



House Farm Bill Summary - 2018

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The 2018 House farm bill was introduced on April 12, 2018 as H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018. The Agriculture and Nutrition Act is a five-year reauthorization bill that includes various agriculture, nutrition, and rural development programs. The farm bill was last passed in 2014 and current programs are authorized through September 30, 2018.

Approximately 80 percent of farm bill funding is expected to be spent on the bill's nutrition title and was a major focus of the House Agriculture Committee's April 18 markup of the new farm bill. Democrats have vowed to oppose the bill based on strong opposition to new proposals and work requirements included in the bill for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The following information is a summary of the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

Title I – Commodities

- Would reauthorize several commodity support programs for the next five years, mainly keeping intact the programs' current forms.
- Would provide another one-time election between Price Loss Coverage and Agriculture Risk Coverage in order to decide which commodity support program to receive coverage for the next five years.
- Would revamp support for dairy producers.

Title II – Conservation

- Would move the Conservation Stewardship Program under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and increase the payment caps by \$10,000 per person annually.
- Would reauthorize through 2023 the Conservation Reserve Program, a program that pays farmers not to produce crops on sensitive land areas.

Title III – Trade

- Would consolidate several trade programs (Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program, Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, and Emerging Markets Program) into new program entitled the International Market Development Program and authorized at \$255 million annually.

Title IV – Nutrition

- Would require 20 hours of work training a week for SNAP recipients that are capable to work and aged 18 through 59.
 - After 2025, the required work hours increase from 20 to 25 hours.
 - States would have two years to implement program.
 - Seniors, disabled, pregnant women, and those caring for children under six are exempt from the newly proposed SNAP requirements.
- Would modify categorical eligibility rules and eliminate broad-based categorical eligibility.
- Would make most households eligible for SNAP benefits that qualify for other federal low-income assistance programs based on receipt of Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance, or cash or other TANF benefits, such as child care, transportation assistance or counseling.
- Would limit an automatic increase in SNAP benefits based on payments under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).
- Would require USDA to create a Duplicative Enrollment Database to prevent SNAP participants from receiving benefits in multiple states.
- Would create a pilot project for authorized retail food stores to provide bonuses to participating SNAP households based on household purchases of fruits, vegetables and milk. Retail food stores participating in the pilot project may be reimbursed up to 25 percent of the dollar value of bonuses earned by households and used to purchase SNAP-eligible foods.
- Would establish a Farm-to-Food-Bank fund which includes \$20 million for states to procure excess fresh fruits and vegetables grown in the state or surrounding region for food banks.
- Would require custodial and noncustodial parents applying for SNAP to cooperate with their state's child support enforcement agency. States currently have the option to do this.
- Would allow up to \$500 of military personnel's monthly housing allowance to be excluded when calculating SNAP eligibility.

Title V – Credit

- Would increase limits on farm loans from \$700,000 to \$1.75 million.
- Would reauthorize the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot Program, which includes matching funds for beginning farmers and ranchers and allows military and related experience to count toward 3-years of experience required prior to an application for an ownership loan.
- Would reauthorize the Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee Program to provide access to credit for farmers who need and want to implement conservation measures on their land but do not have the initial funds to carry out conservation practices.

Title VI – Rural Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Would authorize USDA to reprioritize certain rural development loan and grant applications to assist rural communities in responding to health emergencies (opioid epidemic).
- Would reauthorize a program to provide loans to expand or improve facilities and equipment in rural areas to improve 911 access, integrated interoperable emergency communications, homeland security communications, transportation safety communications, and location technologies used outside an urbanized area.
- Would require USDA to assist communities in developing strategic community investment plans.
- Would establish broadband service standards for rural areas.
- Would create a grant program for borrowers who are financing rural broadband projects that provide retail service.
- Would require USDA to provide both a direct lending program and a guaranteed lending program to finance rural broadband projects.
- Would reauthorize programs and provide grants to address challenges with rural water, water well systems, solid waste management, rural business development, rural electrification, cooperative development, and other critical infrastructure.
- Would exclude incarcerated prison populations from inclusion in the determination of whether an area is rural.

Title VII – Research, Extension, and Related Matters

- Would repeal the nutrition education program. The program is used to inform the public on food and human nutrition research in order to enable low-income individuals and families to engage in nutritionally sound food purchase and preparations practices.
- Would reauthorize the Office of Pest Management Policy. The Office of Pest Management Policy coordinates agriculture policies and activities at USDA related to pesticides and the development and use of pest management tools.
- Would reauthorize the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and extends the mandatory funding for the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program.
- Would extend the termination date of the specialty crop committee of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory board and increase the number of members of the Citrus Disease Subcommittee to 11 by adding two seats for members representing California or Arizona.
- Would reauthorize animal health and disease research programs.
- Would reauthorize grants programs focused on Hispanic-serving institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs.
- Would reauthorize applied research and development of agricultural countermeasures.

Title VIII – Forestry

- Would exempt certain forest management activities from environmental reviews required under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and from consultation requirements under Endangered Species Act.

- Would authorize foreign sales of California timber by designating processed timber of dead and dying trees in California as surplus domestic timber supplies and exempt from export prohibitions.
- Would amend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to require 50 percent of Title II funds be spend on activities pertaining to forest management and the sale of forest products.
- Would establish a landscape-scale restoration program to support activities through financial and technical assistance to improve State and private forest land.
- Would allow funding from the Forest Service’s wildland fire hazardous fuels program to perform cross-boundary wildfire mitigation work, when the funding exceeds \$300,000,000 in any year.

Title IX – Horticulture

- Would maintain the Plant Pest and Disease Management Program and the National Clean Plant Network (Section 10007 of the 2014 farm bill).
- Would extend the authorization of appropriations for the Farmers’ Market and Local Food Promotion Program and increase the authorized level from \$10 million a year to \$30 million a year.
- Would expand the types of activities allowed to be used through Specialty Crop Block Grants.
- Would clarify the role of state lead agencies in promulgating pesticide regulations and streamline the pesticide review and approval process when considering implications to endangered species.

Title X – Crop Insurance

- Would make minor changes to and expand the federal crop insurance program. This contrasts with the President’s FY 2019 budget request to cut farmer subsidies by \$22.4 billion over 10 years.

Title XI – Miscellaneous

- Would establish a new National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program to address the risk of introduction and spread of animal diseases that have an adverse effect on the livestock and related industries of the United States.
- Would provide \$50 million for outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and military veterans in agriculture.