

ACTIONS FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

The following are Center for Food Safety's recommendations that the Biden Administration can immediately take in the first 180 days of its administration to protect public health and the environment from the harmful impacts of industrial agriculture.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TOP ACTIONS



EXECUTIVE ORDERS

- Reverse Trump administration Executive Orders bolstering pesticide-promoting crops, promoting polluting industrial open ocean aquaculture, decreasing protections for food and agricultural workers, and forcing agencies to eliminate important rules that protect health and the environment.

PESTICIDES

- Halt or revoke EPA's re-approvals of the toxic pesticides glyphosate, dicamba, sulfentrazone, atrazine, and isoxaflutole.
- Reinstatement and finalization of the Obama-era proposed prohibition of the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos.
- Reinstatement of prohibition on bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides and pesticide-resistant crops in National Wildlife Refuges.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS

- Revoke Trump USDA's Bioengineered Food Disclosure rules for GMO foods and revise the rules to require clear textual/symbol on package labeling.
- Revoke USDA's 2020 genetically engineered plant regulations that exempt most GMO crops from any regulation, to protect farmers and the environment.

ORGANIC

- Restore animal welfare standards in organic food production that Trump illegally withdrew.
- Close Trump loophole of allowing soil-less hydroponics in organic food production.

FACTORY FARMS

- List as regulated pollutants all air pollutants from Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO).
- Enact moratorium on all new CAFO approvals and work to create just transition plan for farmers.
- Revoke Trump's exempting of factory farms from mandatory reporting of their hazardous waste pollution.

ENDANGERED SPECIES AND ENVIRONMENT

- Restore Obama-era Endangered Species Act rules gutted by Trump rulemaking.
- Restore the National Environmental Policy Act's protections, analysis, and consideration of environmental and social impacts gutted by 2020 Trump agency rulemaking.

FOOD SECURITY

- Withdraw Trump Administration's attempt to lower nutrition in school lunches through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE & POLLINATORS

RESTORE BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

- **National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA):** Many food and agriculture activities that would otherwise be subject to environmental review under NEPA are now exempt or only subject to lessened scrutiny under a Trump administration rule.
- **Endangered Species Act (ESA):** The Trump administration changed how the ESA is applied, by, among other things, significantly weakening it by making it more difficult to protect wildlife from long-term threats posed by climate change.

REVERSE TOXIC PESTICIDE APPROVALS

- **Glyphosate:** In 2020, the Trump administration re-registered glyphosate and allowed its continued use, despite not completing any endangered species assessment or assessment of harm to farmworkers and a declaration of the pesticide as ‘probably carcinogenic’ by the world’s foremost cancer authorities with the World Health Organization.
- **Dicamba:** Dicamba spraying caused off-field drift damage to crops and the environment over millions of acres. In June 2020, a federal court of appeals ruled EPA’s dicamba approval unlawful and vacated it. Nevertheless, EPA reapproved it in fall 2020.
- **Sulfoxaflor:** Sulfoxaflor is known to be toxic to honey bees and other pollinators, and in 2014 a federal court struck down its registration approval for such harms. In 2020, the Trump administration again registered pesticides containing sulfoxaflor on a wide range of agricultural crops and ornamental plants without considering the potential risks to honey bees, pollinators, and threatened and endangered species.
- **Atrazine:** In 2020, the Trump administration approved the chemical atrazine, a weed killer that the European Union has banned due to its significant human health and environmental harms ranging from hormonal disorders, birth defects, reproductive risks, and increased risks of certain cancers—as well as harm to amphibian species and aquatic life. EPA renewed atrazine and is ending the atrazine monitoring program in community drinking water systems.
- **Isoxaflutole:** In 2020, the Trump administration registered isoxaflutole for use on soybeans genetically engineered with resistance to isoxaflutole. EPA has recognized that isoxaflutole is “likely to be a carcinogen” and that it presents dangers to plant and animal communities and surface waters from spray drift and runoff.
- **Chlorpyrifos:** Has been shown to harm the brain development in children, as proposed by the Obama Administration in 2015 (and currently banned in California, New York, and Hawaii).

KEEP TOXIC NEONICOTINOIDS AND PESTICIDE-RESISTANT CROPS OUT OF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

- In 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prohibited the use of neonicotinoid pesticides and pesticide-resistant crops in National Wildlife Refuges due to the potential harms to endangered species and wildlife. In 2018, the Trump administration reversed that decision, and allowed them, through executive order.

ACTION

Restore NEPA protections, analysis, and consideration of environmental and social impacts.

Restore several prior ESA rules.

ACTION

Halt EPA’s re-approval of glyphosate.

Revoke EPA’s registration of dicamba.

Revoke EPA’s approval of sulfoxaflor.

Revoke EPA’s approval of atrazine.

Revoke EPA’s registration of isoxaflutole on soybeans and halt new approvals.

EPA should ban chlorpyrifos.

ACTION

Reinstate prohibition on neonicotinoid pesticides and pesticide-resistant crops in National Wildlife Refuges.

PROTECT OUR OCEANS AND FISHING COMMUNITIES

Industrial aquaculture causes serious environmental, health, and societal impacts including: the escape of farmed fish into the wild; farmed fish outcompeting wild fish for habitat, food, and mates; intermixing with wild fish; the spread of diseases and parasites from farmed fish to wild fish and other marine life; pollution from excess feed, wastes, and antibiotics or other chemicals into natural waters; erosion of fishing communities; and worsening of wild fish population declines.

