



Cordova for President

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The United States Constitution

Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution imposes only three eligibility requirements on persons serving as president, based on the officeholder's age, time of residency in the U.S., and citizenship status:

U.S. Constitution – Presidential Candidate Eligibility

"No person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty-five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States."

POLICY POSITION PAPER

AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY

Ending the Corporate Capture of American Farmland, Prohibiting Private Equity Ownership of Food-Producing Land, and Protecting the American Food Supply as a Public Health and National Security Imperative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States is losing its family farm infrastructure at a rate of approximately 2,000 acres per day. This loss is being accelerated by three intersecting forces: corporate and foreign acquisition of agricultural land at scale, the abuse of eminent domain power to seize farmland for private commercial benefit, and the systematic underpayment of farmers when their land is taken. Compounding these threats is the growing control of American food production by private equity firms whose fiduciary obligations to shareholders are structurally incompatible with safe, honest, and humane food production. The result is an American food supply that is being quietly degraded — through chemical additives, inhumane livestock conditions, and the subordination of public health to quarterly returns — while the institutions responsible for oversight have failed to act.

The Cordova Administration will treat this as what it is: a food sovereignty crisis, a public health emergency, and a national security threat. We will act accordingly from day one.

I. THE CRISIS: FARMLAND CAPTURE AND THE CORRUPTION OF THE FOOD SUPPLY

A. Scale of Loss

American farmland is disappearing at a pace that threatens the nation's long-term capacity for domestic food production. According to the American Farmland Trust, the



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United States loses approximately 2,000 acres of agricultural land every single day to development, corporate acquisition, and government action. At this rate, the foundation of American food independence is being permanently erased.

B. The Corporate and Foreign Acquisition Problem

Institutional investors and foreign entities have entered the American farmland market at scale over the past two decades. Key facts:

- Bill Gates is now the largest private farmland owner in the United States, controlling over 270,000 acres across multiple states.
- Private equity firms have made systematic agricultural land acquisitions, driving up per-acre prices beyond the reach of generational family farmers.
- Chinese-linked entities have purchased farmland near U.S. military installations, a direct national security threat that has received inadequate federal enforcement.
- Foreign ownership of American agricultural land has increased substantially over the past decade, with insufficient federal transparency or restriction.

C. The Private Equity Food Degradation Problem

Private equity does not buy farms to grow food. It buys farms to extract returns for shareholders on a fixed timeline. That business model is structurally incompatible with safe, humane, and honest food production. The American public is paying for the difference with their health.

When private equity acquires food-producing operations, the consequences for consumers are predictable and documented:

Animal Welfare Collapses Under the Profit Mandate.

On a family farm, the farmer lives alongside his animals. Their welfare is personal, practical, and moral. On a PE-owned industrial operation, animal welfare is a line item — a cost to be minimized in service of shareholder returns. The results are systematic:

- Severe overcrowding of livestock, creating conditions that require routine antibiotic administration simply to prevent mass disease outbreak — not to treat illness, but to compensate for the inhumane conditions in which the animals are forced to live.



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- Factory farming practices — including confinement systems, growth hormones, and accelerated slaughter timelines — that would never exist on a family operation and that produce meat of demonstrably lower nutritional quality.
- Animals treated not as living creatures but as inventory units, with welfare decisions made not by farmers but by financial analysts optimizing a balance sheet.

Chemical Additives Extend Shelf Life at the Expense of Human Health.

PE-owned food operations are optimized for one outcome: product that survives long enough in the supply chain to generate maximum distribution revenue. The shelf life of food is a financial asset. The nutritional and chemical integrity of that food is a secondary consideration at best:

- Preservatives, stabilizers, artificial colorings, and chemical additives are introduced into food products not because they benefit the consumer, but because they benefit the logistics and revenue model of the producer.
- Processing methods are designed for distribution efficiency rather than nutritional preservation, stripping food of natural value while adding synthetic substitutes that the human body was not designed to process.
- The cumulative effect of these practices is a slow, systematic degradation of the American food supply — approved additive by approved additive, waiver by waiver — while regulatory agencies staffed by industry veterans look away.

The Public Bears the Cost. Shareholders Capture the Profit.

Private equity exits its agricultural investments on a fixed timeline — typically five to seven years. When they leave, they take their returns. What remains:

- Higher rates of diet-related chronic illness — obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer — driven in part by a food supply saturated with chemical additives and nutritionally hollow processed products.
- Accelerating antibiotic resistance, one of the most serious public health threats of the coming century, driven substantially by the routine use of antibiotics in industrial livestock operations.



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- Environmental contamination of soil and groundwater from industrial agricultural runoff, leaving lasting damage to the land and water resources of rural communities.
- Hollowed-out rural economies, as PE firms exit and leave behind degraded operations, displaced workers, and land that has been exhausted by short-term extraction rather than long-term stewardship.

