

Equity

Building a Healthy, Equitable, and Sustainable Food System via the Farm Bill

To end hunger and malnutrition everywhere requires tackling their root causes. Unfortunately, one of these root causes, and the reason some people are far more likely to suffer from hunger or malnutrition than others, is simply that all over the world, inequities prevent much of humanity from reaching full potential. This is borne out in large disparities in hunger rates based on gender, race, class, and other categories that reflect people's status in their societies.

Food and nutrition security requires an **aggressive action against the inequities that perpetuate these disparities.** Countries with the highest child malnutrition rates remain the furthest behind in reducing gender inequalities. A woman's ability to feed her children is directly related to how much income she is able to earn, and that is why investments in maternal and child nutrition are bound to yield reduced returns when decoupled from women's economic empowerment.

Black farmers in the United States account for **less than 2 percent** of the total number of the nation's farmers, according to the latest Census of Agriculture, and farmers of color altogether **less than 5 percent.**¹ During the twentieth century, Black farmers were stripped of land, not because they farmed poorly; they experienced crippling levels of discrimination when seeking government assistance by being denied loans for which they qualified; or when loans were approved, subjected to deliberate processing delays that made it impossible to get crops planted on time.



The loss of their farmland is seminal in the development of the racial wealth gap and which led to the staggering racial imbalance among the current generation of farmers. Policy enabled these racial disparities to become entrenched, and it will require policy no less to alter the status quo. Breaking the cycle of white supremacy in farming starts with the farm bill.



Bread for the World believes that every human being, created in the image of God, has inherent dignity and should have the opportunity to access enough nutritious food for good health. Despite the reach and impact of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's flagship nutrition program, it is highly unlikely the United States can end domestic hunger without improvements to the program.

Millions of people who are especially at-risk of hunger remain ineligible to receive SNAP. These include people with criminal records for drug offenses, legally present immigrants living in the United less than 5 years, low-income college students who do not work a minimum of 20 hours per week, and the entire population of Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories who receive an inferior version of nutrition assistance instead of SNAP. The farm bill should address these inequities.

In additions, tribal governments have consistently sought—and been denied—authority to administer SNAP on reservations. Self-governance is due out of respect for the dignity and sovereignty of Tribal communities and to ensure the program is administered in a culturally competent manner.

