



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

2023 Farm Bill Policy Priorities

We support the following principles to guide development of programs in the next farm bill:

- Increase baseline for farm bill program spending;
- Maintain a unified farm bill which keeps nutrition programs and farm programs together;
- Any changes to current farm legislation must be an amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 or the Agricultural Act of 1949;
- Prioritize risk management tools and funding for both federal crop insurance and commodity programs; and
- Ensure adequate USDA staffing capacity and technical assistance.

Title I:

We support:

- The continuation of a counter-cyclical program like the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and a revenue program like the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program, including using Risk Management Agency (RMA) data as the primary source to determine a more accurate county yield as long as RMA data at the farm level is protected from FOIA. If ARC-County is continued, we support changes to make the program more effective and fair to all farmers;
- If existing programs continue, the opportunity for farmers to re-elect and/or re-enroll annually;
- Basing Title I payments on historic, rather than planted, acres;
- A reference price increase for all Title I commodities;
- Unassigned, former generic base acres being redistributed to update crop base on the same farm;
- Increased commodity loan rates;
- Restoring ARC/PLC payment base on the 20% of seed cotton base acres that were designated as unassigned and unpaid in the 2018 farm bill; and
- Keeping provisions that Loan Deficiency Payments and Marketing Loan Gains do not count against per person payment limits.

Dairy:

We support:

- Updated production history once every five years based on the highest of a prior three-year history, until then we support supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) production history changes;
- Retaining the current DMC with supplemental and feed cost updates;
- Increasing the DMC 5-million-pound limit for Tier 1;
- Additional transparency to milk checks including listing the percentage of pooled and de-pooled milk by each processor and PPD calculations;
- Modified block voting flexibility within coops (allowing farmers to vote independently and confidentially unless a farmer opts out after being given notice of a referendum);
- Eliminating provisions on a “no” vote on a referendum causing elimination of the entire FMMO;

- Whole milk being promoted and advanced through the special milk program through schools, nutrition assistance and the U.S. military;
- All federal insurance programs related to the dairy industry taking into consideration negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) to ensure that farmers actually receive the margin that they insured; and
- We oppose any regulations or legislation that will ban or limit flavored milk in schools.

Title II:

We support:

- Maintaining funding for federal conservation programs which maintain environmental benefits;
- Working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs; and
- Streamlining the NRCS conservation practice approval process.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

We support:

- Capping acreage enrollment to keep land in production;
- Capping rental rates to a percentage of average county rental rates;
- Making common sense updates to emergency haying and grazing rules, especially adjustments to the turn-in dates surrounding the “primary nesting season,” bale removal, etc.;
- Encouraging prime farmland to come back into production, but retaining the program for marginal acres, land that is highly erodible or non-productive;
- Adjusting the 25% limitation. Extending the 25% limitation to a per farm basis, not just county wide;
- Prioritizing water quality and soil health benefits of CRP over wildlife protection and manage requirements of the program accordingly (such as mowing and maintenance, species mixes, and implementation of buffer/filter strips); and
- Limiting the size of pollinator tracts with an emphasis on smaller parcels and capping pollinator rates.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

We support:

- Maintaining the current prioritization of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding being targeted to livestock producers;
- Maintaining an air quality program that assists producers with air quality compliance; and
- Allowing for flexibility in addressing local and regional resource challenges, including groundwater sustainability and drought relief, resilience, and preparedness.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

We support funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with greater accessibility to farmers.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

We support:

- Increasing Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) funding; and
- Increasing the ceiling on the eligible federal share for ACEP conservation easement to 80% of the easement value.

Title XI:

We support:

- A robust crop insurance program, with no reductions in premium cost share. We oppose means testing, income limits, or add ins, such as required production practices, that might limit the availability or adversely impact risk pools;
- Expansion of insured commodities including specialty crops. Given limitations of process in adding new commodities, examine ways in which to encourage swifter adoption of policies;
- Develop and maintain adequate risk management tools for livestock producers including contract growers;
- USDA enhancing the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage from the current 50% level on production and 55% of the established price by allowing producers to purchase a higher level up to the 65% level and the option to increase the market price option from 55% to 100%; and
- Enhancements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection insurance that provide a more appropriate level of affordable coverage and safety net, along with reducing the amount of paperwork required.

Miscellaneous:

Trade

We support increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP).

Credit

We support:

- Streamlining loan programs and ensuring loan amounts keep pace with farm-level expenses; and
- Minimizing application requirements for young and beginning farmer guarantee programs so they are more aligned with agricultural lenders.

Rural Development

We support:

- A consistent, long-term, market-oriented farm policy that is transparent and efficient prioritizing projects with the greatest economic potential for rural communities.
- Programs should focus on the following:
 - Efforts to encourage processing and marketing opportunities for direct-to-market producers. Infrastructure, workforce development and local processing capacity need to be expanded as this market demand has increased exponentially;
 - Broadband programs prioritizing resources for rural communities most in need of connectivity; and
 - Increased access and incentives to provide safe and adequate childcare in rural communities.

Specialty Crops

We support:

- Incorporating all types of domestic fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program providing an affordable option for increasing the variety available year-round for all and more market opportunities for producers. Priority must be given to fresh and locally grown product when available not withstanding price;

- Ensuring adequate funding for the specialty crop industry with emphasis on fundamental research, marketing and promotions, and pest management programs;
- The USDA giving more consideration to specialty crop growers when considering planting history for various programs;
- Defining "specialty crops" as any fruit, vegetable, nut or non-program crop grown for consumption and sales;
- Dedicated funding for specialty crop growers in working lands programs;
- USDA commodity purchases; and
- The fruit and vegetable industry developing a termed stopgap profit/loss assistance program to mitigate the impact of producer losses due to foreign imports, resulting in an upside-down market.

Research

We support:

- Funding for agricultural research and education;
- Funding a producer-directed, research-oriented specialty crop block grant program and the IR4 bio-pesticide research program for minor crops; and
- Funding for research into the health risks and strategies for mitigating risks associated with chemical contaminants in water and food such as PFAS.

Energy

We support:

- Adequate funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and an increase to the percentage of USDA cost share;
- Increased resources for biofuels; and
- Increased resources for methane digesters.

Nutrition

We support:

- The inclusion of a block grant program that would allow food banks and food access networks to directly purchase specialty crops from farmers;
- Technical and monetary assistance being given to farmers to help facilitate online SNAP sales and streamline the requirement to be able to collect SNAP benefits; and
- The use of SNAP for U.S.-produced agricultural products when available.