

## Family Farm Defenders

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### FFD Mission

Family Farm Defenders is a tax-deductible non-profit activist organization made up of farmers and concerned consumers. We are seeking ways to bring fair prices back to farmers and to insure a safe and sustainably produced food for consumers.

## FFD President's Message - Joel Greeno

### Hello Friends!

Writing to you from Kendall, WI. With 2020 still on our minds and 2021 providing more of the same complications, I hope this finds everyone well. In Wisconsin our growing season has been exciting. We've had near freezing temperatures, record high temperatures, droughts, floods, and tornadoes. If you experienced the same, I hope you have fared well. Others have suffered through forest fires and worse extreme weather events. Our wish is for everything to be green and growing, and for everyone to have a bright and prosperous future.

I would like to take some time to address a serious issue - that issue being racism, prejudice, and hate. Though I feel somewhat inadequate to address the subject, I feel compelled to do so anyway. Given that I have a functioning soul and a strong moral and ethical compass instilled in me by my mom and dad, my family and friends, and my longtime mentor - FFD founder John Kinsman - I will do my best.

My family has been on the continent since 1680, and I often wonder what their early existence was like. I'm sure that life was difficult, but you hope it was also productive. And yet I often wonder what role in history my ancestors played.

We know that the native peoples of North America were not treated very well, and I shudder to think what my ancestors may have done as part of this settler colonial project. I do not know for sure, but I can only hope for the best.

And it wasn't long after that when slavery became part of our country's legacy. One doesn't need to be much of a history buff to know that the Civil War did not really end slavery. Even the 1960s Civil Rights Movement could not abolish the stigma of racism. We are still left wondering what the wars in Korea and Vietnam were fought over. It just seems that the US has always had a reason to hate someone. For how many years was Russia the Cold War enemy. Then we had the 9-11 attack and the "war on terrorism" - another reason to hate.

Then amid all the reactionary politics and the Covid 19 pandemic came the death of George Floyd.

While instances like that of the death of George Floyd have been tragically common (Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Breonna Taylor all come to mind), nothing seemed to have elevated the issue of racism to the level that George Floyd's death did. *(Continued on pg. 3)*



**JOEL GREENO ATTENDS 2019 FARM AID EVENT**  
**Farm Aid Focus was on the Dairy Crisis**  
**and the Loss of Family Farms**

**FARM AID HERO**  
**Joel Greeno**  
*source:farmaid.org*

This event further propelled the Black Lives Matter movement into national consciousness, though there were certainly many earlier episodes of popular outrage like in Ferguson, MO. The brutality of the police was made worse by rightwing violence against communities of color simply trying to defend themselves. To what lengths are 300 years of racism, prejudice, and hate allowed to boil?

Thankfully, many people stood up in defense of Black Lives Matter. Yet others tried to erode the credibility of this effort, saying "all lives matter" while not bothering to address the institutionalized discrimination that persists at all levels - a convenient distraction from issues at hand. Even compassionate people within this movement continue to struggle with what it feels like to be the benefactor and/or survivor of centuries of oppression.

I will put this in the context of the sorry events of January 6th at the U.S. Capitol. If a comparable number of people had gone to Washington D.C. on that date to protest the government, wearing similar clothes and gear, carrying flags and signs except they were all black, I fear most of them would have been shot on the spot. I could be wrong, but I fear I'm not. And this is why as a nation I feel we're not prepared to move forward on this issue.

How in this day and age do we still have people that claim to be a good honorable citizens, and yet they carry Confederate and Nazi flags? Many of us may know family and friends who support these ideas. How from this divisive situation can we create positive change? How do we create a society free of racism and prejudice and hate?

Too many wish to approach each and every issue as judge and jury. Mostly I think, though, what we really need to do is listen. Listen to the stories of pain; listen to the stories of hurt; listen to the people who have real life experience of the deep seated conflicts facing our society. If we truly believe in peace and justice, how do we make it happen? Even now as black farmers are seeking reparations after centuries of systemic racism, there are those saying that they can't have what I don't have. As if trying to rectify past wrongs is a bad thing. Where is our compassion? Where is our empathy? Why does everyone want to be judge and jury?

Once again, the task at hand for those with a functioning soul and a strong moral and ethical compass is to instill peace and bring about justice - by whatever compassionate means necessary.

**From the Farm - Everyone Be Well and Stay Safe.**