Script for August Recess Farm Bill Meetings

Sample Meeting Outline – this is meant to be a guideline, and for your internal use only. Any text in red is a place where you can customize. Maybe not everything here is said in the meeting (keep it conversational) but it is a good tool to get you started. That being said, please make sure you hit the ask at the end!

Parts of this script have two options – Option 1 is for offices who tend to agree with us, while Option 2 is for offices that may not agree on the need for bold climate action.

We recommend you copy and paste this script into a new document and create one script per meeting. Keep in mind that you may be joined by a few other participants and to coordinate on who is taking what. You’ll have time to do this during the practice sessions during the training.

Introductions:

Name, relevant geography, health & medical job or expertise.
(Keep these brief so there’s more time for discussion)
We are excited to meet with you today on behalf of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health. We have long been advocating for equitable responses to the ongoing health impacts posed by climate change.

Establishing Authority:

The Medical Society Consortium brings together medical associations, societies and organizations that represent 700,000 clinical practitioners who share a commitment to protecting public health from climate change.

We wanted to meet with you today because we care deeply about the health of our community — your constituents. As healthcare providers, we are on the frontlines of responding to the health impacts of the food we eat and climate disasters that are all too common in YOUR city/state.

CHOOSE ONE:

Option 1: Thank you for meeting with us today. We are anxious to discuss the impacts we see every day on our patients and communities due to our current food and farm systems.

Option 2: We want to thank you for taking our meeting and for being open to hearing what we have to say about farm policy that is currently under discussion in Washington, DC and the impact those policies will have on health from climate change.
Sharing Your Story:

Speaking from my/our own personal experience as health professionals in your district/state, we/I have seen lives and livelihoods altered by climate change and through the health impacts of food and farm policy on health.

Highlight the climate events that your city/state experiences such as:

- Our current food and farming systems make it too easy for people to eat too much high-calorie ultra processed food and too little fruits and vegetables. Poor nutrition is a leading cause of chronic illness - and of health disparities - including diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. These diet-related illnesses are major drivers of healthcare costs in the U.S.

- Climate-related heat, drought, and flooding damage farms and crops, increasing food prices and food insecurity.

- People with these chronic illnesses are at higher risk from climate-related events including extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

- Enhanced conditions for ozone and particulate air pollution, linked to asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease and premature death, related to air pollution.

- Wildfires and dangerous smoke that spreads thousands of miles.

- Extreme weather patterns such as high heat, hurricanes, flooding and volatile winters.

- Heat stress of farm workers.

Stating the Challenge AND the Opportunity:

CHOOSE ONE:

Option 1: Farm policy discussions provide an unparalleled opportunity to improve the health of individuals and communities across the U.S. by increasing access to healthy foods, reducing air and water pollution, and building climate resilience

Option 2: Current farming practices often contribute to air, water, and climate pollution. Fertilizer runoff pollutes ground and surface water. Large animal feeding operations produce methane gas (with very high global warming potential) and ammonia and particulate matter. People living near these operations have more asthma exacerbations.

ALL: Climate change is also having worsening health impacts on communities across the US. As health professionals, we see an urgent need to take action to protect our health today and the health of our children and future generations. Food and farm policy offers an exceptional opportunity to do that.
**Confirming Their Responsibility:**

As Congress is considering farming policy, there are many steps that can be taken to address these challenges and work towards achieving significant health benefits. We hope that you will consider the recommendations that health professionals have made to the House and Senate Agriculture committees, outlined in our recent letter.

**Making the Ask:**

We recognize that there are several asks here, and that you might not be able to get through all of them. If it’s helpful, consider identifying one or two that are most relevant to you, your expertise, or your community. If you live in a rural state, consider focusing on a fair and just farm system. In urban areas, you could focus on access to healthy foods.

We have identified four pillars for healthy food and farm policy, including better access to healthy foods, support for healthy farms, a fair and just farm system, and more research to promote a sustainable and resilient food and farm system. Our letter provides a little more detail on each of these.

- **Support healthy foods, healthy people, and healthy communities** by improving access to SNAP, increasing investments in healthy and nutritious foods, bolstering support for local and regional food systems, and reducing food waste.
- **Support healthy farms and a healthy planet** by increasing support for conservation programs and sustainable and organic agriculture.
- **Support a fair and just farm system** by investing in rural communities through greater access to credit and technical assistance.
- **Support expanded research** to develop the tools to make our food and farm system healthy, sustainable, and resilient.

**Pre-empting their Response:**

If your member or staff gives a quick “yes” or “I’ll try,” use this opportunity to build on their agreement by furthering your relationship with the office and getting their thoughts on strategy.

Sample questions:

- Where are our efforts best spent? Where should we spread our message on food, farm policy, climate and health?
- How can we help you highlight the health impacts of climate change in state/district?
● Which other offices should we be talking to?

● Are there any upcoming in-state or in-district events where we can highlight the health impacts of climate change and food and farm policy?

● What additional information from the health and medical community would support you in your work?

If your member or staff is not on our side and gives a quick response, use this opportunity to dig for more information.

Sample questions:

● What are you hearing from constituents about (pick a local event like wildfires, flooding, etc)

● Who is your office hearing from on pollution and climate change issues?

If there is a question you don’t feel comfortable answering, especially if it’s about the science or research, you can always respond “I want to ensure we can adequately address that question so let me follow up with you” or “that’s not quite my area expertise so I’m not sure I’m prepared to answer it well at the moment, but I will certainly follow up with you on that”

**Remainder of Meeting:**

Thank you so much for joining us today. With our last few minutes, I was hoping we could hear from you on the current priorities of the Senator/Congresswoman/Congressman.

*Thank you for participating in this Recess Meeting. Please fill out our feedback form [here](#) to tell us about your experience.*