



Institute for
Agriculture &
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AGRICULTURE BUDGET TOO LOW TO DELIVER FOR FARMERS, COMMUNITIES AND RURAL MINNESOTA

At a press conference, Minnesota food and farm groups express profound disappointment over budget target

St. Paul, Minnesota—Today, leading Minnesota food and farm organizations held a press conference on the stairs of the State Capitol to urge the Governor’s Office and House and Senate leadership to increase the 2023 agriculture budget to invest in our farmers and food system. In a [joint letter](#) delivered to legislative leadership, 15 organizations said that an appropriate budget target increase of \$110 million, which would be less than 1% of the overall state budget, would have a profound impact on all Minnesotans.

At the press conference, representatives from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Second Harvest Heartland and the Land Stewardship Project delivered remarks and reiterated the disappointment over the agriculture budget expressed in the [joint sign-on letter](#).

Currently, Minnesota spends less than 0.5% of its budget on agriculture. Agriculture is responsible for \$112 billion annually in total economic impact in Minnesota, driven by farmers, farmworkers, food makers, processors and entrepreneurs. With a historic \$17.6 billion surplus, the Minnesota Legislature has a unique opportunity to deliver for small and mid-sized farmers, farm and food system, and rural communities.

An increased budget would provide appropriate space to support the many priorities funded through the Agriculture Committees, including programs that would:

- Increase financial and capacity investments in infrastructure, small and mid-size processing and market development state-wide, supporting resilient local and regional food systems that strengthen rural economies.
- Enable land access and farm viability for emerging farmers, expanding capital, training, technical assistance, and support for small- and mid-sized emerging, beginning and aspiring farmers.
- Leverage Minnesota agriculture to create positive climate and ecosystem impact, providing the resources farmers need to build the health of their soil, which will clean our water, build resiliency from extreme weather and combat climate change.
- Link nutrition and food access needs to Minnesota agricultural producers, ensuring all Minnesotans have nutritious food.

“We recognize that these priorities are interconnected, and decision makers should be given a budget target with room to support Minnesota’s farm and food system holistically, rather than pitting essential programs against each other to compete for funding,” said Erin McKee, Director of Community Food Systems, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

“By leveraging connections with our state’s small and emerging farmers, we can better feed families. As a major agricultural state, Minnesota is uniquely poised to lead the nation in supporting consistent access to food for all residents, in part, by funding a comprehensive agriculture budget this legislative session,” said Allison O’Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland.

“We urge legislative leadership to provide ample funding for this committee to tangibly deliver for people and the land. Investing in our farmers, food system and ensuring our farmers have the resources they need to survive and thrive is one of the smartest investments our state can make for our land, air, water and climate,” says Laura Schreiber, Policy Organizer for the Land Stewardship Project.

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Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. To learn more, visit: www.iatp.org.

Second Harvest Heartland: *At Second Harvest Heartland, we work to end hunger together. As one of the nation's largest, most efficient, and most innovative hunger-relief organizations, we leverage our unique position in the emergency food chain to make an impact. In close partnership with a network of 423 food shelf and nonprofit partners and 1,115 hunger-relief programs, we support those in our region facing hunger today. More than a food bank, we're a leading partner in the policies and programs that work to end hunger, like SNAP, school meals, and senior nutrition programs. And we're an innovator where food can be the solution, like FOODRx and Kitchen Coalition. Learn more at 2harvest.org.*

Land Stewardship Project: *The Minnesota-based Land Stewardship Project (LSP) is a private, nonprofit, membership-based organization founded in 1982 to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture, and to develop healthy communities. LSP is dedicated to creating transformational change in our food and farming system. To learn more, visit www.landstewardshipproject.org.*