

**The New York Times**

June 21, 2012

# Senate Passes Farm Bill With Bipartisan Support

By **RON NIXON**

WASHINGTON — The Senate approved a sweeping new farm bill on Thursday that would cost nearly \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, financing dozens of price support and crop insurance programs for farmers and food assistance for low-income families.

The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, 64 to 35. It now goes to the House, where it faces a much tougher road because conservative lawmakers want to make deeper cuts in the food stamp program, which serves about 45 million Americans. “This bill represents significant reform,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow, Democrat of Michigan and chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “It cuts subsidies, it cuts the deficit and it creates jobs.”

Senator Pat Roberts, Republican of Kansas and the ranking member on the committee, called the legislation the best bill possible. “It shows what can happen if we break the logjam of partisanship and work together to get something done,” Mr. Roberts said.

Although the bill is known as the farm bill, the majority of the spending, about \$80 billion a year, goes to the food stamp program. The Senate bill would cut a total of \$23.6 billion from current spending levels, including about \$4.5 billion from food stamps, but senators rejected several proposals that would have made even deeper cuts.

Ms. Stabenow said savings from the food stamp program would come mainly from changes including banning lottery winners from getting assistance.

The House Republican budget introduced earlier this year by Representative Paul Ryan, Republican of Wisconsin, would reduce food stamp spending by about \$134 billion over the next decade and turn the program into block grants for the states.

In the House, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Representative Frank D. Lucas, Republican of Oklahoma, said work on the bill would begin on July 11. He said committee members would work on a spending bill next week. Congress will recess for the July 4 holiday week.

“Although there will be differences between the Senate approach and our own, I hope my colleagues are encouraged by this success when we meet on the 11th to consider our own legislation,” Mr. Lucas said.

Although the Senate bill makes significant changes to some farm programs and eliminates or consolidates others, it leaves in place several Depression-era programs like supports for American sugar growers that set prices and limit imports.

The bill eliminates about \$5 billion a year in direct payments that have been given to farmers and farmland owners, whether or not they grew crops. It makes the highly subsidized crop insurance program the primary safety net when crop prices drop. Currently, the government subsidizes about 62 percent of the crop insurance premiums, and the policies typically guarantee 75 percent to 85 percent of a farmer’s revenue. The crop insurance subsidy would cost about \$9 billion a year.

But for the first time crop insurance would be subject to payment limits, and recipients of the subsidy would have to follow soil and water conservation requirements, as they do in other farm programs. The bill reduces the premium subsidy for farmers with adjusted gross incomes of more than \$750,000. The measure would affect only 1,500 out of the 1.5 million farmers and save \$1 billion over 10 years.

Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, a Washington research organization, said the bill failed to achieve real savings because it expanded crop insurance. Still, he said, “We applaud the provisions that require farmers who receive crop insurance subsidies to carry out basic environmental protections on their farms and to reduce insurance subsidies for the largest and most successful agribusinesses.”

While most agriculture groups support the Senate bill, many Southern farmers, especially rice and peanut farmers, say it provides an inadequate safety net because it eliminates direct payments.

“Crop insurance does not provide adequate coverage for peanut farmers when there are fluctuations in the market,” said Armond Morris, chairman of the Georgia Peanut Commission in Tifton, Ga.

Food and nutrition groups said they were disappointed by the food stamp cuts. While they said the bill provided incentives for low-income families to buy more fruits and vegetables, they argue that the cuts will have a devastating effect on low-income families during a time of high unemployment.

Feeding America, an antihunger group based in Chicago, said the cuts would reduce benefits by about \$90 per family and affect 500,000 households in 15 states.

“Now is the time to protect and strengthen food nutrition assistance, not cut it,” said Eric Olsen, the group’s senior vice president of government relations and public policy.

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# Thompson Lauds Senate Passage of Farm Bill Reauthorization

*House Agriculture Committee Readies Markup of Companion Legislation*

Jun 21, 2012 | Issues: [Agriculture](#)

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representative Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy & Forestry, issued the following statement after the U.S. Senate passed S. 3240, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act.

“I commend the U.S. Senate and the leadership of Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts on passage of S. 3240, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act,” said Rep. Thompson. “Senate passage of the farm bill is a positive step in completing this reauthorization process, before its expiration this fall.”

Every five years, Congress passes legislation, commonly known as the “farm bill” that sets national agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry policy. The last farm bill was passed in 2008, and expires in 2012.

“The Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy & Forestry has held [multiple hearings](#) in anticipation of moving forward with a full reauthorization of the farm bill in early July,” Rep. Thompson added. “I look forward to continuing the reauthorization process to ensure that any new legislation meets the needs of producers and farming communities across the country.”

The House Agriculture Committee recently completed its third and final round of farm bill oversight hearings, and is [scheduled](#) to markup its version of the reauthorization on July 11, 2012.

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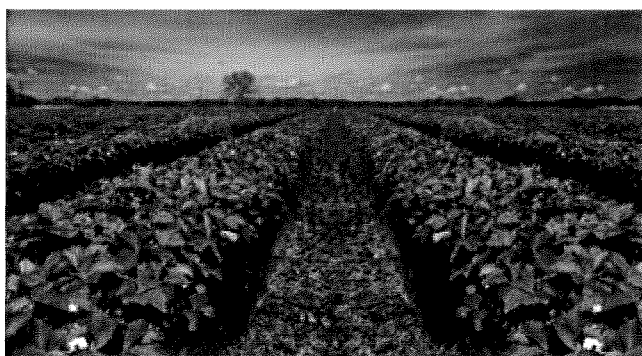
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# Senate Passes Farm Bill

**Legislation includes study on food recall insurance for farmers**by [Helena Bottemiller](#) | Jun 22, 2012

In a rare show of bipartisanship, the Senate passed the farm bill on Thursday by a vote of 64 to 35. The bill, which sets the nation's agriculture and nutrition policy for the next five years, would end direct payments for commodity crop farmers, but ramp up subsidized crop insurance to save nearly \$24 billion over 10 years.



During three days of debate over dozens of amendments, the Senate touched on food safety a few times.

