

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY POLICY

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PREAMBLE

The APGF sub-regions of Asia, Pacific and the Middle East have extremely distinct features when it comes to agriculture and food security. The agriculture industry in Asia and the Middle East faces numerous challenges, including water scarcity, climate change impacts, land degradation, and the need for technological advancements to improve productivity and sustainability. During the COVID-19 pandemic, other vulnerabilities in food supply chains highlighted a need for greater food resilience and sustainable practices.

Despite strides to support growing world populations, 9% of the world's population experiences hunger, one million experience famine and a higher proportion experience constant food insecurity. Globally, millions of people are malnourished as about one in eleven people do not have enough food for basic health.

The answer to these issues lies in regenerative and sustainable agriculture. This includes shortening food supply chains and increasing self-reliance at both local and regional levels. Two-thirds of the world's food is still grown by small-scale farmers. However, due to unequal access to resources, corporate influence on agriculture and difficulties securing land and water, the right to food is compromised. Much of the world goes without enough nutritious food and clean drinking water. Regenerative and sustainable agriculture, the localisation of food supply chains, and self-reliance is the answer to future food security.

VISION

The vision of the Greens is to guarantee food security which is achieved when all people have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. The vision is to reform markets to support farmers and rural livelihoods while recognising the unique role of traditional sustainable food systems.

There is a need to develop a common vision and an integrated approach to sustainability across agriculture and food security taking into account social, economic, and environmental considerations. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences ensuring an active and healthy life. To achieve this the Greens seek to promote change within global economic systems, and global food supply chains to ensure universal food security and right to food is protected.

The Greens aim to reduce the use of chemical intensive agriculture including the use of pesticides. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Kunming Montreal protocol, sets out to reduce by 50% hazardous chemical pollution by 2030. Additionally it outlines that 30% of degraded land is to undergo ecosystem restoration such as on abandoned agricultural land.

The future is not chemical-intensive monocultures that cause soil degradation and biodiversity loss. There is an urgent need to switch to agro-diversity, promoting diversity of plants, animals, and microorganisms, and preserving genetic plant resources including food crops within farming systems. Protecting and conserving biodiversity needs a farming approach that prioritises ecological principles, maintains biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, while feeding local populations.

The role of women in agriculture needs recognition. Despite women making up around two-thirds of the global agricultural workforce, women only own one percent of land. Additionally, working conditions for farmworkers is one of the least addressed global labour issues.

OBJECTIVE

The objective is to promote agrobiodiversity as our best insurance against agricultural disaster and is critical for securing future supply chains, soil health and averting the biodiversity crisis. The Greens will encourage farmers to significantly minimise or eliminate the use of pesticides and instead apply regenerative, local, and organic agriculture techniques which do not degrade the soil, water, and arable land. Intensive, monoculture farming practices, including illegal land clearances, needs to be monitored and/or banned nationally.

The Greens aim to strengthen the understanding that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are not the solution. GMOs pose unacceptable risks to the environment, to independent smaller farmers, and to consumers. GMOs are a tipping point in the corporate control of agriculture as the farmer no longer owns their own seeds but enters into contracts with large agribusiness companies who own the seed and the accompanying pesticide patents.

Runoff from agricultural land into waterways, oceans and ground-water is a serious issue caused by intensive chemical based farming. The run off into ecologically sensitive areas such as coral reefs contributes to coral bleaching and reef die-off. Insecticides and pesticides significantly contribute to the decline of insect populations, now at 70% globally, including key pollinators necessary for crop reproduction.

ACTION PLAN

The Greens believe that food security lies in the application of regenerative and sustainable agricultural practices, self-reliance, and the reform to markets and food supply chains. Food security is best supported by strengthening traditional knowledge systems, care for the land, and encouraging crop and soil diversity. Therefore, the Greens will:

Sustainable Farming

1. Reverse harmful agriculture subsidies, implement stricter government regulations and increase financial incentives for agro-diversities.
2. Share sustainable developments and research with marginalised communities to increase local food supply.
3. Work to support areas facing significant challenges such as water scarcity and severe impacts of climate change to engage in sustainable farming
4. Build infrastructure to protect coastal agriculture from rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and salt intrusion into freshwater sources
5. Increase research, participation, and financial incentives to support a transition to sustainable farming systems and practices that foster long-term soil health, conserve water, reduce non-renewable inputs, minimise pollution and greenhouse gases, support habitats and greater biodiversity, enhance landscapes and cultural heritage, and produce healthy, nutritious food
6. Promote publicly funded agricultural research to achieve these objectives, and support initiatives of the International Consultative Group in Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

