

For Immediate Release

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AGRARIAN TRUST



**Agrarian Trust Launches the Agrarian Commons
A National Model for Community-Centered Farm Ownership**

National — Today Agrarian Trust announces the launch of a transformative new model for community-centered farm and ranch ownership and tenure, the Agrarian Commons. After several years of development and collaborative input, the Agrarian Commons launches in 10 states across the country with 12 founding farms that total 2,400 acres of diversified agriculture serving foodsheds and communities. Diversified agriculture is proven to regenerate soils, sequester carbon, and support healthy ecosystems. Founding boards of the 10 Agrarian Commons are 58 percent women, 63 percent farmers, and 85 percent local to the regions the Agrarian Commons serves.

The Agrarian Commons addresses two primary barriers for beginning and exiting farmers: the high cost of land and high debt burden of modern agriculture. The model decommodifies land through locally governed Agrarian Commons, newly formed legal entities that support farmland access for dispossessed farmers and farmers of color, rebuild human relationships to the land, and return natural capital to land.

Human disconnection from land, the climate crisis, and the catastrophic loss of habitat and species directly impact food security and the health of farms, humans, community, and the earth. The consolidation of industrial agriculture imperils our farms and food systems: Every day, 37 mid-sized farms close across the country. At the foundation of land injustice is the dispossession and theft of land from Indigenous peoples, Black farmers, and other communities of color. More than 60 percent of farmworkers are people of color, yet people of color own less than 2 percent of all farmland in the United States. Underlying all of this is the reality that we are in the midst of 400 million acres of U.S. farmland changing hands as a generation of farmers and ranchers retire. The time for transformation in how land is owned, accessed, valued, and used is now.

The West Virginia Agrarian Commons is building a community to value and sustain interconnected agricultural enterprises, creating equitable ownership, and an agrarian economy that restores the health of the land and its communities after centuries of exploitation. The Southeast Minnesota Agrarian Commons is focused on small-scale farm enterprises that provide new opportunities to rural Latinx immigrants and communities, and build economic resilience and community well-being. Somali Bantu communities resettling the exploited and neglected mill cities of Lewiston-Auburn, Maine are founding the Little Jubba Central Maine Agrarian Commons to hold community farms focused on local food production. Visit the Agrarian Commons website to learn more about the 10 founding Agrarian Commons.

The May 1st, 2020 founding of the Agrarian Commons is a step toward transforming our relationship to land. Agrarian Trust is working to raise \$10 million over the next two years for Agrarian Commons to acquire farms, fund land transaction costs and organizational capacity, and invest in farm viability and ecological health.

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