

## Viewpoint: Ensuring sustainable agriculture — Should organic and small farms get special federal tax breaks or subsidies?

Growing political pressures for federal subsidies and regulations to shift food-supply incentives toward favored farms and farm practices may divert food producers from meeting the needs of the vast majority of families.

Organic and small local farms produce foods with costly attributes that increasingly appeal to wealthy consumers, who can access and afford these products without subsidies or regulations that benefit the producers.

Government's role in food policy should be promoting public goods such as improved environmental outcomes, nutrition, and food security for the most vulnerable adults and children. Farm- and food-policy mission creep is problematic when the products being subsidized are only affordable to some.

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To be clear, this report does not object to policies that cost-effectively improve farm animal treatment, food safety, and food quality; mitigate climate change; or advance other worthy public goals. Those policy objectives have broad support. The problem is special government favors for farm practices or farms that produce a tiny amount of the nation's farm output and food supply that generally costs much more than conventional farm produce, with no evidence that the favored farms and practices contribute to accepted public-good objectives.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)