



National Family Farm Coalition Supports Maine Right to Food Amendment

If passed, the amendment will support farmers and strengthen local food systems

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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9/28/21 -- National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), representing 30 farmer, rancher, fisher, and rural groups in over 40 states, supports passage of an amendment to Maine's constitution to guarantee the right to food for all state residents. The amendment will appear as Question 3 on the state ballot on November 2, 2021. Food for Maine's Future, one of the local backers of the amendment, is a longtime NFFC member.

NFFC board president Jim Goodman, a retired Wisconsin dairy farmer, said, "It's a simple and straightforward choice. The people of Maine can affirm that they have the unalienable right to the food of their choosing, produced in a manner that builds resilient local food systems and economically vibrant communities. Alternatively, if ballot question 3 fails, Mainers surrender their right of self-determination to a corporate food system concerned only with profits and not with the well-being of the people of Maine."

As detailed in a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture [report on food insecurity](#) in the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, hunger does not touch all communities equally. Hispanic and Black Americans were two to three times more likely than white Americans to be food insecure in the pandemic. Addressing hunger and food insecurity from a "right to food" perspective would shift public and private structures and resources to help all communities access the food they need, with particular focus on those most in need. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which regulates 80% of the nation's food, has taken the position that people "have no fundamental right to obtain and consume the food they wish and therefore have no fundamental right to their own bodily and physical health."

Food for Maine's Future President Betsy Garrold, a Knox homesteader, said, "Relocalizing our food system and building our communities is the greatest insurance policy we can have against disruptions of every kind, whether economic, political, environmental -- or a global pandemic. Resilience is built into the DNA of the people of Maine. This amendment will allow us to manifest that resilience by taking back local control of our food system."

On the ballot, Question 3 will read:

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce

and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being?

If passed, the Maine State Constitution will be amended to read:

Right to food. All individuals have a natural, inherent and inalienable right to food, including the right to save and exchange seeds, and the right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being, as long as an individual does not commit trespassing, theft, poaching or other abuses of private property rights, public lands or natural resources in the harvesting, production or acquisition of food.

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National Family Farm Coalition mobilizes family farmers and ranchers to achieve fair prices, vibrant communities, and healthy foods free of corporate domination.