As **Food Safety News** [reported](#) Wednesday, Sens. John McCain (R-AZ) and John Kerry (D-MA) succeeded in repealing a 2008 farm bill provision that mandated a catfish inspection program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- even though the U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates seafood. Echoing concerns raised by the Government Accountability Office, Kerry and

McCain argued that the program was duplicative, wasteful, and was not likely to yield a food safety benefit.

Due to opposition from livestock groups, the Senate did not consider a controversial proposal by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) that would have mandated federal welfare standards for egg-laying hens.

"While I am disappointed that my amendment establishing a national standard for the humane treatment of egg-laying hens was not considered, I remain committed to this issue and will look for other opportunities to advance that legislation," said the senator, after the farm bill passed Thursday.

But Feinstein did succeed on an amendment directing USDA to conduct a study on the feasibility of crop insurance to cover losses for producers affected by, but not responsible for, food safety recalls.

"When this happens producers suffers major financial losses because of a recall they did not cause," said Feinstein in a floor speech, also noting the measure was endorsed by United Fresh. The amendment cleared the Senate by a vote, 76-23 on Tuesday.

Sen. Christopher Coons (D-DE) added a similar amendment, which asked USDA to study the feasibility of government-backed insurance for poultry producers to cover things like disease outbreaks.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) had proposed an amendment to stiffen criminal penalties for those who

knowingly violate food safety laws, but his measure was not included in the package of amendments.

The upper chamber rejected an amendment proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) that would have given states the authority to require that genetically-engineered ingredients be labeled. The provision would have needed 60 votes to pass, but went down by a vote of 26 to 73.

Leaders in the Senate praised the bipartisan effort to get the bill passed in an orderly and timely fashion, but quickly turned their focus on the House, where lawmakers are expected to seek deeper cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP, otherwise known as food stamps, makes up the vast majority of the farm bill's price tag.

Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), chair of the House Agriculture committee told reporters Congress would begin work on the farm bill after July 4 holiday recess.

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## **Senate passes Farm Bill that eliminates crop subsidies**

**BY JANE FYKSEN, CROPS EDITOR | Posted: Thursday, June 28, 2012 9:54 am**

The U.S. Senate voted 64 to 35 in favor of a new Farm Bill late last week, after a deal between the parties to move the legislation forward by trimming amendments from 300 to 73. The Senate's Farm Bill, which many say represents the most significant reform of U.S. farm policy in decades, is purported to save taxpayers over \$23 billion. The spotlight now shifts to the House, where the House Ag Committee is scheduled to begin marking up its version of the 2012 Farm Bill July 11.

The Senate-passed Farm Bill eliminates direct payments to farmers and instead strengthens risk management tools, like crop insurance. To view a copy of this Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, go online to the Senate Ag Committee's website at [www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill](http://www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill). However, here's a more abbreviated summary:

- Eliminates direct subsidies – Farmers will no longer be paid for crops they aren't growing, acres not actually planted or receive support absent a drop in price or yields. Meantime, crop insurance access is expanded. According to the Congressional Budget Office, these changes combined carry a net savings of \$15 billion over the next 10 years.
- Streamlines programs – As just one example, the Senate Farm Bill consolidates 23 existing conservation programs into 13.
- Helps farmers sell locally by increasing support for farmers' markets and spurring the creation of "food hubs" to connect farmers to schools and other community-based consumers.
- This Farm Bill pays more attention to specialty crops (primarily fruits and vegetables) by expanding block grants to states to support research and promotion of specialty crops, and it assists organic farmers.
- Food stamps continue to command the lion's share of Farm Bill dollars. Spurred by the bad economy, there are now 46 million people getting food stamps, at a cost of about \$80 billion a year – an estimated 80 percent of the entire Farm Bill budget. The bill tightens up the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by ending misuse by college students, cracking down on retailers and recipients engaged in benefit trafficking and increasing requirements to prevent liquor and tobacco stores from become participating retailers. It doesn't, though, cut standard food assistance benefits, and funding for food banks and non-profit partnerships is increased so SNAP recipients' benefit values are doubled when they buy healthy produce from farmers' markets.

- The Senate Bill also limits subsidy payments to those with adjusted gross income of less than \$750,000, half the current ceiling, and caps payments at \$50,000 for an individual or \$100,000 for a couple. An amendment approved would also reduce by 15 percentage points the taxpayer share of crop insurance premiums for those with incomes of more than \$750,000. The government now pays an average 62 percent of crop insurance premiums. The bill also ends payments to “farm managers,” sometimes wealthy people who may have an interest in a farm but don’t live on the property or actively engage in farming.
- Other “safety net” restrictions include limiting market loan gains and loan deficiency payments under the Agriculture Risk Coverage program to \$75,000 and requiring farmers to comply with conservation requirements to receive subsidized crop insurance.

National Corn Growers Association president Garry Niemeyer is happy Congress is moving forward with new farm legislation before the current law expires Sept. 30. NCGA has advocated for an affordable crop insurance program as well as a farm program that would provide risk management tools to growers when they are facing a loss beyond their control. NCGA has also encouraged farm policy reforms that will be responsive to taxpayers and effective in helping farms remain viable and productive. Niemeyer says NCGA now hopes agriculture will see a “new, common sense, reformed 2012 Farm Bill before Congress recesses in August.”

NCGA is disappointed though in passage of an amendment requiring conservation compliance for crop insurance. NCGA’s official policy states the organizations opposes the coupling of conservation compliance to eligibility for federal crop insurance.

Stu Ellis, formerly with the University of Illinois and now author of farmgateblog.com, tells producers to anticipate a significantly different Farm Bill out of the House, with possibly far deeper cuts in the House Ag Committee’s version. According to the CBO, the 10-year cost of the Senate version is almost \$1 trillion, which is \$23 billion less than if the current 2008 Farm Bill were to remain in place. Indeed, House Ag Committee chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.) promises differences in the House approach, but which he predicts will still respect “the risks producers face.”

U.S. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack has this to say: “I’m very pleased that the Senate acted in bipartisan spirit today to approve the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act. I am grateful for the Senate’s progress toward providing a reformed safety net for producers in times of need, supporting agricultural research and trade promotion, honoring World Trade Organization commitments, furthering the bio-based economy, conserving our natural resources, strengthening local and regional food systems and promoting job growth in rural America.”