2. Protect and enhance soil, including its structure, organic matter, fertility and soil life by reducing chemical based monoculture and using sustainable methods such as green manures and leguminous intercrops to maintain fertility
3. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, currently responsible for at least 25% of emissions, and promote carbon sequestration to address carbon emissions and soil health.
4. Conserve water resources and \ grant public access to water resources. No one state or private company should control the water resources of other countries or .
5. Minimise the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides to reduce the pollution of soil, air, and water and promote regenerative agricultural practices.
6. Support wildlife and biodiversity through habitat protection and biodiversity corridors, and a reduction in chemical use.
7. Support sustainable farmers and farming practices, rural employment and economic development, and assist farmers in transitioning to more sustainable methods of food production.
8. Shift harmful subsidies away from highly mechanised, fossil fuel-dependent agriculture towards low-input and low-impact agriculture and nature-based solutions as a matter of urgency.
9. Promote permaculture, agroecology, agroforestry, and regenerative agriculture practices and produce.
10. Use taxes, government regulation, and subsidies to discourage large land holdings, control of water, and the amalgamation of farms.
11. Discourage the use of monocultures in agriculture and support smaller farm holdings and greater agricultural diversity, and food diversity.
12. Protect food diversity, including heritage seeds, food, and crops.
13. Ban use of the harmful substances used in the treatment of seeds, soil, crops, and animals.
14. Introduce stringent regulations to protect wildlife, farm workers, rural dwellers, and consumers from the effects of harmful substances used in farming.
15. Include in school curricula practical experience of growing and healthy nutrition and encourage educational links between schools, farms, and community food projects.
16. Increase tree cover by protecting all native and old growth forests, promote sustainable forestry practices in secondary growth forests, encourage appropriate and diverse tree planting and woodland creation from natural regeneration on agricultural land.
17. Enact the 30% land restoration target of the CBD including on degraded agricultural land.
18. Encourage and support the transition to clean energy independence on farms and in the agricultural sector including solar, wind, geothermal, small-scale hydro, and the installation of mechanisms to store energy.
19. Provide transition programmes to support farmers who wish to transition to organic and/or regenerative food production.
20. Protect water catchment zones, riparian zones, rivers, and waterways from harmful agricultural and land-clearance practices.
21. Ensure that instead of agrochemical multinational corporations, the farmers and communities own seeds.

Organic and Regenerative Farming

1. Encourage ecological wisdom which prioritises conserving water, soil, and energy while minimising pollution.
2. Discourage large-scale agribusinesses that rely heavily on the use of chemical biocides and fertilisers and intensive irrigation.
3. Discourage economic subsidies that mask the true cost of farming practices that deplete the land and pollute the soil, air, and water and divert these to regenerative agriculture and biodiversity protection practices.

4. Reorient or establish agricultural colleges to teach organic and sustainable farming methods and regulate corporate funding into the colleges.
5. Provide incentives for small-scale family farms, biological diversity in crop cultivation, and regional approaches to food supply rather than the transportation of food over long distances to markets
6. Use regenerative agriculture techniques such as crop rotation, composting, green manure, and other organic fertilisers so nutrients will regenerate the land
7. Ban development of plant varieties that are tolerant of increased levels of chemical biocides and ban genetically modified organisms.
8. Implement pollution fees on non-organic fertilisers, and use the resulting revenue for environmental restoration. Noting fertilisers are a petroleum based product.
9. End the import of agricultural products treated with hazardous chemicals and GMOs.
10. Support the incorporation of modern regenerative farming techniques with traditional and indigenous agriculture to support food supply

Responsible Farming

1. Ensure humane treatment of animals at all times, including transportation and meat processing. Recognising 82% of agricultural land is allocated for the production of meat and that moves towards plant based agriculture is more compatible with environmental concerns and longer term food production demands.
2. Invest in soil building techniques to return life to land and restart its natural productive capacity
3. Support rural economies by encouraging all farmers to add value to their products through local, direct sales, forming cooperatives to gain better pricing, and more influence from small scale growers.
4. Regulate to ensure that farmers are fairly paid for their produce particularly by large retail organisations and investigate price gouging.
5. Ensure excess produce is not wasted or dumped on the export market where it undercuts farmers' produce and prices
6. Restore investment in cooperatives, farmers' markets, and local incentives to assist small scale farming. Encourage food companies to look for alternative suppliers to those with large land holdings.
7. Protect and promote farmer's right to save and use non-GMO seeds.
8. Support a ban on the production and import of genetically modified (GM) foods, including food from animals fed on GM feed.

Food Security and Food Sovereignty

1. Ensure everyone has access to a healthy, balanced diet and the knowledge and means with which to make healthy food choices.
2. Work to reduce food supply chain vulnerabilities by promoting food sovereignty and reducing reliance on imported foods where possible.
3. Ensure there is a nationally funded body with a remit to carry out research into food safety and ensure that foods are regularly sampled and monitored.
4. Ban synthetic food colourings, food irradiation, and sale of irradiated food and imports
5. Work to shift diets away from imported highly processed foods, towards locally produced healthy options.
6. Phase out existing synthetic food additives.
7. Monitor levels of pesticide and drug residues in food and programmes put in place to eventually eliminate these residues.
8. Impose fines for breaches of regulations on food safety.
9. Produce a greater proportion of food locally to ensure national food security.
10. Ensure equitable income for farmers and the distribution of food to the people who need it most, including women and children, as well as marginalised peoples.

11. Support the international provision of food assistance in conflict zones and the adherence to international law, including resisting strategic restrictions on access to humanitarian aid.
12. Promote the redistribution of resources in communities to ensure that marginalised communities have access to and the ability to purchase nutritious food.
13. Support communities in seasons when climate change impacts severely disrupts food systems.

