

Regenerative Farming Is More Important Now Than Ever Before

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✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › A decades-old anticorporate-farming law in North Dakota makes it illegal for corporations and limited liability companies to purchase farmland
- › Bill Gates secured approval to purchase 2,100 acres in North Dakota via a loophole that allows individual trusts to own farmland as long as it's leased to farmers
- › This amounts to modern-day feudalism and ensures the further deleterious industrialization and centralization of the food supply
- › Will Harris, owner of White Oak Pastures in Bluffton, Georgia, is among those who objects to Gates' increasing ownership of farmland, which threatens human health and the environment
- › Harris' farming methods represent the opposite of Gates' industrialized approach, demonstrating how you can convert conventionally farmed land into a healthy, thriving farm based on regenerative methods

A decades-old anticorporate-farming law in North Dakota makes it illegal for corporations and limited liability companies to purchase farmland in the state. So when Bill Gates received legal approval to do just that, it did more than raise a few eyebrows.

Gates secured approval to purchase 2,100 acres from Campbell Farms, a potato grower in northeastern North Dakota, for \$13.5 million.¹ This, along with the 270,000 other

acres of farmland he's previously purchased in the U.S., makes him the largest private farmland owner in the country.²

Doug Goehring, North Dakota's Agriculture Commissioner, told KFVR-TV that he's gotten a lot of backlash since word got out. "I've gotten a big earful on this from clear across the state, it's not even from that neighborhood. Those people are upset, but there are others that are just livid about this."³

Moving Toward Modern-Day Feudalism

Gates was able to purchase the land legally via a loophole that allows individual trusts to own farmland as long as it's leased to farmers.⁴ The law is meant to protect family farms because the farmland must be leased back to them.⁵ However, while this is Gates' intention, it amounts to modern-day feudalism.

"If this was the game Risk, Bill Gates is closing in. He's acquiring all of the territory. If this was Monopoly or any other board game, you'd think, 'Uh-oh, Gates is up to something,'" Russel Brand said, referring to data that Gates owns sizeable amounts of farmland in 18 states.⁶

Will Harris, owner of White Oak Pastures in Bluffton, Georgia, is among those who objects to Gates' increasing ownership of farmland. First off, he states, Gates isn't a farmer. He doesn't know what to do with the land:⁷

"I have concerns about Gates controlling farmland. Just like I don't want a child abuser controlling even one child, I don't want him to control a single acre. First, land is precious. It may be more precious than anything.

I hate to see someone, who has no idea what to do with it, be put in a position to control it. How well do you think that I would do running a tech company or financial institution? It's the same logic as letting a guy like Gates manage something as complex as an ecosystem. He lacks the understanding to steward it properly."

The Secrecy Is Unsettling

What else is unsettling, Harris says, is the secrecy behind Gates' land purchases, which are often made under the cover of investment firms. Eric O'Keefe's magazine, *The Land Report*, puts out a list of the 100 biggest landowners in the U.S. each year. A 2020 purchase of 14,500 "prime" acres in Washington state caught O'Keefe's attention, as he calls any sale of more than 1,000 acres "blue moon events."

When he dug deeper, the purchaser of the 14,500 acres – in the heart of some of the most expensive acreage in America – was recorded as a small Louisiana company. "That immediately set off alarm bells," O'Keefe told the *New York Post*.⁸ It turned out the company was acting on behalf of Cascade Investment, LLC for Bill Gates.

"Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, has an alter ego," O'Keefe wrote. "Farmer Bill, the guy who owns more farmland than anyone else in America."⁹ Clearly Gates has a big vision for all that land, but unfortunately it doesn't involve organic, biodynamic or regenerative farming, which are needed to heal ecosystems and produce truly sustainable, nourishing food for future generations.

Instead, the acreage seems earmarked for even more genetically engineered (GE) corn and soy crops – the base foods for what will become an increasingly synthetic, ultra-processed food supply focused on fake meat. As Harris wrote on his blog:¹⁰

"An article that was dated May 4, 2021 informed us that Gates has purchased over 200,000 acres in 18 states. Georgia was not listed as one of the 18 states, but an acquaintance of mine sold his farm located in Georgia to Gates prior to that time. What else are they lying about?"

Gates' Influence Worsened Hunger in Africa

Gates won't be implementing the restorative farming methods that Harris embraces on his farm. Instead, biotechnology will be king. Harris points to the Alliance for a Green

Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an organization funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,¹¹ as a sobering harbinger of what's to come.

AGRA was launched in 2006 with funding from Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. It's essentially a Gates Foundation subsidiary and most of its goals are centered on promoting biotechnology and chemical fertilizers.

