



## Climate Change

### Farmers Leading the Way on Climate Change Mitigation

The effects of climate change are becoming clear across rural America. Rising average temperatures, shifting precipitation patterns, changing growing seasons, increasingly frequent and severe weather events, and rising sea levels are making it more difficult to grow food, fuel, and fiber. These difficulties will only intensify over time.

However, farmers and ranchers hold immense power to address this crisis—as many already are. They have implemented conservation practices that build soil health, which make the land more resilient to extreme weather and help to sequester carbon. They are also adopting climate-smart practices that reduce consumption of fossil fuels and inputs.

Unfortunately, these practices have not yet reached widespread adoption. Only about 20% of farms in Wisconsin are using no-till and cover cropping practices.<sup>1</sup> For some farmers, several barriers can prevent adoption of conservation practices; for example, access to information about specialized equipment such as no-till planters or decision-making support for farmers undergoing a transition to conservation practices.<sup>2</sup>

Wisconsin Farmers Union is actively working to educate farmers and other landowners about the benefits of managing the land for soil health. We also are advocating for the potential of farmer-led watersheds to improve water quality in the state.

*In November 2018, the Trump administration released the Fourth National Climate Assessment, projecting devastating outcomes for farmers if no action is taken to prevent temperature increases.*

**The assessment found that:**

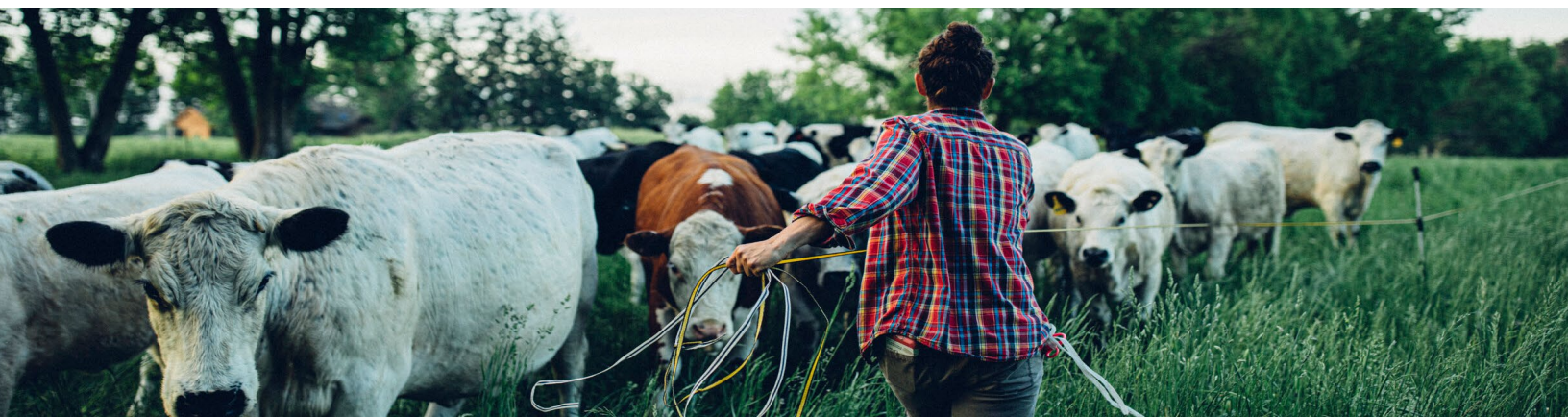
- **Heavy precipitation events will occur two to five times more frequently.**
- **Higher temperatures will reduce yields and stress livestock and poultry.**
- **Soil moisture will decrease significantly across the southern Great Plains and the Southwest.**
- **Weeds, diseases and pests will become more prevalent, and some pesticides and herbicides will lose their efficacy.**

*While innovation in American agriculture has driven productivity increases, inaction on climate change will lead to a productivity decline of 25 percent for Midwest farmers by 2050, according to the assessment.*

**“Climate change is the single greatest long-term challenge facing family farmers and ranchers, rural communities, and global food security.”**

**- National Farmers Union President Rob Larew, July 24, 2020**

1. <https://www.wpr.org/new-farming-techniques-may-save-wisconsin-soil-climate-change>  
2. <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/FNR/fnr-488-w.pdf>



## Climate Change


***The time to act is now. We can be the solution.***

### **Wisconsin Farmers Union supports:**

- Research, cost share, and other voluntary incentives to help family farmers adopt practices and infrastructure that mitigate climate change and sequester carbon without placing additional regulatory burdens on farmers
- Efforts to ensure that regenerative agriculture policies increase market opportunities for family farmers.
- USDA Climate Hubs coordinating climate information, agronomic and risk management support, and programs that enhance marketing options to allow family farmers to effectively utilize opportunities to enhance profits while mitigating climate change.
- Energy efficiency, renewable energy production such as solar energy, wind energy, and biofuels, as well as further development of the bioeconomy on family farms and in rural communities.
- Research on farm-based energy, including small-scale anaerobic digesters, biofuels, and energy crops for biomass and biofuels.
- Research to make anaerobic digesters a profitable venture for smaller livestock operations, as well as funding and development assistance for community digesters.
- Cooperation and collaboration among family farmers to build and expand market infrastructure that will allow consumers to choose agricultural products that create climate benefits.
- New opportunities for family farmers to articulate their climate mitigation efforts with consumers through food processors and retailers
- Protecting family farmland from carbon-intensive suburban sprawl development
- Protecting competition in the markets that family farmers buy from and sell into, allowing for more prescriptive demands of excessively consolidated markets.

### **We need our legislators and policymakers to:**

- Include actual farmers of all scales in the climate policymaking process.
- Support incentives that help farmers transition to climate-smart practices that enhance the soil's capacity to sequester excess carbon from the atmosphere and retain rainfall.
- Help our institutions and agribusinesses research, develop, and implement regenerative practices.
- Endorse and grow statewide efforts to address climate change in addition to nationwide efforts.



***"Farmers have the power to make a real impact in the fight against climate change, but we need to be equipped with the tools to create change and a voice in climate change policy."***

- Rachel Bouressa, Central WI Farmer

info@wisconsinfarmersunion.com • www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com  
State Office: 117 West Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 • 715-723-5561  
Madison Office: 108 S. Webster St., Ste. 201, Madison, WI 53703 • 608-514-4541

[f/wifarmersunion](https://www.facebook.com/wifarmersunion) [/wifarmersunion](https://twitter.com/wifarmersunion)

[/wifarmersunion](https://www.instagram.com/wifarmersunion) [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/blog](https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/blog)

- Support programs and policies in the next