The American Farm Bureau thinks the Senate’s Farm Bill is a solid bill that includes important reforms and is fiscally responsible, while enhancing crop insurance, maintaining a viable

marketing loan program and minimizing the potential for farm program provisions to drive producer decisions. Farm Bureau president Bob Stallman applauds the Senate for “approving a workable bill and moving this process forward.”

Mary Kay Thatcher, Farm Bureau’s farm policy specialist, calls this a “real reform Farm Bill.” “You’re talking about for the first time in many, many years actually reducing funding in the Farm Bill,” by, in part, eliminating direct payments, target prices, the ACRE program and the disaster program,” she notes.

Thatcher worries over the House Farm Bill timeframe. “There isn’t a lot of time once you get to mid-July to have House Ag Committee action. They go out for the whole month of August for recess. They won’t be back until mid-September, because of the Democratic convention coming up after Labor Day, and by the first of October we’re going to have lots of members who want to go home and campaign. So the number of days that we have left to have a bill considered on the House floor are pretty few and far between,” she notes.

U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) notes that during debate on the Senate floor, he made a “motion to recommit” the bill back to committee with the “simple instruction to split it into two separate pieces of legislation – a Food Stamp Bill and a Farm Bill.” That motion was defeated by a vote of 40 to 59.

“Why are these measures combined? The answer is simple – to keep much of the legislation out of the light of day and to make spending \$1 trillion far easier. This is business as usual here in our nation’s capital, and it is bankrupting America.”

According to Johnson, the Farm Bill will spend about \$995 billion over the next 10 years. Of that nearly \$1 trillion, 78 percent will be spent on food stamps. While Johnson voted against the Farm Bill in the Senate, U.S. Senator Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) was in favor.

The American Soybean Association likes the Senate-approved Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program under which revenue losses exceeding 11 percent will be partially offset at either the farm or county level. ASA also supports reduction of Conservation Reserve Program acres from 32 to 25 million acres.

The Senate considered several amendments ASA strongly opposed and that were defeated, including one that would have national check-off programs voluntary (it lost on a vote of 20-79), and another to authorize states to require mandatory labeling of biotech food products (it lost on a vote of 26-73).

## The True Food Network

### House Farm Bill's 'Backdoor Biotech Riders' Engineered to Give Industry Unprecedented Control, Curb Regulation

Posted on July 10, 2012 by Admin

**Sweeping pro-chemical industry provisions attack GE crop safeguards and USDA review process, set controversial allowance for transgenic contamination of the nation's food supply**



The Center for Food Safety (CFS) and a group of 40 food businesses and retailers, and farm, food safety, environmental and consumer advocacy groups today delivered a letter (<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2Group-Letter-Opposing-Biotech-Riders-to-House-Farm-Bill-7.10.11.pdf>) to leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture warning of the long-term, dangerous and potentially debilitating effects that chemical industry-promoting provisions in

the House draft Farm Bill will have on farmers, the environment, public health and the U.S. economy. Far from modernizing the regulatory environment and advancing the health of U.S. agriculture, the buried suite of backdoor biotech riders is the latest attempt by the industry to write its own rules governing genetically engineered (GE) crops, strip the review powers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and control the future health and safety of U.S. agriculture.

The House's draft Farm Bill is scheduled for Committee mark-up on Wednesday, July 11 at 10am EDT.

"This is yet another chilling example of the chemical industry's ongoing campaign to irreversibly alter and control our food supply while they pad their pockets," said Andrew Kimbrell, executive director of Center for Food Safety. "Every member of the Agriculture Committee has something to lose here if they don't cut through the deception and reject this direct assault on USDA's authority and the long-term integrity of our food supply."

Noted impact areas of the proposed chemical industry-promoting Farm Bill provisions include:

- Provides backdoor approval for any GE crop: Even if USDA has not analyzed, let alone agreed to approve a GE crop, unreasonably short deadlines will be established, creating approval and commercialization by default when the agency misses a target date.
- Advances the approval of "Agent Orange" corn: A second proposed backdoor approval will exist in circumstances where USDA is unable to approve or deny a crop application that has gone through one public comment period within 90 days. In these cases, it would be automatically approved. Such a deadline would be nearly impossible to meet given the volume of public and

scientific comments the Department receives, and the number of applications currently being considered. Dow's highly controversial 2,4-D corn—known as “Agent Orange” corn for its use of a chemical component of the infamous Vietnam Era carcinogenic defoliant—is one of the novel crops that could slip through if this process is successful.

- Guts meaningful analysis of GE crops. The bill would place strict limitations on what USDA can meaningfully consider when conducting environmental reviews of GE crops, and prohibit USDA from using funds to conduct any additional assessments. Further, all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act or Endangered Species Act, would be banned, even if a crop approval would harm protected species.
- Removes farmer protections, including cross-contamination losses: With the lack of empowered USDA oversight, U.S. farmers, exporters and food businesses would be opened up to risky circumstances similar to the Starlink corn and Liberty Link rice GE crop cross-contamination episodes that cost U.S. farmers and the nation billions of dollars in losses.
- Creates an allowable limit of transgenic pollution: The bill would compel USDA to establish an extremely controversial national policy for “low-level presence” of GE material in crops, which would set for the first time an “acceptable” level of GE contamination in non-GE crops in the U.S. without recourse. Yet consumers have consistently rejected allowing GE contamination to occur, and any policy that evades reasonable restrictions will create unknown risks to human health and severely impact our capability to export to vital foreign markets.

Responding to the release of these biotech riders, the National Grain and Feed Association released a statement last week expressing their concern with the premature commercialization of biotech traits and the potential for unintended consequences that these riders may pose for domestic and export markets.

“The House Farm bill currently under consideration would take the USDA's review process for genetically engineered crops from woefully inadequate to virtually non-existent, making contamination of the food supply or harm to endangered or threatened species almost certain,” said Sarah Saylor, Senior Legislative Representative for Earthjustice. “Automatic approval of genetically altered crops is particularly alarming.”

