



# HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

## FARM BILL: SHORT SUMMARY

### TITLE I: COMMODITIES

The farm bill strengthens the farm safety net to help farmers and ranchers weather a 5-year recession, depressed prices and a 52-percent drop in net farm income. Inherent risks in agriculture, including weather, natural disasters and fluctuations in global commodity markets, have been compounded by high and rising foreign subsidies, tariffs and non-tariff barriers – resulting in chronically depressed prices for farmers and ranchers.

#### **Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) are maintained and strengthened**

Maintains and strengthens the options of PLC and ARC and allows farmers to make a new election.

PLC is strengthened by allowing reference prices to adjust when markets improve and by allowing farmers affected by long-term exceptional drought during the previous opportunity to update their yields.

ARC is strengthened by using actual yields collected by RMA, by separately calculating revenues for dryland and irrigated land and by using the physical county of the farm when determining ARC benefits. These changes will help ensure accuracy in ARC assistance and mitigate county-to-county disparities.

#### **The Marketing Loan is maintained with modest adjustments**

#### **No taxpayer cost U.S. sugar policy is maintained**

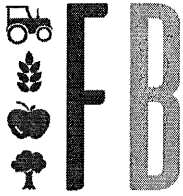
#### **Dairy policy is maintained and strengthened**

The Margin Protection Program is renamed the Dairy Risk Management (DRM) program. The first 5 million pounds of milk production on a dairy is made eligible for higher coverage levels at lower premiums. Milk production not covered under DRM is made fully eligible for a comparable crop insurance policy. Finally, feed costs are studied to ensure accuracy in the DRM, and class I milk calculations are adjusted to help dairy farmers better manage risk in the futures market.

#### **Livestock Disaster Programs are maintained with modest adjustments**

#### **Administration provisions of the farm bill are maintained with modest adjustments**

Farm and ranch families that structure as pass-through entities—very common to agriculture—are all treated equally, and all family members engaged in farming or ranching are recognized for purposes of assistance and eligibility



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### TITLE II: CONSERVATION

The farm bill strengthens the investment in locally-led, voluntary, incentive-based conservation on working lands to promote healthy soils, reduce erosion, provide cleaner air and water, and to enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat.

#### **The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is maintained and strengthened**

Increases funding for EQIP to \$3 billion per year over the life of the farm bill, incorporating the best features of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) into the most successful and popular working lands initiative.

#### **The Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program are maintained and strengthened**

Provides \$250 million per year for RCPP, \$500 million per year to ACEP, and \$100 million per year to Small Watershed Rehabilitation while simplifying complicated application processes and adding program flexibility.

#### **The Conservation Reserve Program is maintained and strengthened**

Increases CRP acreage to 29 million acres over the life of the farm bill while capping rental rates and targeting acreage toward the nation's most fragile lands.

#### **Feral swine eradication and control pilot program is established**

Provides \$100 million toward a pilot program to address destructive and invasive feral swine.

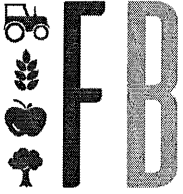
#### **Other provisions are maintained and strengthened**

Provides \$50 million for the Voluntary Public Access Program, \$5 million for Grassroots Source Water Protection, \$10 million for the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program, while reauthorizing the Private Grazing Land Program, and eliminating the arbitrary SAM/DUNS number requirement that has frustrated conservation efforts.

### TITLE III: TRADE

The farm bill maintains and strengthens investment in trade promotion initiatives designed to build upon the nation's \$140 billion in annual agricultural exports and the rare trade surplus for the United States that agriculture exports provide, while improving U.S. food aid.

#### **Establishes International Market Development Program**



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Maintains and strengthens the program purposes of the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program, and the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), bringing these initiatives under the single umbrella of a \$255 million per year International Market Development Program, with no less than \$200 million for MAP, no less than \$34.5 million for FMD, \$10 million for EMP, and \$9 million for TASC.

### **U.S. food aid is maintained and improved**

Maintains and improves international food aid programs, including Food for Peace, Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, Farmer-to-Farmer, Local and Regional Procurement, the Cochran Fellowship Program, the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. The farm bill retains in-kind food aid as the foundation of U.S. food aid, while strengthening oversight, monitoring, and program evaluation and ensuring labeling requirements appropriately convey the generosity of the American people.

## **TITLE IV: NUTRITION**

The farm bill maintains and strengthens the nation's nutrition programs to assist those who struggle to put food on the table, while providing critical training to help people learn the skills necessary to gain well-paying jobs, financial self-sufficiency and better futures for themselves and their families.

