Dear President-Elect Obama,

We congratulate you on your historic victory and welcome the change that your election promises to usher in for our nation. As leaders in the sustainable agriculture and rural advocacy community we supported you in record numbers during the caucus, primary and general election because of the family farm-friendly p olicies that you advocated during your campaign.

As our nation's future president, we hope that you will take our concerns under advisement when nominating our next Secretary of Agriculture because of the crucial role this Secretary will play in revitalizing our rural economies, protecting our nation's food supply and our environment, improving human health and well-being, rescuing the independent family farmer, and creating a sustainable renewable energy future.

We believe that our nation is at a critical juncture in regard to agriculture and its impact on the environment and that our next Secretary of Agriculture must have a broad vision for our collective future that is greater than what past appointments have called for.

Presently, farmers face serious challenges in terms of the high costs of energy, inputs and land, as well as continually having to fight an economic system and legislative policies that undermine their ability to compete in the open market. The current system unnaturally favors economies of scale, consolidation and market concentration and the allocation of massive subsidies for commodities, all of which benefit the interests of corporate agribusiness over the livelihoods of farm families.

In addition, America must come to understand the environmental and human health implications of industrialized agriculture. From rising childhood and adult obesity to issues of fo od safety, global warming and air and water pollution, we believe our next Secretary of Agriculture must have a vision that calls for: recreating regional food systems, supporting the growth of humane, natural and organic farms, and protecting the environment, biodiversity and the health of our children while implementing policies that place conservation, soil health, animal welfare and worker's rights as well as sustainable renewable energy near the top of their agenda.

Today we have a nutritional and environmental deficit that is as real and as great as that of our national debt and must be addressed with forward thinking and bold, decisive action. To deal with this crisis, our next Secretary of Agriculture must work to advance a new era of sustainability in agriculture, humane husbandry, food and renewable energy production that revitalizes our nation's soil, air and water while stimulating opportunities for new farmers to return to the land.

We believe that a new administration should address our nation's growing health problems by promoting a children's school lunch program that incorporates more healthy food choices, including the creation of opportunities for schools to purchase food from local sources that place a high emphasis on nutrition and sustainable farming practices. We recognize that our children's health is our nation's future and that currently schools

are unable to meet these needs because they do not have the financial resources to inve st in better food choices. We believe this reflects and is in line with your emphasis on childhood education as a child's health and nutrition are fundamental to their academic success.

We understand that this is a tall order, but one that is consistent with the values and policies that you advocated for in your bid for the White House. We realize that more conventional candidates are likely under consideration; however, we feel strongly that the next head of the USDA should have a significant grassroots background in promoting sustainable agriculture to create a prosperous future for rural America and a healthy future for all of America's citizens.

With this in mind, we are offering a list of leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to the goals that you articulated during your campaign and we encourage you to consider them for the role of Secretary of Agriculture.

Signatories:

- 1. David Murphy, Clear Lake, IA
- 2. Paul Willis, Thornton, IA
- 3. Michael Pollan, Berkeley, CA
- 4. Bill Niman, Bolinas, CA
- 5. Nicolette Hahn Niman, Bolinas, CA
- 6. Diane Halverson, Northfield, MN
- 7. Marlene Halverson, Northfield, MN
- 8. Aaron Woolf, Elizabethtown, NY
- 9. Judy Wicks, Philadelphia, PA
- 10. Wendy Wasserman, Iowa City, IA
- 11. Anna Lappé, Brooklyn, NY
- 12. Cornelia Butler Flora, Ames, IA
- 13. Eleanor Bertino, San Francisco, CA
- 14. Wes Jackson, Salina, KS
- 15. Wendell Berry, Port Royal, KY
- 16. Alice Waters, Berkeley, CA
- 17. Marion Nestle, New York, NY
- 18. Bill McKibben, Middlebury, VT
- 19. Rick Dove, New Bern, NC
- 20. Ann Cooper, Berkeley, CA
- 21. Michel Nischan, Fairfield, CT
- 22. Jerry DeWitt, Ames, IA
- 23. Michael Dimock, San Francisco, CA
- 24. Jim Harkness, Minneapolis, MN
- 25. Frank Reese, Lindsborg, KS

- 26. Jeff Odefey, Irvington, NY
- 27. Cathy Liss, Alexandria, VA
- 28. Eric Schlosser, Monterey, CA
- 29. Leigh Adcock, Ames, IA
- 30. Dan Barber, Pocantico Hills, NY
- 31. Francis Thicke, Fairfield, IA
- 32. Josh Viertel, Brooklyn, NY
- 33. Peter Hoffman, New York, NY
- 34. Tom Philpott, Valle Crucis, NC
- 35. Hillary Wilson, Valle Crucis, NC
- 36. Dan Imhoff, Healdsburg, CA
- 37. Michael Stumo, Sheffield, MA
- 38. Simran Sethi, Lawrence, KS
- 39. Lisa Stokke, Clear Lake, IA
- 40. Sarah Willis, Thornton, IA
- 41. Peter Kaminsky, Brooklyn, NY
- 42. Kurt Michael Friese, Iowa City, IA
- 43. Carl Safina, Stony Brook, NY
- 44. Anthony Garrett, Washington, DC
- 45. Eliza Maclean, Snow Camp, NC
- 46. Odessa Piper, Silver Spring, MD
- 47. Edward Behr, Barnet, VT
- 48. Phyllis Willis, Thornton, IA
- 49. Larry Cleverley, Mingo, IA
- 50. Jesse Ziff Cool, Menlo Park, CA
- 51. Curt Ellis, Austin, TX
- 52. Wenonah Hauter, Washington, D C
- 53. Patty Lovera, Washington, DC
- 54. John Ikerd, Columbia, MO
- 55. Lucia Watson, Minneapolis, MN
- 56. Deborah Madison, Galisteo, NM
- 57. George DeVault, Decorah, IA
- 58. Melanie DeVault, Decorah, IA
- 59. Andrea King Collier, Lansing, MI
- 60. Rosiland Creasy, Los Altos, CA
- 61. John Jeavons, Willits, CA
- 62. Samuel Fromartz, Washington DC
- 63. Frances Moore Lappe, Cambridge, MA
- 64. Denise O'Brien, Atlantic, IA
- 65. Arnell Hinkle, Berkeley, CA
- 66. Marjie Bender, Pittsboro, NC
- 67. Winona LaDuke, Ponsford, MN
- 68. Diane Hatz, New York, NY
- 69. Cory Schreiber, Portland, OR
- 70. Rick Bayless, Chicago, IL
- 71. Angie Tagtow, Elkhart, IA

- 72. Ralph Paige, East Point, GA
- 73. Clara Bingham, New York, NY
- 74. Arie McFarlen, Dell Rapids, SD
- 75. Bret Kortie, Dell Rapids, SD
- 76. Dwight Ault, Austin, MN
- 77. Amy P. Goldman, Rhinebeck, NY
- 78. Judith LaBelle, New York, NY
- 79. Patrick Martins, New York, NY
- 80. Mary Berry Smith, New Castle, KY
- 81. John Fisk, East Lansing, MI
- 82. Tim LaSalle, Kutztown, PA
- 83. Susan Stokes, St. Paul, MN
- 84. Jude Becker, Dyersville, IA