Signed by Center for Food Safety, Earthjustice, National Family Farm Coalition, Organic Trade Association, Sierra Club and several other organizations, the letter was sent to Committee Chair Frank Lucas (R-OK) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN)

The letter can be found at [Organizations and Businesses Join to Oppose Stripping of USDA's Biotech Regulations in House Farm Bill \(http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2Group-Letter-Opposing-Biotech-Riders-to-House-Farm-Bill-7.10.11.pdf\)](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2Group-Letter-Opposing-Biotech-Riders-to-House-Farm-Bill-7.10.11.pdf)

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About **Center for Food Safety** The Center for Food Safety is a national, non-profit, membership organization founded in 1997 to protect human health and the environment by curbing the use of harmful food production technologies and by promoting organic and other forms of sustainable agriculture. More information can be found at [www.centerforfoodsafety.org](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org)  
(<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org>)

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# The True Food Network

## The Center's Statement on House Agriculture Committee's Passage of the Farm Bill

Posted on July 12, 2012 by Admin

*Riders attacking GE crop safeguards and USDA review process remain amid growing concerns over risk to nation's food supply*

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture completed the markup of its Farm Bill yesterday evening. Buried in the bill reported out of committee are a suite of chemical industry-promoting riders (Sec. 10011, 10013, and 10014) that seek to severely weaken the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) oversight of genetically engineered (GE) crops, fundamentally eroding science-based review.

These riders have the potential to:

- completely eliminate the critical roles of our most important environmental laws;
- unreasonably pressure USDA with impossible deadlines for analysis and decision, while withholding funds to conduct environmental reviews;
- create multiple backdoor GE crop approval mechanisms that would allow the premature commercialization of untested biotech traits to enter our food system;
- limit the regulatory authority of other agencies, such as EPA; and
- force USDA to adopt a controversial policy of allowable levels of GE contamination in crops and foods.

Center for Food Safety ("The Center") has warned that these hidden biotech riders would eliminate vital USDA safeguards that are currently protecting American farmers and the nation's food supply. With the provisions in place, USDA would be ill-equipped and potentially incapable of preventing costly contamination episodes (such as the Starlink corn and Liberty Link rice fiascos which cost American farmers hundreds of millions of dollars in losses) and risks damage to vital U.S. export markets.

Responding to the bill reported out of committee, the Center reiterates its strong opposition to irresponsible and unnecessary changes to USDA's regulations, and joins a growing numbers of organizations and businesses in opposing the riders. Given the 100+ amendments offered to the bill and the sweeping opposition to it in general, the Center is not surprised little attention was paid to these provisions during markup and is confident that they will ultimately be eliminated on the House floor or when the House and Senate bills go to conference.

Earlier this week, a letter signed by 40 organizations and businesses including the Center for Food Safety, Sierra Club, Earthjustice, National Family Farm Coalition and Organic Trade Association was delivered to Committee Chair Frank Lucas (R-OK) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) opposing the biotech riders. The National Grain and Feed Association, whose members include Archer Daniels Midland Company and Cargill, Inc., also expressed serious concern with the chemical industry-promoting riders.

The letter can be found at [Organizations and Businesses Join to Oppose Stripping of USDA's Biotech Regulations in House Farm Bill \(http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2Group-Letter-Opposing-Biotech-Riders-to-House-Farm-Bill-7.10.11.pdf\)](http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2Group-Letter-Opposing-Biotech-Riders-to-House-Farm-Bill-7.10.11.pdf).

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July 10, 2012

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
Committee on Agriculture, Chair  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Committee on Agriculture, Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

## **Organizations and Businesses Join to Oppose Stripping of USDA's Biotech Regulations in House Farm Bill**

***Biotech Riders Would Eliminate Meaningful USDA Oversight, Create Backdoor Approvals for the  
Controversial 2,4-D Corn and Other GE Crops, and Legalize Levels of Transgenic Pollution***

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

The undersigned forty food businesses and retailers, and family farm, consumer and environmental groups, representing over one million members across the United States, oppose the changes that have been proposed to the oversight of genetically engineered (GE) crops in Sections 10011-10014 of the House Agriculture Committee's discussion draft of the 2012 Farm Bill. Purposely buried in the voluminous Farm Bill, these significant changes to the Plant Protection Act (PPA) will create serious risks to farmers, the environment and public health by forcing the rushed commercialization of GE crops and eliminating meaningful review of their impacts.

In the past half-dozen years, courts and government reports have sharply criticized USDA's oversight of GE crops as lacking. Numerous courts have held the agency's approvals failed to comply with our environmental laws. In response, rather than responsibly improving its oversight, the industry seeks to instead change the rules. The Farm Bill riders together would eliminate the much needed review of these novel crops, forcing hasty approvals in advancing the chemical industry's interests in selling their products. Most concerning, these riders may:

- Outlaw any review of GE crops' impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or any other environmental law, or by any agency other than USDA. For example, harm to protected species could occur without any input from our expert wildlife agencies.
- Prohibit other agencies from offering expert input in the review process and instead limit review to solely USDA under the PPA. However, meaningful review would likely be eliminated by this rider, as USDA's analysis of potential harmful impacts is barred from informing any approval decision. The agency is also barred from using its broader statutory authority granted in the PPA of 2000 and instead is limited to its old 1957 Federal Plant Pest Act authority.
- Force the backdoor approval of GE crops, even if USDA has not reviewed and approved them, through unreasonably short deadlines, which, if not met by the agency, would default to immediate approval and commercialization. The provisions would also bar any agency funds from being spent on impacts analysis beyond the riders' narrow and time-forced approval.
- Codify a dangerous national policy of allowing transgenic contamination in crops and foods, risking loss of GE-sensitive domestic and export markets and loss of biodiversity.
- Limit EPA's oversight of biotech crops engineered to produce or contain a pesticide by forcing the agency to choose the least burdensome choice for industry, regardless of environmental consequences.

As you are aware, science and time have shown that GE crops can cause significant harms to agriculture and the environment. These novel crops (the overwhelming majority engineered to be resistant to herbicides, such as Monsanto's Roundup) have dramatically increased overall herbicide use. They have caused an epidemic scourge of resistant superweeds. And they have caused repeated transgenic contamination of non-biotech agriculture and the wild. Federal courts have ruled for farmers, businesses and public interest plaintiffs numerous times, finding that USDA had violated federal law by failing to adequately consider and regulate these potential harms. But rather than address these continued failures, this bill would eviscerate meaningful USDA's review; replacing it with an impotent assessment that cannot inform the agency's decision; permanently cut out any other agencies that might have more expertise (such as the Fish and Wildlife Service); and even prohibit the Department from using any funds to conduct any additional environmental analyses.