ACTIONS

Eliminate the 2020 Trump Executive Order Requiring Agencies to Promote Industrial Aquaculture; Reverse/halt the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide Permit Process for Offshore Aquaculture; Reverse/halt the Corps' Nationwide Permit Process for Shellfish Aquaculture; Instruct the Department of Commerce to return to Congress for new aquaculture-specific legislative authority that protects fisheries and oceans before any offshore aquaculture can be approved.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND RIGHT TO KNOW

KEEP FOOD LABELING STANDARDS MEANINGFUL

- **Humane Standards in Organic Food Production:** In 2016, USDA issued regulations establishing livestock care standards for organic animals. In 2017, the Trump administration withdrew that final rule, despite opposition from organic stakeholders.
- **GMO Food Labeling:** The new rules allow the sole use of QR codes/ smart labels instead of on-package labeling, ban the use of terms “genetically engineered” and “GMO,” and exempt labeling on many GMO foods.
- **Hydroponics:** Hydroponic operations are methods of growing crops using nutrient inputs, without soil. In 2019 USDA allowed hydroponically-produced crops to be sold under the USDA Organic label, claiming that they are exempt from mandatory soil-fertility and ecological requirements of the Organic Program.
- **Food Additives:** Close the “generally recognized as safe (GRAS) loophole” that industry uses to self-certify safety of new additives in secret.

ACTION

- Restore the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule.
- Revoke Trump USDA Bio-engineered Food Disclosure rules and rewrite rules.
- Stop USDA from allowing hydroponically-produced crops to be sold under the USDA Organic label.
- Revoke GRAS regulations.

KEEP OUR KIDS HEALTHY

- **National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs:** In January 2020, the Trump administration proposed rollbacks to Obama-era school lunch standards, which lower nutritional standards for this program. These proposed changes will allow schools to reduce fruits and vegetables, replace whole grains with meat, and serve items like pizza, etc.

ACTION

- Withdraw the proposed rule.

REVERSE ATTACKS ON FOOD SECURITY

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:** In 2019, the Trump administration issued a final rule restricting supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD). The rule imposes harsher time limits for ABAWDs that will likely result in nearly 1 million people losing SNAP benefits.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Revisions of Categorical Eligibility:** In 2019, the Trump administration proposed changes to categorical eligibility, which allows states to use less restrictive income and asset tests in SNAP. The proposed changes would essentially eliminate the policy, which would result in over 3 million people losing SNAP eligibility. A final rule has not been issued.

ACTION

- Revoke rule that restricts SNAP.
- Withdraw proposed rule.

KEEP GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT TRANSPARENT

- **Freedom of Information Act/Government Transparency:** The federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is crucial to efforts to hold agencies accountable by allowing public access to certain government documents.

ACTION

Reverse Trump interpretations of documents required to be disclosed, make government records more easily accessible to the public and allocate more resources to FOIA.

COMMUNITIES AND FARMERS

PROTECT COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT FROM FACTORY FARM POLLUTION

- **Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA):** Public reporting requirements are critical for when CAFOs release dangerous levels of toxic gases into the air (primarily ammonia and hydrogen sulfide).
- **Clean Air Act:** Currently Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are not subject to the Clean Air Act (CAA), including pollutants dangerous to human health and climate emissions.
- **Factory Farm Free Future:** Actions must be taken to protect communities and the environment from polluting CAFOs while also supporting farmers in their transition to better practices.

ACTION

Revoke Trump's exemption for animal waste under EPCRA.

EPA should list all air pollutants from CAFOs as regulated pollutants.

Enact moratorium on all new CAFO approvals and work to create a just transition plan for farmers.

PROTECT FARMERS AND ENVIRONMENT FROM TRANSGENIC CONTAMINATION

- **Genetically Engineered Organism Rules:** In 2019, the Trump administration's USDA issued new regulations concerning genetically engineered organisms (GMOs) under the Plant Protection Act (Part 340 regulations). Unfortunately, the new regulations significantly weaken USDA's oversight over GMOs and leaves it largely up to the biotechnology industry to self-regulate, opening the door to allow new genetically engineered plants and crops on the marketplace without adequate government oversight.

ACTION

Revoke USDA's Part 340 regulations.

KEEP ESSENTIAL FOOD WORKERS SAFE

- **Protect Meatpackers:** Current regulations are weak or absent on inspecting facilities; allowing pre-notifications to employer of inspections during worker complaint investigations; allowing waivers of imminent danger determinations for social distancing and mask violations; etc.
- **Protect Slaughterhouse Workers:** Current regulations eliminate line speed limits at pig slaughterhouses, increase line speed limits at poultry slaughterhouses, and allow waivers to slaughterhouses that allow them to operate at increased line speeds.

ACTION

Withdraw OSHA meat processing non-enforcement policy waivers.

Restore USDA slaughterhouse line speed limits.



CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY'S mission is to empower people, support farmers, and protect the earth from the harmful impacts of industrial agriculture. Through groundbreaking legal, scientific, and grassroots action, we protect and promote the right to safe food and a healthy environment.