

Remonstrance and Petition for a Redress of Grievances - Agriculture

We, the Delegates of the Southern States, in Congress assembled, make the following Findings and Affirmations:

Agriculture forms the foundation of Southern culture as it does of every culture. Even in an industrial age, agriculture builds the sure foundation of every society, generating real production and real economic gain from nature's free bounty.

Since the Great Depression, Federal law and policy have waged war against Southern agriculture, devastating Southern farmlands and impoverishing and dispossessing farm families. Regions once famous for their fruitfulness now lie depopulated and fallow. Instead of making it possible for farmers to remain productive on their own acres, Government policy encourages corporations to gobble up small farms, leaving their owners landless strangers on the land their fathers tamed. Federal policy pushes farmers to "get big or get out," driving them into high-cost, chemical-based farming dependent on heavy equipment. This is impossible without debt, and now many of the remaining small and family farms find themselves enslaved to debt they can never escape.

Federal agricultural policy, with its subsidies and production quotas, has injured small-scale agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture in favor of large, vertically integrated corporations. These policies suppress innovative, low-input, sustainable farming techniques while encouraging expensive, unsustainable and environmentally damaging agribusiness. It concentrates market power into dangerously few hands, leaving small farmers at the mercy of corporate demands. The "industrial agriculture" approach urges Southern farmers to abandon sensible, traditional, diversified planting for single crops and monoculture and has wreaked incalculable damage on the Southern landscape. The government-imposed industrial approach has weakened the genetic treasury of Southern livestock and seedstock, driving irreplaceable heritage breeds to the brink of extinction. It has promoted global trade over domestic production especially in the fishing and aquaculture industries.

The political power of government-sponsored agribusiness corrupts the regulatory process that is supposed to protect the consumer's food safety. The products of industrial farming neither nourish nor maintain health. With Government's regulatory collusion, agribusiness pushes inferior food onto an unsuspecting public, resulting in a dramatic rise in diabetes, obesity, and other chronic and degenerative diseases. Government has approved genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for human consumption without adequate study of their safety and ignoring evidence of their harmfulness. Under the guise of protecting our health, government regulation impedes healthy alternatives, while robbing Southern farmers of their common law right to sell their produce, however processed, at farm gate or local markets.

The right of the People to petition the Government for redress of grievances is recognized by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Therefore, we, the Delegates to the First Southern National Congress, remonstrate against federal agricultural policy and petition the Government of the United States to:

- End all agricultural subsidies.
- Stop promoting high-cost, unsustainable agribusiness with its attendant environmental damage.
- Immediately halt all genetically modified organism (GMO) use in food until proper scientific research can demonstrate its safety.

- Restore the ancient common law rights of farmers to sell at farm gate or market everything produced or processed on their own land by abolishing and repealing policies, regulations, and statutes that stand between farmers and consumers.
- End global trade policy that poses a serious threat to the Southern fishing industry.
- Stop all attempts to require animals and/or farms to be entered in a national registry, such as the NAIS.