After more than a decade, AGRA's influence has significantly worsened the situation in the 18 African nations targeted by this "philanthropic" endeavor. Hunger under AGRA's direction increased by 30% and rural poverty rose dramatically.¹² "Ask the farmers of India and Africa how beneficial Gates' influence was to their agricultural systems," Harris said.¹³

"If you research the failed AGRA ... program, you'll get a sneak peek on the repercussions of letting a businessman make farming decisions. That billionaire-leopard ain't gonna change the spots that made him the most powerful man in the world."¹⁴

Risks of Food Production Based on Efficiency, Not Resiliency

The technologies that industrial agriculture relies on to "improve" food production are destructive. Yet, they're the technologies that Gates embraces. "Pesticides, chemical fertilizers, GMOs, sub-therapeutic antibiotics, and hormone implants ... These technologies result in horrible, unintended consequences that adversely affect our land, water, climate, and livestock," Harris said.¹⁵

Further, they've allowed agriculture to become scalable to the point that a limited number of multinational corporations control most of the food supply. A centralized food system benefits no one but those who control it, and puts consumers at risk. Harris explained:¹⁶

"The centralization of food production impoverishes our rural communities as it creates an oligopoly. This centralization of food production is also bad for consumers. This system lacks resilience."

When mega-production facilities that are focused on efficiency break down, consumers' access to food can become limited, which causes panic. This state of panic allows multinational companies to increase their profits exponentially. When the driving goal of our food production system is efficiency, as opposed to resiliency, consumers suffer."

Harris' farming methods represent the opposite of Gates' industrialized approach, demonstrating how you can convert conventionally farmed land into a healthy, thriving farm based on regenerative methods. At White Oak Pastures, they've:¹⁷

- **De-commoditized** — Instead of relying on commodities, they produce five types of pastured red meats, five types of pastured poultry, pastured eggs and organic vegetables.
- **De-industrialized** — Instead of operating as a monoculture that grows one destructive crop, like GE soy, they've created a living ecosystem that includes 10 species of humanely treated animals that live in a symbiotic relationship. All of their land is managed using holistic principles.
- **De-centralized** — They were able to break away from the centralized food processing system, building their own abattoirs to retain control of the quality of their products.

Going Beyond Sustainable to Regeneration

White Oak Pastures wasn't always the picture of regeneration. From 1946 — when his father was still running the farm — to 1995, the farm used industrial farming methods and chemicals. Harris had just one focus — how many pounds of beef he could produce at the lowest price possible. Now, in addition to a focus on animal welfare, Harris is focused on going beyond sustainable farming to land regeneration.

"We believe farming must not only be sustainable, it has to be regenerative to rebuild our soil," White Oak Pastures' website reads.¹⁸ At White Oak Pastures:¹⁹

- Holistic planned grazing methods naturally sequester carbon, control erosion and increase organic matter in soil
- A life cycle assessment found that their farm is storing more carbon in the soil than their grass fed cows emit during their lifetime
- Former commodity crop land is acquired and regenerated into perennial pasture every year
- They've partnered with a nearby 2,400-acre solar farm to provide planned livestock grazing and regenerative land management

Rather than reverting to regenerative agriculture, in which livestock and crops are integrated into a symbiotic, complementary system that mimics the way nature works, Gates and agrochemical companies are using gene editing, genetic engineering, chemicals and other “technologies” to create hybrid seed lines, crops resistant to winds, flooding and droughts and other lab-created agricultural elements. As Harris noted:²⁰

“The likelihood of the further misapplication of technology is the reason that I am opposed to our land being managed by Bill Gates and anyone else who does not understand how to harvest the abundance of Nature. The proper land steward must respect the cycles of Nature.

... The technocrat's answer to all of our food production problems has been the integration of linear, siloed, reductionist-science-based scalable technology. This approach has proven to be highly effective for complicated linear systems (think computers and machines).

It has also been proven that these technologies are equally disastrous when applied to complex cyclable systems (think farm, eco-system, your body) ... If Mr. Gates wants to come to White Oak Pastures or to send someone, come on, I'll show you how I manage my land.”

USDA Wants to Keep Tabs on Your Home Garden

It wasn't long ago when "victory gardens" could be found in nearly every backyard. During the pandemic, home gardening made a comeback,²¹ but now even this wholesome pastime may become the target of surveillance and regulation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released "People's Garden Registration Form" where you can register your garden to be displayed on their online map.

Provided your garden meets their criteria, which includes benefiting the community, collaborating with others, sustainable practices and public education, the USDA will send you a "People's Garden" sign to display and let your garden be tracked on their map. While it sounds innocent enough, this is another surveillance tool, one that will follow what you plant and whether or not your garden is "sustainable." While it's now voluntary, this could change at any time.

Yet, this type of farming, from diverse vegetable plants in your backyard to farms embracing regenerative and organic methods, is what's needed now more than ever. It's a common misconception that regenerative farming cannot be done on a large-scale. Harris proves this isn't the case. While farming conventionally, he had about 700 heads of cattle on the farm.

Today, the land supports 100,000 individual animals of several species, made possible because they support each other rather than compete for limited resources. As Brand explained and Harris exemplifies, decentralized, regenerative farming is better for the animals, better for the environment and better for the people:²²

"Will Harris makes the perfect points. That there's a requirement for entrenched, generations-deep local knowledge that includes experiential understanding of soil and climate and crops and growth patterns, and the impact on climate, water supplies, irrigation ..."

Bill Gates' model is a reductive technocratic and technological model ... this centralized tech model, when it hits nature and when it hits human beings and when it hits democracy, creates real problems ... perhaps those problems further benefit centralized power ... they're rushing to solutions that lead to the

*centralization of power rather than accepting that power needs to be ...
decentralized to better serve the people and better understand nature ...”*

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