

KUCINICH 2008

Farm Policy

Something is wrong when profits of agribusiness corporations skyrocket, but farmers must find off-farm jobs or sell their farms to survive. A Kucinich Administration will implement the following farm policies to benefit farmers, provide our nation with wholesome food, protect our natural resources, and restore our rural communities:

Fair Price and Fair Markets. The first act of a Kucinich Administration will be to cancel NAFTA and the WTO, replacing them with bilateral trade agreements designed to benefit family farmers and workers while protecting the health of communities and the environment. Country-of-origin labeling will be required. A Kucinich Administration will empower farmers in the marketplace by providing incentives to join a collective bargaining unit—with voluntary membership open only to active producers and the right to bring suit in federal court if an agribusiness doesn't bargain in good faith.

Market Concentration. A Kucinich Administration will create new markets by actively enforcing existing anti-trust laws and proposing new laws to force divestiture in concentrated markets, breaking apart monopolistic agribusiness companies and shifting farm economics towards higher commodity prices for farmers. To increase competition in the livestock industry, a Kucinich Administration will support a national ban on packer ownership of livestock.

Biotechnology and GM Seeds. A Kucinich Administration will advocate only for responsible farm sector biotechnology, creating an indemnity fund—financed by the corporations responsible for the technology—for farmers who incur losses caused by genetically modified organisms (GMOs). To protect farmers, labeling GM seeds with disclosure and liability information will be required. To protect consumers, food containing GMOs will also require labeling.

Local Food Systems. A Kucinich Administration will shift USDA funding and focus away from the promotion of concentrated intensive and industrial agribusiness. The new focus will benefit family farmers, rural communities, the environment, and consumers, with policies crafted to enable farmers to earn a fair price

and to provide safe, nutritious food to all people. A Kucinich Administration will increase funding for regional food processing facilities, marketing assistance, farm-to-school programs, on-farm renewable energy, and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Agricultural research and development institutions will be given funding priority to help family farmers make a transition to profitable and sustainable agriculture.

Conservation and Environmental Protection. A Kucinich Administration will strengthen and enforce air and water quality laws to safeguard rural communities from factory farm pollution. The number of animal units per site will be limited to a level that allows for on-site manure management, and local communities will be given control over the siting of industrial livestock operations. Programs that reward family farmers for protecting the environment will be expanded, and funding to help small independent farmers qualify for organic certification will be increased.

Food Industry Workers and Food Safety. A Kucinich Administration will implement new safety standards in meatpacking and food processing. Worker health and safety protections will be expanded through increased inspections and fines, with criminal charges for employers who cause injury or death to agricultural industry workers. Backing meatpacking unions will help to bring wages and benefits in line with the risks of the job, and funding for smaller, *regional* packing plants will create better economic opportunities for family farmers, better conditions for workers, and safer meat for consumers.

Rural Communities. A Kucinich Administration will initiate a major new program of investment in rural America, putting thousands to work rebuilding invaluable public assets such as schools, hospitals, libraries, swimming pools, and parks. Teachers, doctors, veterinarians, and other important service providers will be offered incentives to work in under-served areas. A variety of support mechanisms and financial incentives will be given to local businesses so that locally owned businesses have a fair chance to compete.