RESEARCH BRIEF

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FACTS & FINDINGS

FROM OUR REPORT ON

THE US FARM BILL

A Research Brief on the US Farm Bill and Corporate Power and Structural Racialization in the United States Food System

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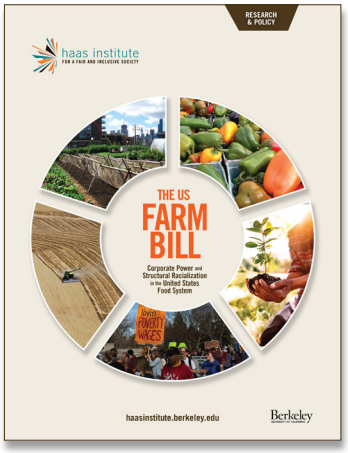
This research brief is distilled from a research and policy eport published by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society entitled *The US Farm Bill: Corporate Power and Structural Racialization in the United States Food System*.

The full report can be accessed at diversity.berkeley.edu/farmbillreport



HAAS INSTITUTE FOR A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

The Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society brings together researchers, community stakeholders, policymakers, and communicators to identify and challenge the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society and create transformative change. The Institute serves as a national hub of a vibrant network of researchers and community partners and takes a leadership role in translating, communicating, and facilitating research, policy and strategic engagement. The Haas Institute advances research and policy related to marginalized people while essentially touching all who benefit from a truly diverse, fair, and inclusive society.

This research brief was produced by researchers in the Haas Institute's Global Justice Program, who frame their work with the question of how to successfully build inclusive, democratic, and culturally diverse societies within a global context, promoting mechanisms and tools that can build the power of marginalized groups to influence action at local, national, and international levels.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary of Key Terms 4

Purpose of the Farm Bill Report 6

Understanding the Farm Bill 7

Farm Bill Title Spending: 2014 v. 2008 8

Corporate Power & Structural Racialization 12

Key Findings 13

- Corporate Power and Structural Racialization 13
- Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Public Assistance 14
- Farmland and Federal Support 15
- Conservation and Climate 16

Structural Barriers 17

Short Term Policy Interventions 18

Long Term Strategies and the Future of the Farm Bill 21

Building a Broad-Based Food Sovereignty Movement 22

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

AGRIBUSINESS: A term that refers to large-scale businesses that encompass farming and farming-related commercial activities, as well as operations that engage in the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products, and the manufacturing of farm machinery, equipment, and supplies. The term also includes large business entities that produce and sell agrichemicals including pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides, and may include the production of synthetic fertilizers, hormones, and other chemical growth agents.

BIOFUELS: Energy sources made from living things or the waste that living things produce. Biofuels can come from a wider variety of sources and can roughly be divided into four categories or "generations." First generation biofuels are made from sugars, starches, oil, and animal fats; second-generation biofuels are made from non-food crops or agricultural waste; third-generation biofuels are made from algae or quickly growing biomass sources; and fourth-generation biofuels are made from specially engineered plants or biomass.

CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION: Horizontal Consolidation: ownership and control within one part of the food system, such as production, processing, or distribution. Vertical Consolidation: consolidation of firms at more than one part of the food chain, such as upstream suppliers or downstream buyers.

CORPORATE CONTROL: Control of political and economic systems by corporations in order to influence trade regulations, tax rates, and wealth distribution, among other measures, and to produce favorable environments for further corporate growth.

FARM BILL: A multi-year omnibus bill that establishes and maintains federal support for agricultural production, nutrition programs, conservations programs, rural development programs, and more. These programs are operated in large part through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

FINANCIALIZATION: A term used to describe a broad set of changes in the relation between the "financial"—financial capital, financial services, and financial markets—and "real" sectors of an economy—manufacturing, agricultural, and service sectors. Financialization is the outcome of sophisticated and complex socio-technological interventions and networks such as information technologies, analytic techniques, and standardized representations of economic realities that facilitate the transmission and processing of information within the global economic system. Financialization is best understood as a force that enables the creation of new "non-real money" assets, and its ability to restructure these assets in ways to affect their monetary value to generate profits from such dynamic.

FOOD SECURITY: Having consistent access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food to maintain a healthy and active life.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: The right of people to determine their own food and agriculture systems, and their right to access affordable, nutritious, healthy, and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.

FOOD SYSTEM: All of the practices, processes, and infrastructure required to feed a population, including agricultural production, harvesting, processing, packaging, distribution, consumption, and disposal, as well as the inputs required and outputs produces at each stage.

META-NARRATIVE: A meta-narrative is a set of mutually reinforcing elements that reflects a meta-analysis of how society operates and how it must change. A meta-narrative seeks to take command of how a debate or issue is framed in public discourse. More fundamental, durable, and broadly relevant than any set of messages, it must also resonate and make sense to popular audiences and have the potential to be widely adopted and applied. The power of a meta-narrative is that it bolsters any debatable issue and can be drawn upon to shape the message(s) around it.

MIDPOINT ACREAGE: A measure of cropland consolidation in which half of all cropland acres are on farms with more cropland than the midpoint, and half are on farms with less. Midpoint acreage is more informative than either a simple median or the simple mean.

NEOLIBERALISM: A new period of capitalism, inaugurated in the late 1970s, and characterized by unparalleled global reach of financial institutions and extensive economic liberalization, such as massive privatization of public enterprises, fiscal austerity, international trade agreements, and deregulation. Contemporary stage of neoliberalism have been facilitated by a mix of high-tech globalized financial systems and labor markets, corporate control over the public sphere, increased commodification of human heritages (e.g. community lands, seeds, water, etc.), and increased consumerism.

SNAP: Short for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP is the largest federal food assistance program. At $756.43 billion in projected spending over the next decade, it is the largest program funded under the 2014 Farm Bill. Formerly known as food stamps, SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families, and provides economic benefits to communities. SNAP is administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION: Refers to the set of practices, cultural norms, and institutional arrangements that are reflective of, and help to create and maintain, racialized outcomes in society—reinforcing group-based advantages and disadvantages.