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## Policy Priority Survey Results

This year's policy priority survey identified several new priorities to advocate for in 2016. "Farmland preservation" ranked as first priority for the first time this year, followed by a brand new priority, "water." "Local food system development" ranked third, followed by the first priority of the last two years, "beginning farmers and ranchers."

New questions this year asked members which government programs they used the most. The most popular program overall was ATTRA, the sustainable agriculture information service. The most popular State-level program was organic certification. Approximately half of survey respondents identified as farmers.

See the full report on survey results and the Tilth Producers' 2016 advocacy agenda at [bit.ly/tpagenda2016](http://bit.ly/tpagenda2016)

## STATE POLICY

### Farmland Preservation

The State legislature is considering changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, the only State source of funding for farmland preservation.

Tilth Producers plans to advocate in partnership with American Farmland Trust and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition in the upcoming legislative session to protect state-level farmland preservation.

### Increasing Funding for Small Farm & Direct Marketing and Farm to School Programs

This legislative session, Tilth Producers will join other members of the Good Food Coalition (led by the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network) in asking for \$250,000 of additional 2016 funding for the Small Farm & Direct Marketing and Farm to School Programs. These programs provide crucial support for small-scale, beginning, and direct-market farmers (including the "green book" many of you may have used as a resource), and have been chronically under-funded.

Join Tilth Producers in lobbying for the programs at Good Food and Farming Lobby Day on February 8.

### Farm Internship Project

Remember when Tilth Producers successfully advocated at the Washington state legislature for a pilot project to legalize farm internships? The Farm Internship Project is going well, with many happy participants renewing their participation in the program.

To help the program expand to a statewide scale, however, we need to increase participation. If you are planning to have interns on your farm this season, consider applying to be part of the pilot program. Farm Internship Project allows farms to offer workers compensation coverage to interns, whether paid or not.

Read more about the Farm Internship Project in Ethan Schaffer's article on the facing page.

## FEDERAL POLICY


### Food Safety Rules Released

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has released the long-anticipated final Produce Safety Rule, one of the new regulations Congress authorized in the Food Safety Modernization Act. The final rules require compliance within two to four years, depending on farm size. They require increased water quality testing and other safety protocols.

Tilth Producers is pleased with the steps FDA has taken to make sure the final rules work for small and organic farms, though lingering concerns remain over the rule's references to audits (which were prohibited by Congress). Learn more about the final rule at [fda.gov/FSMA](http://fda.gov/FSMA)



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