



## **FAIRNESS FOR FARMERS 2024 SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Fair, open, and competitive markets are central to the health and wellbeing of the American economy and our democracy. For decades, the markets that farmers buy from and sell to, and the supply chains and infrastructure they rely on, have become increasingly consolidated and uncompetitive. There are high levels of corporate concentration and evidence of anticompetitive practices in sectors including meatpacking, seeds, crop protection, fertilizer, rail transportation, food retail, food distribution, farm equipment manufacturing and repair, and sales of commodities.

Corporate monopolies limit farmers' and ranchers' choices, pay them less, and charge them more. Markets dominated by monopolies lack resilience and are susceptible to disruptions, harming family farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, consumers, and our communities. Corporate monopolies spanning many sectors of our nation's economy have decimated small family businesses, especially in rural areas.

Additionally, the farmer's share of every dollar consumers spend on food has fallen from 50 cents in 1952 to less than 14 cents today. All the while, consumers are facing inflated prices for food at the grocery store.

National Farmers Union (NFU) launched the *Fairness for Farmers* campaign to respond to these challenges. The campaign is a nationwide effort to give voice to farmers, ranchers, consumers, and communities being harmed by economic concentration and corporate monopolies. *Fairness for Farmers* calls for the revival of strong antitrust and competition law enforcement, the breakup of corporate monopolies, and the creation of new and diverse market opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and consumers.

To address the challenges outlined above, and to advance the efforts of NFU's *Fairness for Farmers* campaign, we support:

- Ensuring the next farm bill includes provisions that increase competition and fairness in agricultural markets;
- Legislation that would strengthen antitrust and competition laws, reverse the trend of corporate consolidation, and protect family farmers and ranchers from anticompetitive practices;
- Legislation to bring greater transparency and price discovery to cattle markets;
- Truthful and transparent labeling of agricultural products, including reauthorization and full implementation of mandatory country-of-origin (COOL) labeling, and support for "Product of USA" or "Made in the USA" label claims on meat, poultry, and egg products, only when they are derived from animals born, raised, processed, and slaughtered in the United States;

- Robust and more urgent enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act (P&S Act);
- The establishment of an “Office of the Special Investigator for Competition Matters” at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to strengthen P&S Act enforcement and support for the newly established Chief Competition Officer at USDA;
- Interagency coordination between the Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and USDA to ensure our nation’s federal antitrust and pro-competition laws are maximally enforced;
- Blocking harmful mergers throughout the food value chain, including the Kroger/Albertsons grocery merger;
- Ensuring farmers have the right to repair their equipment, because equipment manufacturer’s repair restrictions violate antitrust law, increase costs and repair delays, and reduces repair choice;
- Spurring the development and expansion of diverse, local, and/or regional market opportunities throughout farm and food supply chains, including but not limited to production, processing, distribution, retail, and storage; and
- Increasing the cost efficiency and reliability of freight rail service for farmers by addressing the lack of competition among freight rail companies through increased antitrust scrutiny and enforcement, greater Surface Transportation Board oversight, establishing reciprocal switching, and requiring railroads to cover losses due to delayed delivery of rail cars.