

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

PREAMBLE

Agriculture is the most labour intensive of all economic activities providing a source of livelihoods for rural communities throughout the world. While some strides have been made over the decades in supporting a growing world population, millions of people go hungry everyday as food is not distributed to those who need it most. Billions remain malnourished because of unequal access to land, water, credit, market and food. Thus, the right to food, though a human right, is compromised and most people have no opportunity to live in dignity. In such a situation, the prospects for future food security lie with sustainable agriculture, localisation of food supply chains, and self-reliance.

VISION

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. The vision of the Greens is to ensure food security which exists 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 in feeding the world.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Greens is to reconcile the need for affordable food with that of adequate income for farmers while maintaining the integrity of farming land and ecosystems. The Greens will encourage farmers to not apply pesticides and to use regenerative, local, and organic agriculture techniques which do not degrade the soil, water, and arable land. Intensive, monoculture farming practices including illegal land clearance need to be monitored and banned nationally. Water catchment zones, rivers, and waterways need protection from harmful agricultural and land-clearance practices. Seeds need to be owned by farmers and communities and not agrochemical multinational corporations.

ACTION PLAN

The Greens believe that the food security lies in the sustainable agriculture, self-reliance and reform of markets and food supply chains. The Greens action plan values farmers, food security, and food safety. Around 60% of the world's food is still grown by small scale farming. Food security is strongest with traditional knowledge and care for the land with crops grown over generations. The the Greens will --

Agriculture and Farmers

- Support sustainable agricultural practices and farming livelihoods
- Phase out pesticides and artificial fertilisers
- Take measures to stop habitat damage
- Encourage agricultural practice that conserves soil, water and energy with a minimum of pollution
- Discourage heavy industrialisation of agriculture, mass-produced food, and dependence on fossil fuels as this comes with external costs to the environment and human health

- Find ways agriculture can be part of the solution to the climate emergency, biodiversity loss, and to turn back land degradation
- Ensure that the effect of erosion, floods and other environmental hazards are ameliorated and that appropriate adaptation measures are implemented
- Work with local communities to reduce land degradation with regenerative agriculture practices and soil regeneration
- Take measures to rehabilitate regions that have been impacted by desertification and deforestation
- Ban development of plant varieties that are tolerant of increased levels of chemical biocides
- Support and promote organic agriculture and discourage large-scale agribusinesses that rely heavily on the use of chemical biocides, monocultures, and fertilisers
- Consider that the stability of catchments and the health of river systems is paramount and work with people directly affected to stop the degradation of rivers
- Support diversity in agricultural systems for sustainable farming including systems that sequester carbon in soils and have a low greenhouse gas footprint and a closed loop system
- Do not allow the excess produce to be wasted or dumped on the export market where it undercuts farmers' produce in other countries
- Increase investment in small growers' cooperatives so as they can pool their resources
- Shift subsidies away from highly mechanised, fossil fuel-dependent agriculture, towards low-input and low-impact agriculture
- Encourage regenerative farming practices to increase plant growth, and increase species diversity on pastures
- Encourage and support the transition to energy independence on farms such as clean energy production on farms - solar, wind, geothermal, small-scale hydro energy, and energy storage capacity installations
- Support agricultural employment and rural communities, helping to reverse the trend towards increased urbanisation which makes larger populations dependent on intensive food production
- Encourage greater agricultural diversity and reduce reliance on intensification and globalised trade
- Discourage the amalgamation of farms, large land holdings and land speculation
- Diversify the rural economy to reflect wider demands can create a range of opportunities for young people and the well-being of agricultural communities and secure farm incomes
- Support initiatives that increase local product quality and nutrition, local value-adding and local distribution, with fair prices for farmers with lower food miles

Ecology and Sustainability

- Conserve water as a valuable resource and assure fair availability across farms and other industry and urban uses
- Discourage widespread agriculture intensive farming practices that do not consider the environment, water, and local populations
- Support and promote organic agriculture and sustainable agriculture systems
- Train and assist farmers to implement sustainable agricultural systems

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and promote carbon sequestration through less industrialised agriculture methods such as green manures, composts, and leguminous intercrops to maintain soil fertility
- Make provisions to adapt to and mitigate the challenges of climate change and the health and maintenance of the soil and ecosystems that underpin the food and fibre production
- Discourage the use of monocultures in agriculture which contribute to land degradation; and support smaller farms with greater agricultural diversity
- Introduce stringent regulations to protect wildlife, farm workers, rural dwellers and consumers from the effects of harmful substances used in farming
- Phase out all forms of factory farming, including intensive poultry, dairy, and pork
- Support a progressive change from diets dominated by meat, dairy, and other animal products to healthier diets based mainly on plant foods

