than what is normal for U.S. beef producers. If this is correct, the targets will do nothing to reduce antibiotic overuse. We have asked the company to meet with us to explain how they set their targets but so far they have not responded. You can read more in our recent blog post at

[foodanimalconcernstrust.org/blog/mcdonalds](https://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/blog/mcdonalds).

Despite corporate action or inaction, FACT will continue to pressure companies to adopt policies that protect the health of people and animals.

# Thank you.

FACT would like to honor those who continued their commitment to our cause over the past year through generous legacy, honorary, and memorial gifts. We honor these donors daily as FACT works toward our vision that all food-producing animals will be raised in a healthy and humane manner and everyone will have access to safe and humanely-produced food.

Without the loyal and generous support of our donors, both past and present, FACT would not be able to achieve the work that we do promoting humane farming and safe and healthy food. Thank you. We are grateful for the support that we receive, and thank each of you for the impact that your generosity allows us to make.

### **Planned Giving and Bequests**

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# Platinum Transparency 2023

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FACT is pleased to share that we have the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid (formerly GuideStar), a nationally recognized charity watchdog. You can rest assured that FACT maintains a high level of accountability and transparency.

#### Contact Us

773-525-4952

[www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org](http://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org)

[info@foodanimalconcerns.org](mailto:info@foodanimalconcerns.org)

## FACT Board Members

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*Double JB Farm in Tennessee*