D. The Eminent Domain Abuse Problem

The 2005 Supreme Court decision in *Kelo v. City of New London* opened the door to eminent domain being used not for traditional public purposes but for economic development that primarily benefits private commercial interests. State-level reform has been uneven and toothless. The result is that local governments now routinely seize farmland on behalf of corporate projects, compensating owners at a fraction of true market value and destroying multigenerational agricultural operations.

The case of Jeff Melin of Spalding County, Georgia is illustrative. County authorities used eminent domain to seize 225 acres of his operating 450-acre cattle farm to build a 730-acre airport with 124 hangars serving primarily private and corporate aircraft. Melin received compensation at a fraction of the per-acre price Georgia Power paid for a nearby comparable parcel. He was given 90 days to vacate a shop containing 75 years of accumulated farm equipment and to relocate 95 head of cattle. Century-old pecan trees were destroyed before the legal process was complete. This is not an isolated incident. It is a pattern.

II. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

A. The Fifth Amendment Standard

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation. Two components of this guarantee have been systematically violated in the modern era of eminent domain abuse: the public use requirement and the just compensation requirement.

B. Public Health Authority

The federal government's authority to regulate food safety and the conditions of food production is well established under the Commerce Clause and the existing statutory



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framework of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Federal Meat Inspection Act, and the Poultry Products Inspection Act. The Cordova Administration will use this authority aggressively to impose mandatory disclosure requirements, chemical use restrictions, and livestock welfare standards on all PE-owned food-producing operations.

C. The Post-Kelo Failure

The Kelo decision generated bipartisan condemnation. Congress passed the Private Property Rights Protection Act in 2006, but it was structurally weak and has failed to prevent ongoing abuse. The Cordova Administration will pursue both executive and legislative action to restore the original integrity of the public use requirement as it applies to agricultural land.

D. Federal Authority Over Federally-Funded Projects

The federal government exercises substantial authority over state and local infrastructure projects that receive federal funding. Any project that uses eminent domain to destroy active agricultural land without genuine public necessity and without full market compensation is a misuse of federal funds and subject to federal corrective action.

III. THE CORDOVA ADMINISTRATION POLICY AGENDA

A. Immediate Executive Action

On the first day of the Cordova Administration, the following executive actions will be taken:

1. The FAA will be directed to suspend all Airport Improvement Program grants and federal approvals for any airport project that has used eminent domain to seize active agricultural land without demonstrated public necessity, pending review.
2. The Department of Justice will be directed to investigate whether compensation paid to farmers in eminent domain actions involving federally-funded projects meets the constitutional standard of just compensation.
3. The FDA and USDA will be directed to conduct an immediate audit of all chemical additives currently approved for use in food products owned or operated by private equity-backed corporations, with particular attention to preservatives, colorings, stabilizers, and growth-accelerating substances.



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4. A comprehensive Presidential Executive Order will be issued establishing the Agricultural Sovereignty and Eminent Domain Integrity Framework.

B. Prohibition on Private Equity Ownership of Food-Producing Farmland

The central question is not how much farmland private equity should be permitted to own. The central question is whether private equity should be permitted to own food-producing farmland at all. The answer is no.

Private equity ownership of active food-producing farmland is incompatible with the public interest for the following reasons, each of which is independently sufficient to justify prohibition:

- The fiduciary duty of a private equity firm runs to its investors, not to the public. Food safety, animal welfare, and nutritional integrity are costs to be minimized, not values to be upheld.
- Private equity operates on a fixed exit timeline of five to seven years. Responsible agricultural stewardship requires generational commitment. These two imperatives cannot coexist.
- PE ownership of farmland drives up land prices, making acquisition by family farmers economically impossible and accelerating the consolidation of food production into fewer, less accountable corporate hands.
- When PE firms exit agricultural investments, they leave behind degraded land, displaced workers, and communities stripped of their economic foundation.

The Cordova Administration will submit to Congress the American Agricultural Sovereignty Act, which will include the following provisions with respect to private equity:

1. Full Prohibition: No private equity firm, hedge fund, or institutional investor whose primary purpose is financial return rather than agricultural production may own, lease, or control active food-producing farmland in the United States.
2. Mandatory Divestiture: All private equity-owned agricultural land must be divested within three years of enactment. Right of first refusal will be granted, in order, to: (a) the original family from whom the land was acquired; (b) neighboring family farmers; (c) the state agricultural land trust.



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3. Enforcement: Violation of the prohibition will constitute a federal offense carrying civil penalties of not less than \$10,000 per acre per day of noncompliance, and criminal liability for corporate officers who knowingly participate in prohibited ownership structures.

C. Foreign Ownership Prohibition

Foreign nationals, foreign governments, and entities with more than 5% foreign ownership are prohibited from owning agricultural land in the United States. Existing foreign-owned agricultural parcels will be subject to mandatory divestiture within two years of enactment, with right of first refusal to American family farmers.