Incentives

- Use subsidies and financial incentives to support a transition towards more sustainable farming systems. Farming should support local habitats and greater biodiversity, reduce non-renewable inputs, enhances landscapes and cultural heritage and produces healthy nutritious food
- Provide incentives for small-scale family farms, biological diversity in crop cultivation, and local approaches to food supplies rather than the transportation of food over long distances to markets
- Support rural economies by encouraging all farmers and introducing systems so as to add value to their products through local, direct sales

Right to Food and Consumption

- Change the current pattern of food consumption which causes significant environmental and social harm to more of local, smaller scale tradition knowledge based food systems
- Minimise food wastage including dumping of market crops, which has significant environmental and social implications
- Encourage appropriate recycling of food waste
- Ensure future food security at all levels through public foodgrain systems, etc

Genetic Diversity and GMOs

- Encourage farmers to use their own local or traditional seed varieties and to plant a variety of crops that contribute to soil health and biodiversity
- End genetic engineering in agriculture and the release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment
- Ban commercial growing of genetically modified (GMO) crops so as farmers and not chemical companies continue to own and save seeds for future food production
- Establish and uphold the rights of consumers, farmers and local authorities to choose GM-free food and to establish GM-free zones
- Make GMO labels mandatory to give the public a choice when considering the source of the food they buy
- End import of agricultural products treated with hazardous chemicals

- Protect farmer's right to manage the land without interference from agrochemical companies

Food Security

- Support global food security and local self-reliance and local food cultures
- Ensure that the multinational agribusiness companies do not control global supply chains, commodity markets, and the supply of seeds and other agricultural resources
- Discourage dependence on cash crops that reduce availability of land for local food supply and often results in the loss of rural livelihoods and environmental destruction
- Enact a law to reduce power of large food processors and retailers, and to prevent mergers and monopolies and that the grocery market operates in the interests of small retailers and consumers
- Introduce a legally binding market code of practice to ensure that all farmers and suppliers are treated fairly
- Support the food sovereignty movement which promotes the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture systems
- Encourage maintenance of adequate food reserves and seed banks at local and regional level to offset scarcity in food supply
- Improve and increase production of indigenous food sources to ensure the indigenous people and farm workers are not over-exposed to persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals
- Do not permit mining industries to dump toxins or destroy water or food sources
- Increase access to healthy food in order to decrease food poverty and lessen malnutrition and starvation

Food Safety

- Ban synthetic food colourings and, where safe alternatives exist, minimise food irradiation and sale of irradiated food and imports
- Monitor levels of pesticide and drug residues in food and eventually eliminate them
- Shut down those manufacturing units which breach the regulations on food safety
- Ensure that food is safe, with stringent regulations on production, storage and sale

Wildlife and Biodiversity

- Protect wildlife habitats and biodiversity from further encroachment by agriculture
- Increase tree cover by encouraging appropriate tree planting or woodland creation from natural regeneration on agricultural and non-agricultural land
- Bring a global halt through international conventions to illegal land clearance for monoculture plantations such as palm oil, soy beans, and cattle ranching.

Research and Development

- Strengthen and increase research, development and extension to support sustainable agricultural systems, healthy landscapes, and resilient rural and regional communities
- Ensure that the findings of research are applied to improve existing successful programmes and to target funding away from the chemical agribusinesses
- Support research and development on small-scale and appropriate technologies and innovation to increase efficiency and to conserve resources

- Ensure that there is a well-funded body with a remit to carry out research into food safety and ensure that foods are regularly sampled and monitored

Food Strategy

- Initiate an innovative forward-thinking food strategy – one that promotes food security, food safety, and healthy food
- Encourage localisation and diversification to stabilise the food economy without expensive government subsidies
- Encourage small-scale farmers to get out of debt and rebuild a strong, resilient farming community
- Involve all stakeholders, including farmers, growers and consumer groups, in decision-making at a local level on food production and the subsequent environmental protection
- Promote sustainable food production and healthy eating through education at all levels, including public health campaigns, school curriculum activities, and higher education programmes

Miscellaneous

- Support small-scale farming, rather than export promotion, and support for local food growing in preference to cash crops
- Work towards forming an international forum to freely share and promote sustainable best agricultural practices
- Develop and implement measures to eliminate waste in the entire food production system
- Encourage sustainable and appropriate use of local native plants for food and fibre to reduce land degradation, greenhouse emissions, and increase their protection
- Support a fair and predictable price on all emissions, including methane
- Protect productive land from urban sprawl and mining
- Ensure that food is affordable for everyone
- Create guidelines and standards for all food and drink sold in schools
- Recognise women's role and status as farmers with equal rights and standing as men, and work towards the elimination of discrimination
- Work to provide support to address the mental health crisis affecting many farmers around the globe

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