

AGROECOLOGY COOLS THE EARTH

A Landworkers' Alliance Primer for COP26



To date, **farming and land-use** have been treated as peripheral issues by the UN Commission on Climate Change and, as such, have been largely left out of previous COP negotiations.

For the past half a century, farmers and landworkers across the globe have been forced down the path of **intensification and mono-cropping** by a food chain system dominated by powerful **agribusiness, supermarkets** and other **multinational corporations**.

This industrial farming model has led to widespread pollution, dangerous levels of carbon emissions and severe loss of biodiversity.

But alternatives do exist - it's the political will to transition that is lacking.

The UK Government must therefore act now to give farmers and landworkers the support and opportunities they need to transition to more **ecologically and socially just farming and land use systems**.

For too long farmers have been treated as part of the problem. It's time we're recognised as part of the solution.

**We need a
Climate-Just
Transition in
Agriculture Now...**

This means that all those - including **farmers, peasants, pastoralists, migrant workers, contract workers, landless people**, and **indigenous people** - are at the forefront of decisions about solutions for the climate crisis.

Agroecology has a fundamental role to play in delivering a low-carbon food and farming system and adapting to the impacts of the climate crisis...

Agroecological farming:

- Promotes soil health
- Incorporates trees into agricultural systems
- Reduces need for imported animal feeds that cause deforestation elsewhere
- Eliminates atmospheric pollution from nitrate fertilisers
- Manages livestock in a climate-friendly way
- Localises food supply chains and supports local economies
- Agroecology respects diversity of cultures, local systems and grassroots decision making



Our Key Messages at COP26

1. Carbon Offsetting and 'Net Zero' risk continuing business as usual, or worse...

Focussing on carbon offsetting schemes as a way of achieving Net Zero distracts from the urgent need to reduce harmful emissions at their source. We need a clear plan of how to significantly reduce emissions, whilst also ensuring a socially just transition in the energy sector.

2. 'Climate Smart Agriculture' - including Bioenergy Carbon Capture and Storage Schemes (BECCS) and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) - are false solutions to the climate crisis

Large scale-single species carbon capture plantations have been shown to have devastating ecological and social impacts, and technofix 'solutions' like GMOs - which are laden with risks - only serve to bolster corporate control over our food systems.

3. We need a land-sharing approach to land-use

Plans to 'intensify' agriculture so that we can produce more food on less land to "spare land for nature" are based on a false logic. Instead, we should adopt an agroecological farming approach that integrates nature and wild areas into productive and varied landscapes, bridging the divide between human and non-human ecological systems.

4. Sustainable forestry means incorporating trees into living, working landscapes

Increased tree planting must be in balance with social justice outcomes, and large scale mono-crop plantations undermine agroecological farming systems and sustainable forestry. If tree-planting schemes were well planned and skilfully integrated into productive landscapes through agroforestry and forest management, we would see huge environmental, climatic and social benefits.

5. Animals in agriculture are an important part of agroecological systems

Agroecological and pastoralist livestock systems are not equivalent to industrial animal systems and do not cause the same level of harm in terms of carbon emissions, pollution and destruction of forests for feed production.

We are therefore advocating for less but better-quality sustainably produced livestock, and for farmers to receive the right support to ensure they can manage their livestock well, and within local ecological limits.

6. The future lies in local food systems

Industrial-scale long supply chains not only contribute heavily to CO2 emissions, but international Free Trade Agreements also undermine domestic food production and the livelihoods of UK food producers. We are advocating for government support for local food systems, to reduce emissions and build resilience.

