FOOD, WATER, AND POLICY IN MISSOURI

Supporting clean water through local food and conservation agriculture

WHERE WE ARE

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

Missouri is an agricultural state. Most of the land we see along the highways are growing conventional corn and soybeans - commodity crops. These crops are often produced using intensive chemical inputs and are used to feed animals in large production facilities.

WHERE WE CAN GO

SMALL-SCALE SUSTAINABILITY

Less seen are the many smaller scale farmers growing fruits, vegetables, grains, and pasture-raised livestock with good stewardship of our land and water resources. Water is a crucial component of a robust food system and deserves proper attention and resources. Independent, often small and mid-sized farms, frequently try alternative ways of growing food with more sustainable practices. Sustainable growing methods protect our natural resources we all depend on and support healthy environments.

THE IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE

Large, industrialized row crop agriculture uses significant amounts of chemical inputs, while concentrated animal production operations produce massive amounts of waste that degrade our soils. These chemical inputs together with animal waste also runoff into our waterways, harming our state’s water quality.
Consumers in urban communities want to support small-scale, family farms, both urban and rural. This is evident from the increase in demand for local food in restaurants, grocery stores, schools, etc. Supporting these farmers ensures jobs in both rural and urban communities and provides consumers with the environmentally-responsible, local food they're demanding.

**PRECIPITATION AND DROUGHT IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT**

Increased precipitation - both overall and in the frequency of extreme events - are more common, affecting Missouri agriculture and communities, as we've already seen with the recent flooding in 2015 and 2017. Current and projected increases in annual precipitation across the state are substantial. Concentrated seasonal rainfall is expected in the spring and fall months, while the length of consecutive dry days will increase greatly over the summer.

Changes in precipitation patterns place additional stress on water supply systems, wastewater, stormwater management and flood control efforts. We need focused resiliency efforts on water systems.

**SMALL-SCALE AND PASTURE-RAISED FARMS**

Nearly half of our country's land is privately-owned crop, pasture, and rangeland, where agricultural production and natural resources like rivers and lakes intermingle. As stewards of the land, farmers and ranchers play a vital role in preserving our natural resources. Water, land and farming conservation practices, such as cover crops, integrating native plants in crop fields, and protecting pollinators are beneficial for the farmers and all Americans.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

We need your help supporting small-scale farms, making it possible for more people to grow and raise nutritious, local food for Missourians in urban and rural communities. We need to ensure that the natural resources essential to growing our own food are sustained for the future.

We need to support agriculture policies that anticipate and plan for changing precipitation patterns.

We need to support legislation that limits the expansion of industrialized agriculture in our state to ensure that we have the resources needed to support a healthy food system and protect air and water for generations to come.

**CONTACT**

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