To make matters worse, the bill establishes purposely impossible deadlines for USDA to respond to GE crop approval applications. A new one-year deadline to approve or deny an application (with an optional 180-day extension) will put unreasonable pressure on the Department and will undoubtedly impact its willingness to even attempt rigorous risk assessments.

Further, multiple backdoor approvals have been written into this bill that could allow potentially dangerous GE crops to be commercialized without the necessary safety assessments, let alone any limitations. For example, if USDA's initial documentation indicates a crop may not pose a risk, but it is unable to respond to a petition within the timeframe required, the crop would be automatically approved under this law. This backdoor approval will take effect even if USDA has not yet completed the environmental analysis required. A second backdoor approval exists for applications that are currently under review by the USDA and have gone through an initial public comment period. Under this condition, if USDA is unable to approve or deny a crop application – such as Dow's 2,4-D corn, engineered to withstand exposure to one of the herbicides in the Vietnam-era defoliant Agent Orange – within 90 days of the Farm Bill passage, then the crop would be deemed approved. Such a deadline would be impossible to meet given the volume of public and scientific comments the Department receives (for the Dow corn, over 350,000) and the number of applications currently being considered.

Conventional (non-biotech) and organic farmers, as well as grain handlers, grain millers and processors, have suffered substantial losses in the past due to transgenic contamination. If this bill were to become law, the Secretary of Agriculture may be potentially unable to prevent costly contamination episodes, like Starlink corn or Liberty Link rice, which result in market rejection, loss of foreign and domestic markets, and untold millions of dollars in lost revenue to farmers and the food industry.

The riders also compel USDA to establish an extremely controversial national policy for the low-level presence of GE material in crops, which would set for the first time an acceptable level of GE contamination in non-GE crops in the U.S. without recourse. Consumers have consistently rejected allowing GE contamination to occur, and any policy that evades reasonable restrictions will create unknown risks to human health and severely impact our capability to export to vital foreign markets.

Fundamentally, Congress should not attempt to alter the USDA's regulatory framework for GE crops in such a one-sided and non-transparent manner. The new deadlines and diminished review process will make a mockery of USDA's GE crop reviews, transforming it into a façade of 'rubber stamp' approval, at the urging of the chemical industry. The only gain from these measures will be to the profits of the pesticide industry to the detriment of conventional and organic farmers and businesses, as well as the environment.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully urge Congress to strike the biotech provisions (Sections 10011-10014) from the House Agriculture Committee's discussion draft of the 2012 Farm Bill.

Respectfully submitted:

**Organizations and Businesses**

Alliance for Humane Biotechnology  
Alliance for Natural Health USA  
Beyond Pesticides  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Environmental Health  
Center for Food Safety  
Cuatro Puertas  
Earthjustice  
Eden Foods  
Equal Exchange  
Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund  
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Food and Water Watch  
Friends of the Earth  
Go Wild Campaign  
Institute for Responsible Technology  
Just Label It  
LabelGMOs  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Mangrove Action Project  
National Cooperative Grocers Association  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Organic Coalition  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Association  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut  
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Interstate Council  
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance  
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides  
Organic Trade Association  
Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association  
Pesticide Action Network  
Planetary Health, Inc.  
Rural Advancement Fund International - USA  
Sierra Club  
Truth in Labeling Coalition  
United Natural Foods, Inc.  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Washington Biotechnology Action Council  
Weston A. Price Foundation  
Wood Prairie Farm

**Individuals**

Former Congressman Jim Bates  
Dr. Jennifer F. Brewer, East Carolina University  
Dr. Jack Heinemann, University of Canterbury

CC:

Speaker John Boehner  
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. House of Representatives

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## Noem praises House committee passage of farm bill

**AP** Associated Press — Thu, Jul 12, 2012

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rep. Kristi Noem is praising the House Agriculture Committee's passage of the 2012 Farm Bill, saying it saves more than \$35 billion and makes farm and nutrition programs more accountable to American taxpayers.

The South Dakota Republican voted for the bill, which passed the committee Thursday by a 35-11 margin.

Noem says it's a long way from perfect, but it will save taxpayers billions of dollars while protecting the farm and food safety net on which many South Dakotans rely.

She praised the extension of several livestock programs, the Protect our Prairies Act which encourages conservation of native sod and grassland and a program to streamline processes to combat pine beetle mitigation efforts.

The House committee vote comes three weeks after the Senate passed its version.

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## Noem praises House committee passage of farm bill

CHET BROKAW, Associated Press

Published 02:37 p.m., Thursday, July 12, 2012

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's lone member of the U.S. House defended the farm bill approved by the House Agriculture Committee on Thursday, saying it will help South Dakota farmers and ranchers while making sure food stamps go only to people who need the help.

Rep. Kristi Noem, R-S.D., who serves on the Agriculture Committee, said she would still like to see some changes in provisions that provide a financial safety net for farmers but the bill includes some good things for South Dakota.

Her opponent in the November election, however, said House committee's version of the bill makes "draconian" cuts to food stamps, provides inadequate support for developing ethanol and other biofuels and favors Southern rice and peanut farmers over South Dakota corn and soybean farmers.

Democrat Matt Varilek also said Noem voted for a provision that could eventually hamper efforts to have meat carry labels identifying the country in which it originated.

Noem said the bill includes provisions she has promoted to extend livestock disaster payments, encourage protection of native sod and grassland and streamline the process of fighting the mountain pine beetle infestation that is killing trees in the Black Hills.








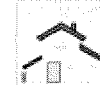
The House committee bill differs from the Senate measure passed three weeks ago by preserving a price support program that pays farmers when prices fall below certain levels. That target price system is favored by Southern rice and peanut farmers.


Corn and soybean farmers prefer a program, included in both bills, that would compensate them for modest revenue losses before subsidized crop insurance kicks in.

Noem said she does not support target prices, and in that regard, prefers the Senate version of the farm bill.

"The No. 1 priority for producers in South Dakota that I've been hearing for the last couple of years has been that crop insurance needs to remain strong," Noem said. "That safety net

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is just critically important when you live in a state like South Dakota where we face a lot of extremes and people take a lot of risk to put their crops in every year."

