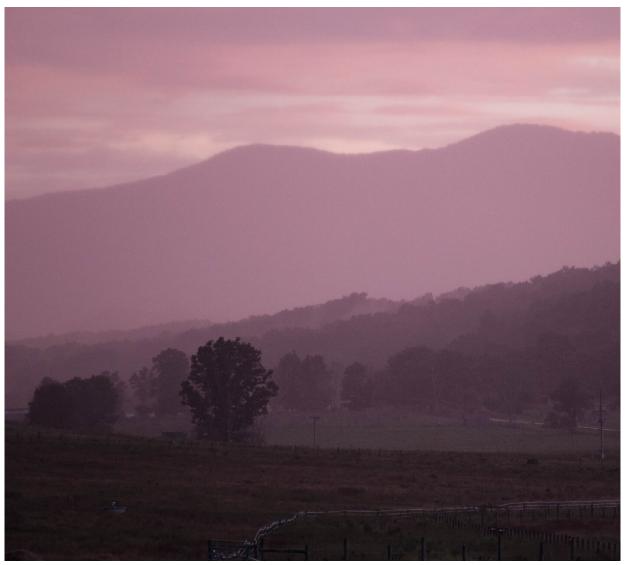
'Growing Climate Solutions Act' gives fari the carbon market table

By Guest Column - September 10, 2020



The sun sets over a hazy mountain ridge in Highland County. (Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

By Robert Whitescarver

At last, farmers and foresters might have a seat at the carbon market table. Bipartisan introduced in both the U.S. Senate and House to create incentives and remove barrier to receive credits for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing soil organic 1

The "Growing Climate Solutions Act" will empower the U.S. Department of Agriculture programs for farmers and foresters that support greenhouse gas reductions and carbe bipartisan legislation was introduced on the House side by U.S. Reps. Abigail Spanberg Bacon, R-Neb. In the Senate it was introduced by Sens. Mike Braun, R-Ind., and Shelde

As a long-time soil health professional, farmer and an environmentalist who cares abc totally support the legislation and encourage others to study and support it, as well.

If enacted and carried out, it will reduce greenhouse gases, improve soil health, reduc who work the land credits and payments for good stewardship — creating a pathway while ensuring more sustainable farms and forests.

Oceans are the largest carbon sink on Earth, followed by our soil and forests. Plants – grasses, corn, soybeans, seaweed, algae – all of them literally take carbon out of the a and store it in their tissue. Yep, good ol' photosynthesis. Plant residues left on the land land put that carbon into the soil – the second largest carbon sink on earth. Trees of c carbon sink, store carbon as wood and roots.

Sustainably raised livestock also play a key role in advancing carbon sequestration. Gr ruminants are essentially mobile carbon sequestration enhancers and fertilizer factor come out the back end they are placing digested grass back on the land, carbon and a

Putting carbon on and in the soil increases soil organic matter. That's a good thing be matter can retain more moisture, resist erosion more efficiently and recycle nutrients the higher the soil organic matter, the healthier the soil.

It has been shown that a 1 percent increase in soil organic matter can sequester about Using plants to take carbon out of the air and then leaving most of the plant on the lai matter. For example, a farmer that grows corn for grain can harvest the ear of corn ar land. That dead cornstalk is loaded with carbon. Left on the land it will intercept the ϵ helping reduce soil erosion. When the cornstalk decomposes it adds organic matter to speak this is referred to as plant residue use.

Other plant residue use practices include leaving wheat straw and soybean stubble or harvested and feeding hay to cows.

The "Growing Climate Solutions Act" lists the following practices that may qualify for credits or carbon sequestration: plant residue use, emissions reductions derived from use, livestock emissions reductions, on-farm energy generation, energy feedstock prc reductions, reforestation, forest management, avoidance of forest conversion, grassla rotational grazing and other practices deemed appropriate by a newly formed advisor

Overall, U.S. farmland soil is capable of sequestering 650 million metric tons of carbor 11 percent of America's greenhouse gas emissions, according to a report published by America.

The soil and forests are the most practical and available carbon sinks. And it makes se the most soil – farmers and foresters – to use plants to capture carbon from the air ar

The "Growing Climate Solutions Act" is supported by a wide range of farm, environme organizations including the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the Virginia Agribusines Cattleman's Association, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, Virgir Voters, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and many others.

I urge my fellow Virginians who are concerned about the future of agriculture and our representatives in Congress and encourage them to support this commonsense legisl

Robert "Bobby" Whitescarver was named "soil health champion" in the National Assoc Districts Soil Health Network, author, farmer and educator at James Madison Univers. through his website at http://www.gettingmoreontheground.com

Guest Column

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