Genetic Diversity and Genetically Modified Organisms

1. Encourage producers to use local or traditional seed varieties and to plant mixed cultivars.
2. Ensure funding for national and local seed banks, seed libraries, and conservation of locally selected seed varieties including heritage and rare breeds.
3. Support initiatives to ensure survival and preservation of crop varieties and animal breeds.
4. Oppose patenting of genes and living organisms, and implement national and international bans on the patenting of life-forms, including agricultural crops and animals.
5. Support a ban on the use of GMOs in all agricultural systems including in the production of human food and animal feed and on importation of GM food or feed.
6. Establish and uphold the rights of consumers, farmers and local authorities to choose GM-free food and to establish GM-free zones including a labelling system.
7. Legislate for a strict liability regime which makes biotech (GM seed) companies and GM food producers fully liable for any losses through contamination or harm caused to the environment or human health.
8. Apply the precautionary principle and place strict conditions on research using genetic engineering to ensure that GMOs do not escape, pollinate other plants or cause other damage.

Food Consumption and Wastage

1. Change the current pattern of food consumption which results in significant environmental and social harm including the waste of 40% of the world's food.
2. Reduce food wastage by moving away from centralised and profit focused distribution chains. This will also increase food security, reduce environmental impacts and social inequality when it comes to the distribution of food.
3. Use public information, education campaigns, and legislation on food labelling and marketing to inform consumers.
4. Encourage appropriate recycling of food waste including composting and government programmes for food waste collection and recycling.

Farmed Animals and Industrialisation of Food Production

1. Phase out all forms of factory farming, including intensive poultry, dairy, pig, and fish farms, which involve overstocking, inhumane conditions, pollution or excessive use of imported feed, fertiliser, pesticide, or fossil fuel inputs.
2. Support progressive change from diets dominated by meat, dairy, and other animal products to healthier diets based mainly on plant foods. Around 82% of agricultural land is used for animal products and this cannot be sustained.
3. Discourage industrialisation of agriculture and factory farming in favour of humane farming practices.
4. Promote regenerative agriculture which is part of the solution to the climate emergency, biodiversity loss, and other contemporary challenges rather than agriculture contributing to environmental issues.

Protection of Natural Resources and Inclusive Economic Growth

1. Adapt agricultural practices to mitigate against the extreme weather events, market volatility, and civil strife that can impair the stability of local food production.
2. Ensure equitable access to irrigation.
3. Work to prioritise fair access to land, resources, and infrastructure for marginalised communities.
4. Provide decent employment conditions and wages to those who work in the agriculture sectors.

Research and Development

1. Support research on programmes used to encourage healthy eating, preserving biodiversity and crop diversity while reducing pollution through agriculture.
2. Ensure scientific research is conducted ethically and independently and applied in accordance with the precautionary principle.
3. Acknowledge local, traditional knowledge systems as a part of R&D.

Miscellaneous

1. Encourage greater agricultural diversity and reduce reliance on intensification and globalised trade.
2. Increase community food sovereignty to improve resilience in a climate emergency, address market fluctuations, and reduce susceptibility to pandemics and pest and disease outbreaks.
3. Regulate to prevent the further accumulation of vast amounts of land by global corporate landowners.
4. Encourage maintenance of adequate food reserves at local and regional level to offset food scarcity and reduce the power of large corporations in times of crisis.
5. Promote a local food culture and self-reliance with the long-term aim being to fulfil basic food needs and encouraging community-led food production through initiatives such as community gardens, edible fruit trees in public spaces, urban farms and backyard gardens and orchards.
6. Strongly regulate the corporate food industry's highly processed and cheap food options, to ensure that locally produced healthy options are competitive in the marketplace.
7. Reduce the monopoly power of the corporate food industry by prohibiting control of the grocery market by a few very large food processors and retailers who are engaged in price gouging.
8. Introduce a legally binding market code of practice to ensure all farmers and suppliers are treated fairly and receive reasonable prices for their produce.
9. Support local food economies through the encouragement of local shops, farmers markets, farm shops, and seasonal production and consumption.
10. End food dumping and export of food at prices below the cost of production.
11. Discourage dependence on cash crops that reduce the availability of land for local food supply. Support sustainable agricultural practices, livelihoods from farming, the rural economy, and phase out subsidies which encourage highly intensified farming, pesticides, artificial fertilisers, pollution, large land holdings and habitat damage.
12. Ensure that regulation of irrigation water, including groundwater extraction, delivers resource security, maximum water use efficiency and environmental sustainability, including the protection of critical ecosystems such as wetlands and base stream flows.
13. Encourage sustainable and appropriate use of local native plants for food and fibre to reduce land degradation, greenhouse emissions, and biodiversity protection.
14. Support farmers and rural communities to work towards net zero emissions, recognising that some biological emissions will continue but should be minimised and offset.

15. Enact a whole society approach involving all stakeholders, including farmers, local and indigenous communities, and consumer groups, in decision-making at local, national, and international levels.

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