### **Real work and training requirements are established**

Provides that work capable adults (ages 18-59) work or participate in work training for 20 hours per week. Exempted populations include seniors, disabled, those caring for children under six, or those who are pregnant. No individual loses SNAP benefits unless they decline to work or accept free training to learn a skill.

### **Authentic categorical eligibility is established**

Modifies categorical eligibility rules so people may qualify for SNAP based on their eligibility and receipt of benefits from other low-income assistance programs based on receipt of SSI, General Assistance, or cash or other TANF benefits, such as child care, transportation assistance or counseling. Requiring authentic categorical eligibility as opposed to nominal services (such as the use of hotlines or receiving brochures) helps increase assistance for those truly in need of help, allowing the farm bill to significantly increase general asset values, vehicle values, and savings account values that people may claim to remain eligible for SNAP.

### **Standard Utility Allowance based on actual heating and cooling costs**

Eliminates automatic availability of the Standard Utility Allowance for heating and cooling, meaning households will need to demonstrate actual utility costs in order to qualify for an increase SNAP benefits. The elderly are exempt from the documentation requirement.



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### **Healthy food incentives are maintained and strengthened**

Incentivizes healthier diets by promoting increased purchases of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, including through retailer-funded incentive pilot projects.

Increases funding to \$60 million per year for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, with \$20 million to be used for the Farm-to-Food Bank program providing inexpensive food for low-income families.

Maintains the Commodity Distribution Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Distribution of Surplus Commodities, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchase Program, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

## **TITLE V: CREDIT**

The farm bill maintains and strengthens critical access to credit for America's farmers and ranchers who are working through the hard economic times of a 5-year agriculture recession.

### **Beginning Farmers and Ranchers incentives are maintained and strengthened**

Maintains the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot Program, with matching funds for savings accounts, and reserves a portion of ownership and operating loans for beginning farmers and ranchers. Allows military and related experience to count toward 3-years of experience required prior to an application for an ownership loan.

### **Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee Program is maintained**

Maintains the Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee program to help farmers and ranchers implement conservation measures on their land.

### **Ownership and Farm Operating Loans are maintained and strengthened**

Updates loan limits for individual farmers and ranchers for the first time in 16 years, enabling producers to access the credit they need to produce a crop under today's costs of production.

## **TITLE VI: RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The farm bill works to help rural communities that have suffered alongside farmers and ranchers in the current agricultural recession. The bill includes a significant new investment to provide broadband service to harder-to-serve, more rural areas of the country, while also providing the Secretary of Agriculture the necessary tools to combat the ongoing opioid crisis and expand affordable healthcare coverage.

### **Efforts to combat opioid addiction are enhanced**



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Provides the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to help communities combat opioid addiction by prioritizing assistance to direct medical services where they are most urgently needed.

### **Broadband service to rural America is enhanced, especially to unserved and underserved areas**

Provides strong incentives for providers to offer quality broadband service to all of rural America, particularly harder-to-serve areas of the country, so today's families can live and work in these areas.

### **Efforts to provide affordable health care coverage in rural America is enhanced**

Provides incentives for the provision of healthcare coverage through agricultural healthcare plans to meet farm, ranch, and rural needs for individuals unable to access affordable healthcare coverage.

### **Rural development initiatives are maintained and strengthened**

Maintains and strengthens multiple initiatives under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act and the Rural Electrification Act that provide for rural water and waste, essential community facilities, rural business and economic development, rural electrification, cooperative development, telemedicine and distance learning, broadband, regional authorities, and other critical infrastructure, including the Value-Added Product Market Development Grant.

### **Energy initiatives are maintained and strengthened**

Maintains and improves the energy initiatives that enhance energy independence and efficiency while providing economic opportunities in rural America.

## TITLE VII: RESEARCH

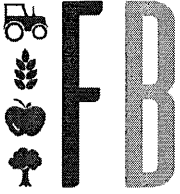
The farm bill keeps American agriculture at the forefront of innovation and productivity through cutting-edge research and support of the nation's land grant and non-land grant colleges of agriculture to provide the safest, most abundant, most affordable food supply in the world. Research is especially critical with the world population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050.

### **Critical research for specialty and organic crops expanded**

Provides full funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, maintaining set-asides for vital citrus research and extension. Increases funding for the Organic Agriculture Research & Extension Initiative, providing resources for combatting fraudulent imports of organic products coming into the United States. The farm bill promotes research on the development of mechanization and automation of labor-intensive tasks on farms and in packing facilities.

### **New scholarships established at 1890 land grant universities**

Establishes a grant program for each 1890 institution to award scholarships to individuals pursuing a



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career in food and agricultural sciences.

### **Eases the burden of an overly prescriptive federal bureaucracy**

Streamlines the plan of work and time & effort reporting processes for the land-grant formula funds to ensure that university research and extension personnel are able to spend their time and effort on actual projects rather than completing unnecessary federally-mandated reports.

