



## A Green New Deal *for* Food and Farming

by Ahna Kruzic

Our food and agriculture system is responsible for more climate change-contributing emissions than all the trucks, planes, trains and cars on the planet combined. At the same time, we're confronted with evidence that climate change is wreaking havoc on agricultural production—and unraveling systems of the natural world that have evolved over millennia to create a habitable planet.

The Green New Deal, a non-binding resolution that calls for dramatic shifts in our economy to carbon-neutralize the U.S. by 2030, highlights “working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector.” This is a very good idea.

### Agriculture & the climate crisis

It's clear that to address climate change we need to end chemical-intensive agriculture. At PAN, we support a just transition to food and agriculture systems that puts power back in the hands of the farmers, workers and communities growing food. The Green New Deal could be one way to help us accomplish this.

Much of agriculture's contribution to climate change is from industrial farming's reliance on fossil fuel-based inputs. Deforestation and conversion of grassland to commodity crop production reduces acres of diverse, carbon-sequestering ecosystems globally, and reliance on petrochemical inputs for monocrop production is on the rise. This includes synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides derived from petroleum-based hydrocarbons.

With a changing climate, scientists predict increased stress for farmers in the form of hardier pests and weeds—in addition

to facing droughts, fires and floods. Relying on an outdated, petrochemical-based system to combat intensifying pest and weed pressure will only worsen the problem, especially as three chemical companies now control the majority of the global seed market.

This leaves farmers with fewer, more expensive options as profits leave the farm and collect in corporate boardrooms. Something's got to change.

### A just transition

Without a transition to agroecological farming, the pesticide treadmill (fueled by weed and insect resistance) could kick into overdrive as farmers struggle to manage pests in a changing

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# Pesticides, Preemption & Local Control

In early May, California officials announced plans to cancel use of the brain-harming pesticide chlorpyrifos—a hard-fought win for rural communities, farmworkers and children in the state. The good news came on the heels of New York’s new law banning the chemical and last year’s ban in Hawai‘i. Chlorpyrifos-ban bills are still in motion in Oregon, Connecticut and Maryland.

This welcome momentum around chlorpyrifos reflects something much broader. In the face of federal backtracking on the most basic public health and environmental protections, communities are organizing to demand that states step up to defend them. In many cases, these communities are also stepping up to defend themselves.

## Winning back local control

Preemption—when one level of government overrides the laws passed by another—has become a focal point for community organizing across social movements. From sanctuary cities to minimum wage laws, many of the policy battles we hear about in 2019 tie closely to preemption, whether it’s the federal government preempting state laws or states preempting municipalities.

When it comes to pesticides, the federal courts are clear: municipalities have the right to create local pesticide rules if they choose to do so. But, in the late 1980s, industry lobbyists started a national campaign to strip this control away from local communities.

State by state, laws were passed to tie the hands of cities and counties that wanted to pass local pesticide laws. Today, 43 states have laws on the books that explicitly shift legal authority over pesticides from municipalities to the state.

## The Minnesota story

This year, Minnesotans ran a bold campaign to take back local control.

Back in 2013, three beekeepers in Minneapolis experienced acute hive kills, and their colony deaths were directly linked to drift from a nearby pesticide application. Beekeepers wanted to find a way to protect their livelihoods from future damage but realized they couldn’t after learning about state preemption.

Working with PAN and other pollinator advocates, the beekeepers built a broad coalition to pass a city resolution

that affirmed Minneapolis as a “pollinator-friendly city,” and directed the City of Minneapolis to lobby for local control.

Soon, “pollinator-friendly” cities were popping up all over Minnesota. In 2019, there are 40, more than any other state. Though actions vary city by city from increased pollinator habitat to decreased pesticide use on city-owned property, the underlying message is the same: Minnesotan cities want their control back.

## Solutions, from the ground up

A bill to restore local control of pesticide rules to four of Minnesota’s largest cities won widespread support this spring, almost landing on the Governor’s desk for signature despite aggressive industry opposition. Minneapolis-based PAN Organizer Willa Childress notes that many state legislators “affirmed that this was an important right of localities—and that the state shouldn’t interfere if a community wants to go above and beyond a state standard.”

In other parts of the country, municipalities are shunning use of pesticides on public lands, including bee-harming chemicals and the weedkiller glyphosate, which science has linked to increased cancer risk.

Meanwhile, officials in this administration are threatening to strengthen federal preemption over state pesticide authority, in response to the actions on chlorpyrifos and as states like Arkansas and Missouri put rules in place to protect their farmers, whose crops are being destroyed by the drift-prone herbicide dicamba.

We’ll continue to push back. Across the country, we’re building a powerful movement that’s working to press states to take action where the federal government fails, and to restore control to local communities. —

For more information about local control battles, visit PAN’s website: In Minnesota: [www.panna.org/control](http://www.panna.org/control)  
Nationally: [www.panna.org/local](http://www.panna.org/local)



# PAN Fellows Cultivate Justice

Small farmers, farmworkers, Indigenous peoples and rural communities disproportionately bear the burdens of our chemical-dependent industrial agricultural system. This can include chronic illnesses, contaminated air, water and soil, inadequate on-the-job protections and unfair laws rooted in racism and oppression.

The PAN Fellowship Program supports a pathway to leadership for food and farming activists from frontline communities. Leaders with a deep and personal understanding of the issue—including their social, political and cultural context—can craft meaningful and appropriate solutions for their communities and the system as a whole.

This year, PAN has the honor of welcoming Donovan Kanani Cabebe, Jibril Kyser, and Héktor Calderón as our 2019 Fellows.

