

As you come in: please put a
BLUE dot on the Iowa map at
the front to show where you
live

Thank you!

What are one or two issues in Iowa food and agriculture and rural communities that you are most concerned about AND eager to do something about?

Notes from discussion

- Urban sprawl, development
- Land prices and beginning farmers (multiple folks)
- Racial equity and history of land, rural spaces
- Ag chemicals – human health impact, on pollinators, in water supply, how farming practices impact it; drift problems
- Vibrant rural communities – economic, cultural (multiple votes); driving to city for jobs; deskilling? Of agriculture
- Local foods
- Farm to school
- Conservation on farms

- Healthy foods, including in schools
- Food deserts, food equality
- Land for young farmers
- Worker safety
- Healthy soil (multiple folks)
- Water quality (multiple folks)
- Habitat for native insects
- Land access for diversified farmers
- Easing regulations for small producers
- Diversity for ecosystems & human systems
- Diversify away from corn & soybean production; cover crops & small grains, more livestock
- Narrative shifts through arts & culture

- Brain drain for rural populations
- Rural workforce
- Rural housing shortage
- Hunger, food deserts, food access
- Lack of understanding about policy
- Public funded research
- Land use & zoning
- Lack of understanding of food system, consumer education (multiple folks)
- Sustainable agriculture – continual
- Conservation, incentivize needed practices for soil & water quality
- Transparency in food system, esp. with prices
- Lack of understanding between people, get out of our food system silos, bring back food policy council
- Viability of small farms
- Connect with other age groups
- Food sovereignty, food is a human right

General categories

- Rural economic development
- Conservation, water quality, pollinator habitat
- Food access,
- farm to school
- Land access
- Diversified farms
- Pesticides

Center for Rural Affairs

Anna Johnson

U.S. On Verge Of Full-Scale Government Hoedown

9/30/13 4:34pm • SEE MORE: POLITICS ▾

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It doesn't matter where you are starting from –
you can have an impact on policy

Just starting out?

- Pick ONE issue to start
- Educate yourself on the issue
- Evaluate – how much time and attention (and/or money?) can you put towards it
 - Less time: choose short activities, like responding to action alerts
 - More time: Submit op-eds, attend lobby days, volunteer, have meetings with decision makers

Just starting out?

Build relationships

- Less time: a few of the below
- More time: several of the below
- Relationships with:
 - People who also care about the issue
 - Subject matter experts
 - People who maybe you don't agree with on the issue but you can look for common ground
- Relationships matter!

Deeper engagement opportunities

- Serving on boards/commissions
 - FSA
 - SWCD
 - PFI Committees

Re-cap

- Educate yourself on the issue
- Decide on your commitment level
- Build relationships

Things to remember

- Take care of yourself!
 - Be patient
 - Be persistent
 - Celebrate any wins, positive things
 - Go to a hoedown every once in a while

Because....

- Change can be slow
- Often up against big money & big power
- Must stay focused

Good news!

- You matter!
- Your voice matters!
- You *can* make a difference!

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

- *Alice Walker*