



National Family Farm Coalition

110 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 307 • Washington, DC 20002 • (202) 543-5675 • Fax (202) 543 0978 • nffc@nffc.net • www.nffc.net

Contact: Katherine Ozer (202) 543-5675 Cell: (202) 421-4544
George Naylor (515) 370-3710

FAMILY FARMERS CRITICIZE NEW SUBSIDY DATABASE THAT SHIELDS REAL BENEFICIARIES OF CURRENT FARM POLICY

Farmer Group Demands Real Subsidy Reform that Gives Farmers a Fair Price

Washington DC (June 13, 2007) – The National Family Farm Coalition believes the new database released yesterday by the Environmental Working Group misses the mark in its critique and analysis of the current broken farm subsidy system. We agree that current farm and food policy is derailing our food system with the continuous loss of diversified family farms, but EWG’s database showing wealthy farmers as the main beneficiaries of our farm policy overlooks the real winners of the subsidy system: food processors, multinational grain traders, and industrial livestock operations.

EWG fails to acknowledge why subsidies are necessary in the first place: to address perpetually low commodity prices below the cost of production. George Naylor, president of NFFC and a corn and soybean farmer from Iowa, said, “Large subsidy payments reflect a system that encourages production to achieve cheap commodity prices which benefits the buyers of these commodities. That is what needs to change. Corporate agribusiness interests vs family farmers seems not to matter to EWG. EWG tries to make farm programs fit a description of welfare programs, even if it’s Tyson and Cargill who are the real welfare cases.”

Research by Tufts University has shown that from 1997 to 2005, the four largest broiler chicken companies paid \$5 billion less than the cost of production for their feed. The four largest hog companies (producing 50% of U.S. hogs) paid \$3 billion less than the cost of production for their feed. These industrial operations are also some of the most egregious environmental polluters, yet EWG, as an environmental organization, fails to recognize them as the true beneficiaries of our subsidy policies.

Bill Christison, a soybean and livestock farmer from Missouri, said, “Farmers don’t want taxpayer subsidies. We want a fair price from the marketplace. We need fair prices and price stability. What we don’t need are these Farmers Risk Management Accounts or privatized revenue insurance that do nothing to address the underlying failures of the current system.”

NFFC’s Food from Family Farms Act advocates replacing the current ineffective subsidy programs with a floor price for commodities in conjunction with emergency food, crop, acreage, and strategic energy reserves. We need a farm bill that actually supports family farmers, not one that dismantles our current system without addressing the systemic causes of who benefits from our current farm and food policies.

###

The National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), founded in 1986, provides a voice for grassroots groups on farm, food, trade and rural economic issues to ensure fair prices for family farmers, safe and healthy food, and vibrant, environmentally sound rural communities here and around the world. NFFC represents family farm and rural groups in 30 states whose members' face the challenge of the deepening economic recession in rural communities caused primarily by low farm prices and the increasing corporate control of agriculture. For further information about the organization, call 1-800-639-3276 or visit www.nffc.net.