## Donovan Kanani Cabebe

### Protect Our Keiki Fellow

Born and raised on the Hawaiian Islands, Donovan now calls Kauai home. Donovan is a grassroots community organizer and political activist with his eyes on Native rights and protecting natural resources. As a Hawaiian cultural practitioner, he has a strong belief in the wisdom and knowledge of First Nations and Indigenous peoples of the world; they hold the key to bringing humanity back into balance with the natural environment. Donovan stands as an advocate for the k̄naka ʻōiwi, Hawaiʻi's original people.

As a PAN Fellow, Donovan worked with the multi-island Protect Our Keiki coalition on pesticide and water policies. He attended hearings and testified at the Capitol, met with legislators and their staff, talked with agency officials and organized initiatives to protect kids, families and communities from pesticide exposure.

## Jibril Kyser

### Grassroots Science Fellow

Jibril was born and raised in South Sacramento, California. While growing up in America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, Jibril tapped into a vibrant community of Black, Indigenous, and Refugee urban farmers and community organizers who inspired his reverence for land, food and water. The knowledge he gained through his community work inspired him to study agroecology as a Conservation and Resource Studies major at UC Berkeley. Jibril has research experience in both analytical chemistry and developmental endocrinology.

As a Grassroots Science Fellow at PAN, Jibril works with PAN Staff Scientist Dr. Emily Marquez to train community members to use the Drift Catcher to detect pesticides in farming communities in California's Central Valley. Jibril is vegan and grows most of the food he eats.

## Héktor Calderón

### Farmer Justice Fellow

Héktor was born in Mexico City and grew up in Southern California. He received a BA from San Diego State in



*"I was raised being told, "each one of us, doing our part, moves the wa'a (ship) forward. So learn, know and do your part." The Save Our Keiki fellowship helped me know my role in my work and community better. I have been able to create a network of engaged organizations and individuals that are passionate about stopping the chemical cartel from poisoning paradise."*

— Donovan



*"As a Grassroots Science Fellow at PAN, I'm confronting pollutive and deadly plantation-style industrial agricultural by equipping frontline and farmworking communities with the analytical tools and knowledge they need to win protection from pesticides for their families. I do this work to improve conditions of people of color and Indigenous people worldwide suffering because of industrial agriculture."*

— Jibril



*"As a farmer, and the Farmer Justice Fellow at PAN/CFJC, I stand for social justice as a beacon of light that dismantles the inequities of racial, political and economic disparities in our farming systems. Farmers of color can serve and uplift their communities by cultivating storytelling and traditional agricultural and food practices."*

— Héktor

International Business with an emphasis in Management in the region of Latin America, and completed an apprenticeship with the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems where he earned an advanced certificate in Ecological Horticulture. Héktor has worked on diversified vegetable production operations and with orchard trees on small scale farms. Héktor is the son of immigrants and a protector of food justice, food sustainability and food sovereignty.

At PAN, Héktor is a Farmer Justice Fellow with the California Farmer Justice Collaborative (CFJC). In addition to tracking implementation of the 2017 Farmer Equity Act, Héktor will be connecting with and sharing stories of farmers of color in the Central Coast to shape policies and support structures that create a more just, equitable and connected agricultural playing field. —

climate. Continued reliance on chemical solutions would not only exacerbate the climate crisis, but also exacerbate the health risk facing farmers, workers and rural communities.

So how do we work collaboratively with farmers to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions as the Green New Deal suggests? We

must ensure that any future binding law-making centers the solutions posed by farmers, workers and their communities:

Let's talk about jobs for all, parity pricing for farmers, planning and organizing of agricultural production, allocation of resources in an environmentally sound and just way. And we can't just rely on politicians; we've got to utilize the conversation around the Green New Deal to articulate the future we want, and demand the binding policies that will help get us there.

~ Patti and George Naylor, Iowa farmers

People across the U.S. have been calling for decades for just food and agriculture systems that work with and for our environments and communities. From Indigenous communities advocating for land and tribal sovereignty protecting traditional agricultural practices, to family farmers calling for parity pricing and supply management to ensure farmers make a living wage—the solutions are right in front of us.

We will continue to support and advocate for proven solutions being promoted by those most impacted by chemical-intensive agriculture. And we're hopeful the Green New Deal can be a powerful tool as we work toward a climate-just future. —

In April, PAN and the National Family Farm Coalition hosted an online forum featuring farmers sharing their perspectives on the Green New Deal. Speakers included Iowa farmer Patti Naylor, Dr. Gail Myers of Farms to Grow, Inc., and Alaska farmer and fisherman Carl Wassilie. To see a recording of the forum, visit [www.panna.org/GND](http://www.panna.org/GND).

## The Science

for your conversations about pesticides

### Pesticides & the Climate Crisis

Along with flood, drought and fire, farmers can add increased pest pressure to the list of anticipated impacts of climate change. With a longer growing season and a warmer climate, weeds and insect pests will proliferate.

The "solution" promoted by the biotech/pesticide corporations is more pesticide use — which is itself responsible for harmful emissions that further exacerbate the climate crisis.

The 2014 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that about 20% of global emissions leading to climate change are attributable to agricultural activities, including pesticide use. Rather than doubling down on chemical-intensive agriculture, we must make farming part of the solution by shifting to regenerative practices that are focused on soil health and sequester carbon, rather than contribute to emissions.

## It's Our 35th Anniversary!

To kick off our 35th anniversary celebrations, PAN hosted a gathering of current and former staff and board members. We heard stories from some of PAN's founders and former leaders, and toasted 35 years of progress and partnership.

We invite you to share your PAN stories and memories too! Send two to three sentences to [social@panna.org](mailto:social@panna.org) for your comments to be included in our anniversary video.



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