Varilek previously said he supported the Senate version of the financial safety net, including a strong crop insurance program. He also has said it should limit payments to large farm operations and instead focus on helping more modest-sized family farmers. Those making more than \$750,000 a year in adjusted gross income should have to pay a bigger share of the cost of crop insurance, he said.

Varilek said a provision requiring the Agriculture Department to file a report to Congress on its compliance with the World Trade Organization could be used later to hamper the labeling of meat to indicate its country of origin.

The Democrat also said he favors the Senate bill's more modest \$400 million a year cut in food stamps, now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The House version would save \$1.6 billion a year by tightening eligibility rules for food stamps.

Noem said the House committee's bill would cut food stamp spending by eliminating practices in some states that waive income and asset limits for people getting other welfare benefits or that give people minimal heating aid so they are eligible for food stamps.

"We truly believe this program needs to go to the people who really need it," she said. "We want to make sure it's getting into the hands of people who are hungry and need the help."

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## Ag groups react to House Ag Committee's farm bill passage

By Sarah Gonzalez

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WASHINGTON, July 12, 2012- The House Agriculture Committee successfully passed its five-year farm bill authorization through committee with no major upsets, but commodity groups agreed that passing a joint farm bill before the current legislation expires on Sept. 30 is top priority.

“In addition to crop insurance and Title I policies, the bill passed today includes important provisions with regards to conservation, research, food aid, marketing and nutrition that should not be subjected to the uncertainty of short-term extensions,” said National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) President Erik Younggren.

National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) President Garry Niemeyer said his members will be encouraging changes to the legislation as it reaches its final changes. He noted NCGA “is disappointed the House Agriculture Committee’s passed version of the 2012 farm bill does not include a more viable market-oriented risk management program.”

“We support moving the legislative process forward and urge Speaker Boehner to schedule time for full House floor consideration before the August recess,” Niemeyer added.



With a 35 to 11 vote, the “Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act” (FARRM) amendment process maintained its sugar and dairy policies, while adopting a GIPSA rulemaking repeal and defeating challenges to its \$16 billion in Nutrition Title savings.

Satisfied that the committee bill provides price protection against multi-year price collapse and “a good conservation title,” National Farmers Union (NFU) President of Government Relations Chandler Goule said “we were disappointed by the fact that Energy didn’t have any mandatory funding, but we were pleased that the no-cost sugar program was maintained and that the stabilization provisions of the dairy programs were maintained.”

Goule said overall he is pleased the bill passed, but noted the urgency of getting it to the House floor, through conference and to the President's desk before Sept. 30. That task, he noted, will be "very difficult," but an extension of the current farm bill "has some very negative consequences."

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Senior Director of Congressional Relations Mary Kay Thatcher said during the markup that if Boehner agreed to move the bill straight to conference instead of the floor, the legislation would need to attach as a rider to a legislative vehicle later in the year, most likely tax bills in the lame duck session.

However, Ranking Member Collin Peterson, D-Minn., said after the markup that House members "will not stand for it not going to the floor" and noted the urgency of getting the legislation on the floor before August 3. The possibility of extending the current bill "is even less likely with these guys," he said of the House, noting that "there is no good scenario beyond Sept. 30."

"My concern is the bill will be taken away from us and we will be told what to do," he added.

Regarding particular amendments debated Wednesday, Thatcher noted the committee defeated those to alter sugar and dairy programs before noon. "We were pleasantly surprised," she said. "Especially at the sugar vote, given the 46 votes in the Senate, but there were only 10 votes here. I think it's a really good omen."

Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., proposed the "Sugar Reform Amendment" to repeal the Feedstock Flexibility Program, which he said would "make sugar policy more transparent" and "provide flexibility to USDA in administering sugar policies."

The measure, defeated 36 to 10, died in opposition led by Ranking Member Collin Peterson, D-Minn., Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, and others, who maintained the sugar policy works and operates without cost to taxpayers.

Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., had the final word, noting that "sugar policy doesn't have an effect on the federal budget," and the committee's biggest challenge "is to address debt and come up with savings."

A dairy amendment offered by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Rep. David Scott (D-GA), defeated by a margin of 29-17, attempted to remove the "Dairy Producer Margin Protection and Dairy Market Stabilization Programs" in the Farm Bill and replace it with a new margin insurance program.

National Milk Producers Federation President Jerry Kozak said the Goodlatte-Scott dairy amendment "would have undone years of consensus-building and compromise among dairy farmers" and commended the bill's defeat.

International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) supported the amendment, saying it "would offer the safety net of a margin insurance program with no strings attached."

"Today's close vote, with bipartisan support, proves that our chances are excellent of winning a vote on the House floor when the Farm Bill is brought for a vote," said IDFA CEO Connie Tipton. "Speaker of the House John Boehner has already indicated his intention to speak out against supply management for dairy."

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) commended the committee's passage of certain Credit Title provisions. The farm to school provision, led by Reps. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), Renee Ellmers (R-N.C.), and Chris Gibson (R-N.Y.) authorizes small rural schools to start making their own food purchases, provided USDA determines this would yield reduced administrative costs.

Reps. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.) had their amendment to authorize microlending programs within USDA accepted by voice vote. The amendment authorizes USDA to make microloans of up to \$35,000.

"Capital is the number one need of young and beginning farmers, and this amendment starts to address that need by improving federal credit programs for new producers," said NSAC Policy Associate Juli Obudzinski.

The Nutrition Title maintained its \$16 billion reduction to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) despite proposed amendments from both sides of the aisle. One proposed to reduce the cuts to the Senate-passed version, which only saves \$4 billion. The other proposed the SNAP reductions increase to the House Budget reconciliation level, or around \$30 billion.

