



## THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA POSITION PAPER

*The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulation of responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results.*

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### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, SEED DIVERSITY, AND FOOD SECURITY

Federal agricultural policy affects the safety and security of our nation's food supply both now and far into the future. As more than 40 percent of land in the U.S is farmed, agricultural policy has a significant impact on many issues of concern to The Garden Club of America: climate change, water quality, air quality, native plants, invasive species, and energy use.

The Garden Club of America supports federal, state, and local legislation and policy that addresses the following:

#### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Restoring degraded soil and conservation of healthy soil on farms and ranches by encouraging placing conservation easements on marginal lands, practicing no tillage, planting cover crops or perennial forage, rotating crops and employing intensive rotational grazing, reducing use of fertilizer and pesticides that kill soil microorganisms, helping to mitigate climate change, and reducing runoff because of soil's sponge-like capacity to absorb water and to sequester carbon.
- Ensuring a strong and well-funded conservation title in the Farm Bill, which represents the largest source of federal funding for conservation on private lands in our country.

#### SEED DIVERSITY, HEALTHY FOOD, FOOD SAFETY, AND FOOD SECURITY

- Protecting worldwide seed diversity and further study of genetically modified organisms (GMO) crops to determine safety.
- Supporting programs for increased production of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables (referred to as "specialty crops" in the farm bill), and continued advocacy for organically and locally grown food and farm-to-school initiatives.
- Recognizing the importance of pollinators and encouraging them by increasing and preserving natural habitat and supporting efforts to work with pesticide manufacturers, agricultural interests, and beekeepers to determine best management practices for pollinator health.
- Discouraging the overuse of hormones and antibiotics in livestock.
- Supporting the regulatory authority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to achieve these ends.

#### LARGER ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS THAT PROMOTE FOOD SAFETY AND SEED DIVERSITY

- Protecting clean water by using riparian areas to prevent nitrate runoff and loss of topsoil, and encourage efficient irrigation practices.
- Preserving clean air and water by minimizing use of fossil fuels for cultivation, harvesting and transportation.
- Supporting policies that aid climate change adaptation, including establishment of seed banks, and wildlife corridors.
- Protecting native plant species with programs to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to eradicate existing ones.
- Encouraging protection of wildlife habitat and native ecosystems, including wetlands, grasslands, hedgerows, forests, and riparian systems. Support conservation easements, and tax incentives for this purpose.

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*The purpose of The Garden Club of America is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence and publications, and to restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.*