



For Immediate Release:
February 28, 2007

CONTACT: Jennifer Morrill
202-378-1255 or jmorrill@farmland.org

Renewable Energy a National Priority For 2007 Farm Bill *Must Strengthen Agriculture and Protect the Environment*

Washington, DC—American Farmland Trust (AFT) agrees with the broad 25 x '25 Alliance calling on Congressional leaders to develop policies to help the country reach an ambitious goal: provide 25 percent of the nation's energy supply from renewable sources by 2025. "The *25 x '25 Action Plan: Charting America's Energy Future* provides a road map of recommendations for our national leaders as they work to develop the energy and conservation sections of the 2007 Farm Bill," says AFT President Ralph Grossi.

"AFT supports the new direction in the 25 x '25 Alliance's report. We join them in calling on Congress to construct renewable energy policies and programs that promote economic opportunities within the agriculture and rural communities, yet strengthen environmental stewardship and conservation of natural resources and the environment," says AFT President Ralph Grossi.

"However, increasing our commitment to the production of renewable energy must go hand in hand with an increased commitment to working lands conservation programs to help mitigate the intense pressures that such a shift in energy policy brings." AFT notes that the 25 x '25 report wisely recommends the preservation of a strategic land base for the future production of food, feed, fiber and energy by increasing funding for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection (FRPP) program, and other conservation measures.

Many of the recommendations in the 25 x '25 Alliance report align with those made in by AFT in its "*Agenda 2007: A New Framework and Direction for U.S. Farm Policy*" released in May. These include ways to expand and improve working lands conservation programs, to support farm

-continues-

entrepreneurship, increase renewable energy and bio-based products, promote rural development and other strategies for the economic viability of agriculture.

Momentum continues to build for change in U.S. farm policy as various Congressional committees begin work on this year's most important public legislation. "With farm bill hearings and budget debate starting, and more new marker bills set to be introduced, we're beginning to see how new policies can provide a brighter future for U.S. agriculture and the public," adds Grossi. "Everything from revenue-based safety net programs, expanded conservation for working lands, support for farmers and ranchers left out of past farm bills, increased access to healthier diets, and increased renewable energy are among many critical ideas for forging a new direction in U.S. farm policy."

The *25x'25 Action Plan: Charting America's Energy Future* can be seen at www.25x'25.org. A full copy of American Farmland Trust's *Agenda 2007* report and other farm policy campaign materials can be seen at www.farmland.org, and AFT will provide organizations with a briefing on *Agenda 2007* upon request.

-30-

American Farmland Trust is a national nonprofit organization working with communities and individuals to protect the best land, plan for growth with agriculture in mind and keep the land healthy. As the leading advocate for farm and ranch land conservation, AFT has ensured that more than a million acres stays bountiful and productive. AFT's national office is located in Washington, D.C., and the phone number is 202-331-7300. For more information, visit www.farmland.org.