"We recognized that it was a pretty delicate balance between Lucas and Peterson," Thatcher said. "I suspect far more effort went into finding that balance than actual votes"

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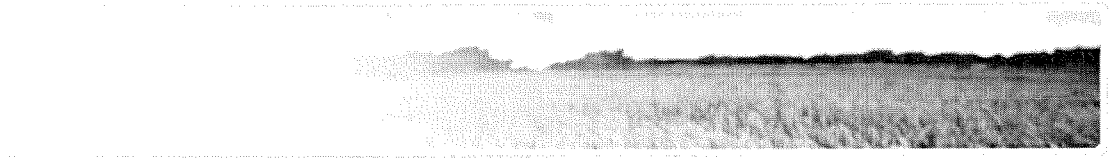
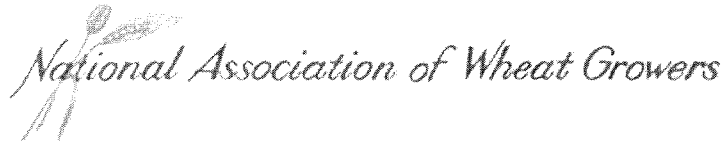
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## Wheat Growers Applaud House Ag Passage of 2012 Farm Bill

July 12, 2012

A statement from National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) President Erik Younggren, who farms wheat, sugar beets and soybeans near Hallock, Minn., on the House Agriculture Committee's approval of 2012 Farm Bill language:

"NAWG was happy to see Members of the House Agriculture Committee approve their version of the 2012 Farm Bill early this morning, and we strongly encourage House Leadership to schedule floor time for the bill as soon as possible.

"My fellow farmers will begin planting winter wheat in just a couple of months. It is very important they and all farmers have an understanding of the farm safety net available to them when they make the substantial investments required for the new crop. In addition to crop insurance and Title I policies, the bill passed today includes important provisions with regards to conservation, research, food aid, marketing and nutrition that should not be subjected to the uncertainty of short-term extensions.

"We commend Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson for undertaking the mark-up in an expeditious fashion and allowing Committee Members' voices to be heard. We look forward to the floor process and finalizing new farm and food policy before Sept. 30."

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## Groups Respond to House Ag Farm Bill Passage

Thanks to a very late vote on the House Ag Committee's version of the farm bill Wednesday - several ag organizations started weighing in on the measure Thursday. Chairman Frank Lucas and Ranking Member Collin Peterson were commended, applauded and congratulated for their work on the measure - while the House leadership was encouraged to bring the measure to the floor for debate and passage. Each of the groups expressed the importance of finalizing farm legislation before the current bill expires at the end of September. The American Soybean Association pointed out that the legislation affects Americans from all walks of life - as it is more than just a farm bill - it is a jobs and food bill.

The American Farm Bureau Federation says the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act is a fiscally responsible, bipartisan measure that continues to provide a basic-but-broad foundation of risk management protection for the nation's farmers and ranchers. While Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman said farmers are not going to receive all the provisions they had hoped for - he commended the bipartisan efforts that went into providing the risk management, marketing, conservation and trade tools farmers and ranchers need to ensure a solid, predictable agricultural economy over the next few years. According to Stallman - the legislation maintains proven program features like the marketing loan provision and strengthens the crop insurance program. He added that it includes significant but fair reductions in ag spending over the next decade. Stallman said there are provisions Farm Bureau believes could be improved - but it was refreshing to see agriculture set a clear example of working together on building a package of reforms in a fiscally responsible manner.

National Corn Growers Association President Garry Niemeyer says NCGA is disappointed the House Ag Committee's version of the 2012 Farm Bill doesn't include a more viable market-oriented risk management program. While he says the group does support moving the legislative process forward - and urges the House Speaker to schedule time for floor consideration before the August recess - the nation's corn growers feel significant changes are needed. He says NCGA's farmers will work with House members to ensure those changes are included in a final package.

American Soybean Association President Steve Wellman notes ASA's key priority in the farm bill discussions has been to develop programs that help farmers manage risk while complementing crop insurance and avoiding planting distortions. He says ASA is encouraged by the committee's passage of a farm bill - but is concerned about planting distortions that could occur under a coupled target price program like the one contained in the House bill. The group supports provisions that reauthorize and fund trade and market development programs - as well as ag research programs; and the reauthorization of the Biobased Market Program and the Biodiesel Education Program. ASA also supports the focus on working-lands conservation and the gradual reduction of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

Despite the nearly 100 amendments considered by the House Agriculture Committee - National Sorghum Producers says the commodity title was left relatively intact - including reference prices and producer choice. Both were priorities of the group. NSP Legislative Committee Chairman J.B. Stewart says the committee passed a very good bill that achieves substantial budget savings - but maintains balanced and solid protection for America's farmers and ranchers.

The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance - a national coalition of more than 120 organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables and more - commended the House



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Agriculture Committee's continued support of policies that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of specialty crop agriculture. They say the measure includes funding for key specialty crop priorities like Specialty Crop Block Grants, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, Plant Pest and Disease programs and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Alliance members are disappointed with a significant policy change to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Robert Guenther - Senior Vice President of Public Policy for Alliance member United Fresh - says opening the program to all forms of fruits and vegetables undermines the goal and focus of the program - which is to provide a fresh option to more than three-million American school children.

Gene Schmidt - National Association of Conservation Districts President - says his group fully supports the bipartisan efforts of Chairman Frank Lucas and Ranking Member Collin Peterson in moving a strong, common-sense bill out of committee. He says the FARRM Act demonstrates a firm commitment to the protection of America's precious natural resource base for the future. While the measure does call for conservation cuts - Schmidt says NACD says it's done in a way that consolidates and streamlines programs to preserve the ability of conservation districts, producers, landowners and other partners to continue working together to implement conservation on the ground. But cuts above the six-billion dollars outlined in the House bill - he says - will compromise these efforts and put the nation's critical and irreplaceable natural resources at risk for the future.

The National Cotton Council is grateful to the Committee for including the Stacked Income Protection Plan with provisions going along with the Cotton industry's proposal and new Supplemental Coverage Option. NCC Chairman Chuck Coley says cotton growers and their lenders need the certainty of program eligibility without regard to organizational structure or income - which is what the legislation will do. Coley says NCC looks forward to working with the House leadership to move the bill reported by the Committee.



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## **Opening Statement of Chairman Lucas at Business Meeting to Consider H.R. 6083, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

JUL 11, 2012 | Issues: [Farm Bill](#)

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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[tamara.hinton@mail.house.gov](mailto:tamara.hinton@mail.house.gov)

Good morning. Thank you all for joining us to consider the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act.

