



Sustaining Life on the Land

Reflections on Rural Life

AGRICULTURE AND LAND: DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND ACTION CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

*In the 1998 statement by the Catholic Bishops of Ohio entitled **Life on the Land: A Call to Reflection and Action on Agriculture in Ohio**, the Bishops encourage legislative leaders to carefully listen and respond to the various needs and visions within our rural communities. The following are ten policy directions offered from this statement.*

1. Establish an ongoing public review and oversight process regarding industrial scale agricultural facilities to assure appropriate community accountability, public safety and just working conditions.
2. Develop appropriate policy distinctions among farm operations considering factors such as the number of nonfamily employees, the concentration of animal units, waste disposal needs, and community accountability.
3. Foster the development of state and local land use policies and plans which support farmland preservation, urban and rural revitalization, and appropriate housing and industrial developments.
4. Foster the widespread ownership of land and productive property while emphasizing support for first time farmers and the maintenance of small and moderate sized family farms.
5. Support farming methods and technologies that sustain rather than damage the environment (e.g., crop diversification and rotation, conservation practices and greater reliance on environmentally safe chemicals and other technologies).
6. Strengthen rural communities by helping rural people shape their own economic and social future through increased participation as decision makers.
7. Support efforts that secure accessibility to quality education, job development, health care, housing, and child care.
8. Assure all persons working in the agricultural system fair wages, unemployment compensation, and protections and benefits afforded to other workers, including the right to organize.
9. Encourage and support cooperatives as a way of giving both consumers and producers a measure of economic power and greater participation in the economic enterprise.
10. Support further study and research in the development of alternative food systems such as sustainable and regenerative farming, and urban gardening.