

**The Humble Farm Cap Takes Center Stage**

*By Cyndie Shearing Sirekis*

Across America, farmers and ranchers are gearing up to voice their concerns from the countryside about proposed climate change cap-and-trade legislation. United through a grassroots effort, food and fiber producers of all types will be using a familiar item—the humble farm cap—to capture the attention of lawmakers and make their views known.

Bob Stallman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, is encouraging members of local and state Farm Bureaus to sign, right across the bill, a new farm cap and hand-deliver it to a member of Congress with the message “Don’t CAP Our Future.”

The farm cap is an ever-present icon of American agriculture, and it seemed a natural fit as the symbol with which to send a message regarding congressional cap-and-trade schemes. Virtually everyone in farm country, including school-age boys and girls who pitch in with pride alongside their parents and grandparents, sports a farm cap as they go about producing food for our nation and the world. Even cowboys are known to occasionally put their hats aside in favor of an unassuming farm cap.

But the symbol is only as strong as its message, and in this case, the message is robust—“Don’t CAP Our Future.” The message refers to the fact that analyses from numerous sources show farmers and ranchers will pay more for fuel, fertilizer and energy if cap-and-trade becomes law. Over time, these higher expenses and a shift in land use would lead to a decrease in food production in the United States.

Already, the economic situation in some sectors of agriculture is dire. Many farmers, particularly dairy and pork producers, are keeping financially afloat on nothing more than bank lines of credit. For many, sheer determination is what keeps them in business. Those who are persevering are doing so with a brighter future in mind. They are also driven by the goal of being able to pass the farm or ranch on to the next generation when they retire or perhaps farming with their children as they grow into adulthood.

“I’m doing this for my kids,” is an oft-expressed and sincere sentiment among farmers. During the “Don’t CAP Our Future” effort, that truth will likely be repeated to members of Congress, as they hand their lawmakers a signed farm cap and explain how their ability to produce food and fiber for the U.S. and much of the rest of the world will be compromised if cap-and-trade becomes law.

Consumers also will be hit hard under cap-and trade. The Department of Energy estimates energy costs could grow by \$1,870 per household. Combined with higher costs for food, the additional yearly hit on families would be about \$2,300 per household. Said another way, the cap-and-trade law would impose costs of up to \$200 billion a year on American households.

To learn more about why farmers and ranchers are telling their lawmakers, “Don’t cap our future,” visit [www.fbactinsider.org](http://www.fbactinsider.org). You can also become a fan of the “Don’t CAP Our Future” page on Facebook (<http://bit.ly/3CKqKL>).