

# FROM FALLOW FIELDS TO COMMUNAL FARM



Lopez Family Farms (left), regenerative farm (right). CC BY 4.0 I.Jenniches

**This land's story:** Located in the San Ysidro Church community of Doña Ana County, this land has sustained the Lopez family for over five generations. Once part of a much larger farm property, three parcels represent the final six acres of the original family land.

Once known as Lopez Chile Farm with the motto "It hurts so good!", the Lopez family grew pecans, alfalfa, cotton, corn, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, stewarding both the soil and a vision of community abundance. Now, Melissa Lopez-Sullivan is leading the next chapter; protecting this land as a community-held place of nourishment, teaching, and transformation.

Lopez Legacy Farms is advancing a three-phase land acquisition and stewardship strategy, ensuring long-term community control while allowing for sustainable, step-by-step growth. Each phase builds toward the vision of placing all 6 acres into the New Mexico Agrarian Commons, securing the land for collective benefit in perpetuity.

**Our vision for this land:** Lopez Legacy Farms is proud to be working toward placing our land into the New Mexico Agrarian Commons, a community-led trust committed to land justice, ecological healing, and generational stewardship.

## New Mexico Agrarian Commons

Chihuahuan Desert Charities, Naya's Refuge, and New Mexico Healthy Soil Working Group founded the New Mexico Agrarian Commons in partnership with the Agrarian Trust. The Commons realizes an innovative and robust model of shared land ownership intertwining agriculture, ecological stewardship, environmental and social justice, and community well-being.

The Commons creates affordable access to land, ensuring economic opportunities for historically displaced, disenfranchised or financially disadvantaged people with deference to Indigenous communities, people of color, and women. By holding land to provide long-term, affordable and secure lease tenure to farmers and ranchers for regenerative agriculture, the Commons is strengthening local food systems and ecology at the same time.



Melissa Lopez-Sullivan and her father, Roger Morales, CC BY 4.0 | Jenniches

## Healing Land, Growing Justice

Lopez Legacy Farms is an extension of the values and mission of the New Mexico Doula Association (NMDA), where this project's founder, Melissa Lopez-Sullivan, serves as Executive Director. It represents the physical grounding of birth justice and reproductive justice; reconnecting the work of community-based doulas and full-spectrum care providers to the land, food systems, and cultural healing traditions that sustain our people.

The agricultural history of New Mexico is shaped by colonization, land theft, and racialized displacement. Indigenous communities stewarded this land for generations before colonization imposed extractive systems like *encomienda*. Later, Mexican landowners lost property through post-1848 legal systems that erased Spanish land grants. Black farmers, including the founders of Blackdom, NM, also faced barriers to land access due to racism and environmental exclusion. Lopez Legacy Farms reclaims a small but powerful piece of this history by centering land, healing, and community care in the hands of those most impacted.

Rooted in NMDA's vision that all people deserve access to culturally humble, affirming care, Lopez Legacy Farms will serve as a vital site for rest, recovery, and reconnection for birthworkers and families. From nourishing herbal support for pregnant people to economic opportunity for caregivers and farmers, this project builds the infrastructure for healthy, sustainable communities led by those most impacted.

## How you can help

We are actively raising funds to:

- Purchase and protect each parcel of land, 2 acres at a time
- Transition the land into the NM Agrarian Commons
- Build infrastructure for irrigation, gardens, and cooperative programming

Every contribution helps root this land in justice, healing, and intergenerational care.

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LEARN MORE:

[NMhealthysoil.org/land-access/](https://NMhealthysoil.org/land-access/)



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