

PolicyPennings by Daryll E. Ray & Harwood D. Schaffer

US farm organizations join alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture

The United Nations held a Climate Summit during the fourth week of September 2014 in preparation for more intensive work at the Lima Climate Change Conference this December and the 21st session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on climate Change (COP 21). French Minister of Global Affairs Laurent Fabius says he expects COP 21 to focus on the adoption of a legally-binding agreement including pledges by all countries to the Green Climate Fund and carbon pricing (<http://tinyurl.com/opl29y8>).

In the run-up to the UN Climate Summit, the streets of New York were filled with activists urging the nations of the world to take meaningful actions that would reduce the addition of global warming gasses to the earth's atmosphere.

In advance of the summit, US farm groups were a part of a larger effort of "more than 20 Governments and 30 organizations and companies [that] announced they would join the newly launched Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture" (see the press release at <http://tinyurl.com/kheq3wa>).

The Climate Summit press release said, "the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture aims to achieve: Sustainable and equitable increases in agricultural productivity and incomes; greater resilience of food systems and farming livelihoods; and reduction and/or removal of greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture (including the relationship between agriculture and ecosystems), wherever possible. It aims to improve people's food and nutrition security to adjust agricultural practices, food systems and social policies so they account for climate change and the efficient use of natural resources. It will work with stakeholders, including governments, farmers, scientists, businesses, civil society and regional and international organizations."

US organizations participating in this effort through the North American Climate-Smart Agriculture Alliance (NAC-SAA) include the National Farmers Union, the National FFA Foundation, the American Soybean Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), the Western Growers Association, the American Farmland Trust, and the United Soybean Board.

In a news release AFBF President Bob Stallman said, "whether it is excessive flooding or withering drought, farmers and ranchers rise each day to meet the challenges of the weather; we have no doubt that we will continue to adapt to a changing climate.

"Farm Bureau believes that there are tools and solutions that will make combating inclement weather less challenging without hindering our productivity or harming the U.S. economy. This collaborative effort will insure that farmers and livestock producers will do what needs to be done to readily meet the food demands of a global population expected to exceed 9 billion people in 2050."

The US effort is facilitated through Solutions from the Land. In a description of the effort (<http://tinyurl.com/lt94s2t>), Solutions from the Land writes, the NAC-SCA "provides North American agricultural and forestry leaders with several platforms for shaping an integrated approach for simultaneously pursuing the three pillars of climate-smart agriculture: 1) sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and livelihoods (i.e. sustainable intensification); 2) adapting and building more resilience; and 3) reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions."

As a part of their "activities the members of Alliance will 1) review latest information on what science is telling us about changing climatic conditions and the impact they will have on agriculture and forestry industries; 2) formulate and prioritize recommendations on adaptation needs, priorities and policies to reduce risk and enhance the resilience of agricultural operations; 3) support and comprise farmer/forester leadership teams that will share and discuss real-world adaptation and resiliency strategies with their peers at national, regional and local forums; and 4) be active participants in the Global Climate-Smart Agriculture Alliance."

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