## TITLE VIII: FORESTRY

### **Encourages proper management for healthy and productive Federal, state, and private forests**

The farm bill reauthorizes the Landscape Scale Restoration Program directing the U.S. Forest Service and state forestry agencies to tackle critical challenges, such as forest health, wildfire and drinking water protection. The bill supports conservation of at-risk species identified by State Wildlife/Forest Action Plans and authorizes Indian Tribes to conduct forest management activities on federal lands where they have a tribal interest.

### **Incentivizes infrastructure and new market opportunities to revitalize communities and healthy landscapes**

The farm bill supports capital investment through the Community Wood and Wood Innovation Program. The bill works to address the need for innovative wood products by including important components of the Timber Innovation Act that direct the secretary to promote research and development.

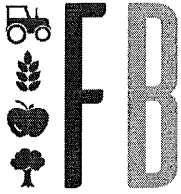
### **Simplifies environmental process requirements, while still ensuring robust environmental protections**

The farm bill builds upon the successes of farm bill categorical exclusions (CEs). CEs are used for routine activities with known outcomes, and they save the Forest Service time and money while protecting the environment and natural resources. The bill expedites the Forest Service's ability to quickly remove dead trees after wildfires. This bill funds reforestation and rehabilitation, including planting trees, surveying for natural regeneration, clearing vegetation around seedlings, and other activities.

## TITLE IX: HORTICULTURE

The farm bill recognizes the diversity among specialty crops—ranging from fruits and vegetables to tree nuts, nursery crops and floriculture—and maintains and strengthens critical initiatives that enhance the competitiveness of our nation's specialty crop producers.

### **Maintains and improves the Specialty Crop Block Grants Program**



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Provides \$85 million per year for Specialty Crop Block Grants, and clarifies performance evaluation language to ensure that the federal bureaucracy does not unnecessarily interfere with project implementation at the state level.

### **Maintains the Plant Pest & Disease Management & National Clean Plan Network**

### **Takes several steps to deliver commonsense regulatory reform, restoring a transparent and science-based process to preserve farmers' and ranchers' land-use and water rights**

Provides regulatory relief by clarifying the role of state lead agencies in promulgating pesticide regulations and streamlining the pesticide review/approval process when considering implications to endangered species.

## TITLE X: CROP INSURANCE

The farm bill honors one of the loudest and most consistent messages received from the heartland: do no harm to crop insurance. For most farmers, crop insurance is vital to recovering from natural disasters, critical to adequately managing risk, necessary to obtaining financing and extremely helpful in marketing a crop. This is especially true for young and beginning farmers.

### **Expanding quality coverage to all of America's farmers and ranchers**

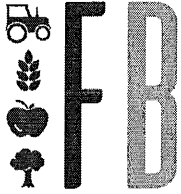
The farm bill requires further research and development to create risk management products that work effectively for farmers and ranchers affected by hurricanes, encourages private sector innovation in the development and maintenance of new policies to meet unique risks, and ensures farmers and ranchers who suffer natural disasters are not unnecessarily penalized in future years through effective double deductibles due to insurable yields being set artificially low.

## TITLE XI: MISCELLANEOUS

The farm bill makes significant new investment in disease preparedness and response. The bill also makes a substantial new investment in young, beginning, socially disadvantaged, veteran, and small farmers and ranchers to help improve the viability and profitability of their operations. Given recent disease outbreaks and the challenge of feeding nine billion people by 2050, both investments are of vital importance.

### **Animal Disease Preparedness and Response investment**

Provides \$450 million to enhance USDA's ability to identify, diagnose and respond to a potential animal disease outbreak. The bill establishes a new National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, designed to protect the health of the nation's livestock sector. The program is modeled on the highly successful Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention



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Program that has strengthened USDA's ability to protect U.S. agriculture and natural resources from foreign plant pest threats. The bill also establishes a new U.S.-only vaccine bank with priority for stockpiling Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine and provides for the enhancement of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

The bill also directs the secretary to include veterinary teams, including those based at colleges, in training programs to respond to endemic diseases, requires FSIS to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach to small and very small meat processors, and maintains the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan to detect, control, and eradicate diseases of aquaculture.

### **Socially disadvantaged, veteran, young and beginning, and small farmer and rancher investment**

Provides \$50 million for outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and military veterans in agriculture, reauthorizes the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement to improve the viability and profitability of small, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, codifies the position of Agricultural Youth Organization Coordinator to ensure USDA is focused on promoting young people in agriculture, and creates a commission to study how the United States can be best positioned to help feed 9 billion people by 2050.