



THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA

## THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA POSITION PAPER

The Garden Club of America supports independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulating responsible public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results. The Garden Club of America is a nonpartisan, issue-oriented advocate for a beautiful, healthy planet.

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### AGRICULTURE, SEED DIVERSITY, AND FOOD SECURITY

Federal and state agricultural policies affect the safety and security of our nation's food supply both now and far into the future. According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), about 52 percent of the US currently is considered to be farmland. Agricultural policy has a significant impact on many issues of concern to The Garden Club of America: soil and plant health; climate change; water quality, quantity, and use; air quality; pollinators, native plants, and invasive species; energy use and overall public health. The Garden Club of America supports federal, state, and local legislation, policy, and individual action that address the following:

#### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Rebuild degraded soil and conserve healthy soil on farms and ranches across the country through environmentally supportive farming practices such as no-till, composting, cover or perennial crops, silvopasture management, intensive grazing, agroforestry, crop rotation, and integrating livestock into crop production systems.
- Incentivize farming practices that restore and protect soil health.
- Discourage deforestation.
- Encourage farming practices that reduce the need for excessive fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.
- Support private conservation and/or public-private partnerships that permanently protect agricultural lands.
- Support state and federal funding programs that enable farmers to reinvest in operations and ensure access to land for future farmers.
- Ensure a strong and well-funded conservation title in the farm bill that provides the technical and financial resources for farmers to improve the soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on and surrounding their operations.
- Support policies and legislation that encourage sustainable agricultural practices and promote healthy, livable farm communities.
- Support innovation and entrepreneurship in new processes and technologies that improve analytics and encourage more efficient growing practices, including research and development of alternative sources of protein such as plant-based products.
- Expand and protect pollinator habitat and encourage best management practices for pollinator health.
- Support diversity in crop choices to ensure soil health.

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

- Promote the use of native seeds and seed-saving initiatives like seed banks.
- Encourage the further study of genetically modified organism (GMO) crops to determine safety.
- Advocate for programs that encourage the production of more organically and locally grown food, urban agriculture, and farm-to-school initiatives.
- Encourage responsible use of antibiotics in animal feed to prevent the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria which impacts public health.
- Modernize the food safety oversight system and increase funding for the USDA and the US Food and Drug Administration to improve food safety protections.