D. Independent Federal Appraisal and Just Compensation Reform

No eminent domain taking of agricultural land may be finalized without an independent federal appraisal conducted by an appraiser with no financial relationship to the condemning authority. The appraisal must reflect true market value based on the highest comparable sale within 50 miles in the preceding five years. Farmers who receive compensation below this standard will have a federal right of action for the difference plus attorney's fees.

E. National Eminent Domain Transparency Registry

The Cordova Administration will establish a publicly accessible federal database cataloguing every eminent domain action involving agricultural land in the United States, including the condemning authority, project purpose, acreage taken, food production displaced, compensation paid, independent market valuation, federal funding received, and current use of the taken land updated annually.

IV. FOOD SAFETY AND THE PRIVATE EQUITY FOOD SUPPLY: A PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATE

The degradation of the American food supply under corporate and private equity ownership is not a theoretical concern. It is a documented, ongoing public health crisis that the federal government has failed to confront with the seriousness it demands.

A. Mandatory Chemical Additive Disclosure and Restriction

The Cordova Administration will pursue the following food safety reforms:



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1. **Full Ingredient Transparency:** All food products sold in the United States must disclose on their primary label every chemical additive, preservative, artificial coloring, stabilizer, and processing agent contained in the product, using plain language rather than industry code names.
2. **Presumption of Harm:** Any chemical additive that has not been independently reviewed by a scientist with no financial relationship to the food industry within the preceding ten years will be treated as presumptively unsafe and subject to immediate suspension pending review.
3. **Shelf Life Chemical Audit:** The FDA will conduct a comprehensive audit of all additives used primarily to extend shelf life rather than enhance nutritional value. Additives found to pose material risk to human health will be banned. There will be no grandfather exemptions.
4. **Corporate Ownership Disclosure on Packaging:** Every food product must disclose on its label whether the producing operation is owned or controlled by a private equity firm, hedge fund, or institutional investor. Americans have the right to know who is making their food and what their incentives are.

B. Livestock Welfare as a Food Safety Standard

Inhumane livestock conditions are not merely an ethical failure. They are a food safety failure. Overcrowded, stressed, chemically-dependent animals produce food of lower nutritional quality and higher health risk. The Cordova Administration will:

1. Establish mandatory minimum space, movement, and living condition standards for all livestock raised for human consumption. Violation of these standards will result in immediate suspension of USDA approval for sale of the affected products.
2. Ban the routine preventive use of medically important antibiotics in livestock operations. Antibiotics may be used only to treat confirmed illness in individual animals under veterinary supervision. This is not an agricultural policy. It is a public health policy. Antibiotic resistance is projected to kill millions of Americans over the coming decades, and the routine antibiotic use in industrial livestock operations is a primary driver.
3. Prohibit the use of growth hormones and artificial growth accelerants in livestock raised for human consumption, consistent with standards maintained by the European Union and most of the developed world.



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C. Criminal Liability for Knowing Food Supply Contamination

The existing regulatory framework treats food safety violations primarily as civil matters subject to fines — fines that are, for PE-owned corporations, simply a cost of doing business absorbed into the financial model. This is not accountability. It is a fee structure.

The Cordova Administration will pursue legislation establishing criminal liability for corporate officers and private equity principals who knowingly approve or permit food production practices that introduce harmful chemicals, biologically compromised animals, or demonstrably unsafe products into the American food supply. The standard will be knowing conduct, not negligence — but the penalty will be commensurate with the harm: not a fine, but prosecution.

If you knowingly poison the food supply of the American people in order to generate a return for your investors, you will be prosecuted. Not fined. Prosecuted.

V. THE MELIN PRECEDENT: RETROACTIVE FEDERAL REVIEW

The Jeff Melin case in Spalding County, Georgia will serve as the first application of the Cordova Administration's federal review authority. The FAA will be directed to halt all federal support for the Spalding County Airport project pending a determination of whether the project meets the public benefit standard required for federal aviation funding, an independent federal appraisal of all land taken from private owners, a DOJ review of whether compensation paid meets the constitutional just compensation standard, and a full agricultural impact assessment of the food production capacity permanently destroyed.

If the project fails any of these reviews, federal funding will be terminated. Without federal funding, the county faces the full financial weight of the project alone — a weight a county with a below-average median income cannot carry. The practical effect will be to halt the project and create conditions for the land to be returned to agricultural use.

VI. CONCLUSION



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The American family farm is not a relic. It is a living institution that feeds this nation, anchors rural communities, and represents a form of independence that no amount of private equity capital, government overreach, or foreign acquisition should be permitted to erase.

Private equity does not grow food. It harvests profit from food. The difference between those two things is the difference between a nation that feeds itself honestly and a nation that consumes whatever a financial model permits it to be given.

The Cordova Administration will draw that line clearly, enforce it without apology, and ensure that the men and women who grow the food this country depends on are protected — not plundered — by the government they elect.