

April 21, 2021

CONTACT

Philippa Martinez-Berrier

pmb@frontwoodstrategies.com



CLIMATE, FOOD
+ AG DIALOGUE

CFAD Calls on USDA to Develop “Climate Bank”

Recommendations outline need for research to support producer and forester action

Washington, DC — Today, the [AGree Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue](#) (CFAD) — a diverse and bipartisan group of producers, food and agriculture companies, and civil society organizations — submitted two sets of recommendations to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). CFAD members believe that U.S. working lands are critical to the success of mitigating climate change; in the [first submission](#), CFAD calls on USDA to strengthen its support of research and science for climate-smart agriculture. In [the second](#), CFAD outlines guiding principles to inform the creation of a USDA National “Climate Bank” (“i.e., all climate contributions, not just carbon sequestration). USDA support for land management innovation will enable the agriculture, food, and forestry sectors to deploy the technical assistance, infrastructure, and market-based solutions needed to meet the challenges of climate change.

“Meeting the challenges of climate change requires a robust, multi-pronged set of solutions, and they must be backed by federal policies that prioritize producers’ livelihoods and the role of U.S. working lands,” said Heather Lair, Partner at Meridian Institute who leads CFAD. “USDA has an opportunity and responsibility to invest in climate-smart agriculture that will chart a path that allows agriculture to thrive while making serious progress on the challenges of climate change.”

Research is critical to climate mitigation and adaptation; USDA and the U.S. government have research assets that must be coordinated and leveraged to build the science and business cases for management change. CFAD recommends that USDA:

- **Immediately create a “Climate Research Coordinator”** position to develop a coherent climate research strategy across all USDA agencies, coordinate climate research with other federal agencies, and engage with external research stakeholders.
- **Build the business case for climate-smart agricultural practices** (i.e., conduct pre-competitive analysis and modeling that demonstrates the economic value associated with climate-smart agriculture practices).

- Develop and pilot tools for farmers and university researchers to **access USDA datasets in a way that respects farmer data privacy and autonomy.**
- **Ensure that diverse farmers, ranchers, and farming systems can participate** in federal conservation programs and adopt climate-smart agricultural practices.
- **Improve the rigor and transparency of climate models and measurements** to support the efforts of the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory and private ecosystem service markets.

While increasing research and science efforts to drive conservation practices, USDA can simultaneously develop financial mechanisms to support a suite of policy tools that would enable a large-scale transformation across the diverse U.S. agricultural landscape to promote climate resilience. A “Climate Bank” would finance, incentivize, and account for the climate-related contributions of U.S. agriculture and forestry, including from livestock management (e.g., grazing, enteric fermentation, and manure management). A Climate Bank, in partnership with farmers, ranchers, and foresters and the private sector, will accelerate adoption of climate-smart practices on working lands, helping to reduce U.S. emissions and in some cases delivering important co-benefits, like water quality and quantity, habitat, etc., while supporting producers. This Climate Bank should:

- **Include all greenhouse gases** (GHG) and food-, agriculture-, and forestry-related strategies, not just those related to carbon sequestration.
- **Leverage private investment** to spur the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices.
- **Provide funding to producers to develop GHG credits that can co-finance climate outcomes** with the support of private sector developers, recognizing and leveraging existing third-party standards.

Science continues to demonstrate the need for land sector solutions to prevent global warming; a 2020 report by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) shows that the land sector is critical in order to prevent more than a 1.5 C degree warming of the planet over pre- industrial levels. 9.3% of U.S. GHG emissions come from agricultural production and studies continue to show that the U.S. land sector has the potential to be a significant source of carbon dioxide sequestration and GHG reductions.

Read the full recommendations [HERE](#).

###

About CFAD: AGree’s [Climate, Food, and Agriculture Dialogue](#) includes farmers, ranchers, and foresters; environmental NGOs; food and agriculture companies; and former government officials. Members share a common view that climate change demands ambitious and durable federal policy solutions that are commensurate with the urgency and scale of the problem. CFAD sees the U.S. food, agriculture, and forestry sectors as a crucial source of solutions to climate change.