

PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNITY FARMLAND TRUST

- ❖ We believe that land represents the gift of the Creator to the human community to serve the welfare of both the land and the community that lives upon it.
- ❖ We believe that both land and human community are threatened when the local community that lives on the land loses control over the land and how it is used.
 - This occurs when land is owned by non-resident heirs, sold at auction to highest bidders, or bought by outside interests for profit, so that fewer and fewer members of the community own the land and many are forced to leave the community.
 - It also occurs when decisions about land use are ceded to outside economic or governmental interests that do not serve the welfare of either the land or the community that lives upon it.
- ❖ Community Farmland Trust (CFT) will be legally incorporated to regain control of the land for the welfare of the land and the community.
 - A. Regaining control of the land on behalf of the community.
 1. CFT may purchase land for sale when it has the financial resources to do so. It may sell land it owns to consolidate assets or to purchase more desirable land, provided there are guarantees from the purchaser that the land will serve the welfare of the community and be used in accordance with general land trust policies.
 2. CFT will be incorporated as a non-profit to receive land deeded to it outright or in a life estate by individuals or other entities to be used in accordance with its land use policies. Owners of land deeded in life estate will be allowed to receive income from their land for their support.
 3. CFT will be open to managing land leased to it by land owners for an agreed upon fee, to be used in accordance with its land use policies.
 4. All land owned by CFT will be reserved for sustainable agricultural use in perpetuity, using the land in ways that preserve the health and productivity of the land. Increased fertility and organic matter, water absorption and retention, carbon sequestration, increased biodiversity, and nutrient density of products along with other designated factors will all be used in assessing the health of the land, with 3 to 5 year tests to measure improvement.
 5. While CFT will welcome land contributions located anywhere, its primary interest will be on acquiring the farmland and preserving the agricultural community of the larger Freeman area (Turner and Hutchinson Counties in South Dakota).

B. Making the land available to farm families.

1. CFT will lease the land it holds in trust to farmers who support and agree to abide by the land use policies of CFT, whenever possible giving preference to beginning farmers without discrimination with regard to gender, ethnicity, age or other differences. These will be long term leases with periodic review done by the Board of Trustees.
2. CFT will prefer that leaseholders use the land in ways that provide food for the local community and the surrounding area or have some part of their agricultural enterprise be engaged with a local food system, and in general be committed to the welfare of the local community and engaged with it.
3. Within the land use policies of CFT, leaseholders will be free to use the land in agricultural enterprises that suit their interests and competencies.
4. Leaseholders will have the right to establish infrastructure on the land, including dwellings, that fit with CFT land use policies. Equity represented by such infrastructure will be credited to the leaseholder.
5. Leaseholders will be encouraged to form an Association of Leaseholders to explore and pursue common interests and to represent their concerns to the CFT Board of Trustees.
6. CFT will allow donor farmers and current leaseholders of the land to pass their lease on to their heirs so long as the heirs continue to use the land in accordance with CFT land use policies.

C. Providing governance and oversight of the land and its use.

1. CFT will be organized as a non-profit corporation composed of dues paying members who support and endorse the values espoused by CFT.
2. CFT will be governed by a Board of Trustees committed to the aims and policies of the trust who represent the diversity of the community: farmers, business interests, local governments, faith communities, educational institutions, etc.
3. CFT will receive an annual percentage rent of the agricultural produce of the land from the leaseholders for administrative purposes.
4. CFT may engage the services of a Farm Manager to coordinate the activities of the leaseholders and to mentor and supervise their operations.

S. Roy Kaufman, Freeman, South Dakota
Revised proposal for adoption by Rural Revival
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