

# Who really profits here?

## Farmers before corporate interests!

Appeal to the International Conference of Agriculture Ministers



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Berlin, 18.01.2025

This year, for the 15th time in a row, we traveled to the “Wir haben es satt” protest and the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA). This year too, the GFFA has set itself ambitious goals: defusing “conflicts of interest” in biomass use, strengthening the right to food by prioritizing food and nutrition (“food-first”) and shaping “framework conditions in a socially, ecologically and economically just manner”.

With great concern, however, we are witnessing the solidification of the global food crisis. Even after the end of the coronavirus pandemic, 150 million more people face hunger than before. In total this amounts to 733 million people. The situation of farmers around the world and on farms here in Germany is dramatic and is being exacerbated by producer prices that do not cover costs and a lack of access to the necessary resources. Rising prices, unequal incomes and the effects of the climate catastrophe are leading to unacceptable working and living conditions in rural as well as in urban areas worldwide. We are indignant that politicians all too often give in to the one-sided interests of large companies, especially when it comes to distributing the profits from the diversity we generate. This is unjust! That is why we - civil society side by side with farmers - feel compelled to take to the streets repeatedly and shortly before the future-setting parliamentary election in Germany to make our existential concerns heard. **Bioeconomy awakens many desires on the part of industry and can foreseeably worsen grievances and inequalities in the food system. Until now, bioeconomy, simplified, meant 'tank instead of plate' and international trade in agricultural fuels. The consequences were rural areas emptied of peasant structures and biodiversity. In addition, the use of agrofuels to date has been a dangerous false solution in climate policies. This must change. We therefore call on you to act decisively for the rights of peasants and farmers and marginalized groups worldwide!**

We call on you, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Özdemir, and on you, international agriculture ministers meeting at the GFFA, **to send a strong political signal for human rights and democracy and against inequality and discrimination.** This includes, to finally, valuing peasants and farmers politically and putting their needs before the interests of the agricultural industry. Too often, peasants and farmers around the world are being presented with accomplished political facts. **All people who live and work in rural areas must be included in the political shaping of our food systems.** As stated in your final communiqué last year, **special efforts must be made for marginalized and vulnerable groups.**

**Specifically, we demand from you:**

### **Democratic food systems and peasant participation:**

1. Enshrine **human rights** and in particular **UN peasants' rights (UNDROP)**, the **right to adequate food** and the **principle of social participation** as guiding principles for food and agricultural policy - but also specifically for the bioeconomy - in your final communiqué.
2. Strengthen **the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** as the body mandated to coordinate world food policies and thus also bioeconomy issues. Implement its resolutions and secure the work of the CFS financially.

3. Strengthen human rights-based **agroecological circular systems** that are based on territorial markets and not global markets for biomass and the bioeconomy. Rural areas and peasant farms must benefit from the bioeconomy, not large landowners, global agricultural traders, industrial corporations and industrial centers.
4. Make use of the current **broad global consensus on the right to adequate food** and the associated guidelines and policy recommendations. Translate these into national legislation and policy. Use the “guide for countries to develop national right-to-food action plans” prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, to implement concrete and practicable steps for political participation, including in the bioeconomy.

**Aligning bioeconomy with the needs of the rural population and consumers, not with a few large companies.**

1. Enshrine **agroecology, planetary boundaries and the right to adequate food as basic principles of a sustainable bioeconomy** in your final communiqué. To stop the global extinction of farms and curb hunger, bioeconomy must be shaped within the framework of an agroecological transformation.
2. Clearly name the inequalities and **enormous market concentration** with oligarchic structures as obstacles to a socially just and sustainable bioeconomy in the final communiqué.
3. Prevent necessary carbon sinks in agriculture and forestry from being misused as a justification for further destructive greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Prevent the EU-Mercosur agreement and other **free trade agreements**, such as with Indonesia or southern African countries, that promote extractivist and industrial biomass production and jeopardize the right to adequate food
5. Take actions to counteract the negative effects of the agro-industrial bioeconomy. Strengthen **territorial markets** instead of global markets.
6. Declare the need to reform the international trade framework in your final communiqué. Support a participatory negotiation of this reform with special efforts for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Set **food sovereignty and fair prices** for food producers and consumers as well as strict rules on food speculation as goals.
7. In your final communiqué, advocate for a global and national monitoring body for production costs to counteract unfair competition.
8. As already successfully implemented in Spain’s dairy sector, a **ban on buying below production costs should be introduced along the entire value chain**. This must also apply to biomass for the bioeconomy.
9. *With regard to Europe:* Campaign for the contractual obligation with price-quantity-reference before delivery in accordance with Art. 148 of the Common Market Organization (CMO) in all areas of agriculture to finally being implemented.

**Strengthening access to land, stop land grabbing for bioeconomy:**

1. Denounce **land grabbing in the name of the bioeconomy** in your final communiqué.
2. Campaign for the organization of a second intergovernmental **International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20)** in 2026 by Colombia and the FAO.
3. *Specifically to the EU agriculture ministers:* Campaign, at European level, for the introduction of a **land observatory** and measures to facilitate access to land for peasants and small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs. This includes enshrining a negative list in the definition of “active farmer” so that non-agricultural investors are excluded from CAP subsidies.
4. *Specifically for Germany:* Exempt small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs and agricultural businesses with little or no land of their own from the land transfer tax when

buying land. To finance this, the land transfer tax rate should be increased for those with above-average land ownership (progressive land transfer tax). Additionally, the exemption from the land transfer tax for share purchases must be severely restricted. Also support initiatives for the regulation of share purchases as well as lease and purchase price brakes at federal level.

**Protect seed diversity - bioeconomy must not be a gateway for genetic modification:**

1. In your final communiqué, commit to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the **International Seed Treaty (ITPGRFA)** and **UNDROP** as the foundations of bioeconomy policy. Incorporate these conventions into national legislation with a focus on peasants' and Indigenous rights.
2. Also speak out against restrictive laws that impose the same rules on peasants as on the seed industry and thus curtail peasant's right to seeds. Exclude **UPOV** from bilateral trade agreements.
3. *Specifically to the EU agriculture ministers:* Ensure that **new genetic modification techniques (CRISPR/Cas)** remain strictly regulated in the sense of the precautionary principle, freedom of choice and the competitiveness of our peasants and farmers.
4. Ensure that patents on plants and animals are banned - and start implementing the patent ban on conventionally bred plants and animals immediately. Ensure the right to free reproduction.

**Dear Ministers gathered at the GFFA: Show us not only with words but also with your deeds who you care about in agriculture and food!**