

Charlotte Vierling

Food Sustainability

5 April 2021

Profile Project

Use this link to see full project (has all of the elements in one file, but would not allow me to submit to Moodle. Picture of project at the bottom of this document):

https://www.canva.com/design/DAEZoQN8Niw/TmhMOXENxvcfpWOgT16UEA/watch?utm_content=DAEZoQN8Niw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink

This profile centers on The Farm Aid Inaugural Concert of 1985, a time when music and activism united to protect a classic American institution: the rural family farm. Rising interest rates, declining prices, unfortunate weather conditions, counterproductive government action, and extreme farm debt resulted in thousands of American farms at risk of foreclosure with an Iowa epicenter. Essentially, the Farmers Home Admin, an arm of the USDA, aggressively sought to collect on the loans they had encouraged small farmers to take out to expand their operations when land value was high and the market appeared promising, per Earl Butz's "get big or get out" mantra. As such prices for land and produce bottomed out, the government began to rapidly foreclose on properties, ordering farmers off of the land within thirty days or forcibly removing farmers from their entire livelihoods. Set primarily in the corn belt of the United States, the resulting Farm Crisis wiped out more than a third of farms, an estimated 300,000 farmers defaulted on their loans by the end of the decade, and more bank failures occurred in 1985 than

in any year since the 1930s, all compounding to economic distress. This domestic issue was largely disregarded from the public eye, until major celebrities began speaking out on the Farm Crisis to an international audience. Aiming to raise awareness and funds for the American farmer, the 1985 Farm Aid effectively brought together rock, folk, and country icons to perform for a cause and urge the public to open their minds and empty their wallets. For fourteen hours, in the pouring rain, American favorites performed to avid fans and spoke to the Farm Crisis at “FarmAid: A Concert for America.” The concert ultimately raised \$9 million, \$41 million short of their initial goal, yet was deemed successful in raising awareness to the Crisis, directing funds to farm-related causes, and increasing the spirits of the local farmer. Given the resulting praise from the 1985 event, the Farm Aid organization continues to host events and fundraise for their primary objectives, notably lessened industrial agriculture and the promotion of the Good Food Movement, with the charity still running over thirty years later and a scheduled concert for 2021. While simply a brief synopsis to the otherwise extensive event, the concert itself remains as one of the greatest representations of American strength and unity throughout crisis.

FARM AID: 1985

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CLICK RIGHT TO LISTEN TO
THE LATEST EPISODE OF
FUNKY FARMERS: 80'S
WEEK!



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The 80,000 fans in Champaign, Illinois for the 1985 Farm Aid (Above)

Advertisement material for the 1985 Farm Aid. Notice the emphasis on "American" assistance bolstered with appearances from white celebrities (Right)