Consideration of this bill is the next step in the process of authorizing the 2012 Farm Bill, and I appreciate the efforts of my colleague, Ranking Member Collin Peterson, and the bipartisan nature in which this legislation was written.

I am and will always be a farmer and a rancher. While my wife now heads our cow/calf operation in Oklahoma, my mind never leaves the farm. I know how risky it is to make your living as a farmer. I still check the weather every day, usually multiple times a day because I know at a moment's notice a dream crop can turn into a disaster.

Our goal was to give producers choices to better manage risk, whether it is through improved crop insurance products, a new revenue program or through a price protection mechanism.

I've said this many times before, but it is worth saying again: a safety net is written with bad times in mind. These programs should not guarantee that the good times are the best, but rather that the bad times are manageable.

In general, the bill provides deficit reduction and reform. It is a tough farm bill, but a fair one. We face huge deficits and the heavy burden of debt. We needed to go deeper in finding savings and we needed to do it in a more balanced way. At the end of the day, the FARRM Act will contribute more than \$35 billion to deficit reduction with \$14 billion coming from the farm safety net, \$6 billion coming from conservation programs, and \$16 billion from nutrition reforms.

This bill is a culmination of years of work. We started the process of holding 11 comprehensive audit hearings - focusing our attention on the U.S. Department of Agriculture - to look for ways to improve programs for farmers, increase efficiency, and reduce spending.

We then went out to the countryside this spring to hear directly from producers in the field. This was a continuation of the field hearings held when Mr. Peterson was Chairman.

Finally, we wrapped up the hearing series in Washington where we gathered agricultural leaders to discuss their policy priorities. The information we gathered from those hearings have led us to where we are today: to consider a bill that is balanced, reform-minded, and fiscally responsible; to consider policy that works for all regions and all crops; to consider improvements that increase program efficiency, integrity, and accountability.

Reducing government spending and reforming government programs is never an easy task. We face difficult choices, but it is our responsibility to cut costs and improve program efficiency so that we can once again live within our means.

The FARRM Act includes numerous reforms. Not only does it reduce the deficit by \$35 billion, but it also repeals or consolidates more than 100 programs. Specifically, it repeals direct payments. In the past, I have defended direct payments because they are an effective and trade-compliant way to help producers manage price, production, and cost risk. The direct payment has been a lifeline for a lot of farmers. But there were no sacred cows. If it cost money, it was on the table for cuts. Ultimately, we decided to repeal direct payments because the size of the cuts we are making made it impossible to keep them. In fact, beyond the marketing loan program, we repealed all current farm programs now in place, which saves taxpayers over \$14 billion.

We also made historic changes to the conservation title. This is a title that has been close to my heart for a long time. Instead of the piecemeal approach we have used for years, we made a comprehensive overhaul of conservation programs, which eliminates duplication and improves efficiency. We consolidated the current 23 programs to 13. This saves \$6 billion.

We also close loopholes and eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP. Some say the cuts we propose to food stamps are not enough, while others say the cuts are too much. I believe most Americans would agree a two percent cut to food stamps is reasonable.

I'd like to be clear that this legislation will not prevent families that qualify for assistance under SNAP law from receiving their benefits. We are working to better target the program and improve its integrity so that families most in need can continue to receive nutrition assistance.

We do that in a number of ways:

First, SNAP's resources have been stretched because this administration has encouraged states to take liberties in how the program is administered.

Some states are making nominal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) payments to households so that they get an income deduction to help them receive a higher amount in SNAP benefits. In practice, that means that states can game the system by sending a \$1.00 check which can trigger an increase of up to \$130 in SNAP benefits. Closing this loophole ensures that both LIHEAP and SNAP are targeted to the families who need assistance.

Similarly, most states have implemented categorical eligibility for SNAP, which means that any household who benefits from a low-income assistance program is automatically eligible for SNAP benefits. Some of these benefits can be as simple as providing a household with a pamphlet or access to a 1-800 number hotline. When states implement categorical eligibility, these households do not need to meet SNAP asset or gross income tests.

This provision changes nothing for households that qualify for the program under the rules of SNAP law, and those households will continue receiving the benefit level for which they qualify. Families that receive cash assistance can still take advantage of categorical eligibility for SNAP. But by ensuring that only cash assistance triggers SNAP eligibility—and not other benefits like brochures—we can save billions of dollars over 10 years.

We're also trusting states to do their job in administering SNAP. Currently USDA awards \$48 million per year to states for improving program efficiency. We all support good government efforts, but taxpayers cannot afford to pay bonuses to states that are essentially just doing their job. The FARRM Act ends state performance bonuses.

The bill also cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse by ending SNAP benefits for lottery winners and providing additional resources to USDA to prevent trafficking of benefits.

To further the goal of targeting nutrition programs for those families in need, the FARRM Act increases assistance for our local food banks, which have been struggling during the current economic climate. Food Banks have been successful in effectively using government dollars and securing private-sector donations to feed the hungry.

I urge you to approve this common sense, reform-minded approach. It is a balanced bill that underscores our commitment to production agriculture and rural America, achieves real savings, and continues to provide nutrition assistance for needy American families.

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## House Ag Committee Advances Farm Bill

JUL 12, 2012 | Issues: [Farm Bill](#)

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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WASHINGTON – Chairman Frank Lucas of Oklahoma and Ranking Member Collin Peterson of Minnesota issued the following statements after the House Agriculture Committee approved H.R. 6083, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2012 by a vote of 35-11.

**"Today marked an important step forward in the development of the next farm bill. I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues and the bipartisan nature in which this legislation was written and approved. This is a balanced, reform-minded, fiscally responsible bill that underscores our commitment to production agriculture and rural America, achieves real savings, and improves program efficiency, said Chairman Frank Lucas.**

**"I'm pleased today's markup is behind us and we can continue to move the process forward. The current farm bill expires on September 30 and there only 13 legislative days before the August recess. Simply put, the House leadership needs to bring the farm bill to the floor for a vote. We should not jeopardize the health of our rural economies which, by and large, have remained strong the last few years. Our nation's farmers and ranchers need the certainty of a new five year farm bill and they need it before the current farm bill ends," said Ranking Member Collin Peterson**

For more information on FARRM, click [here](#).

**###**



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## House Farm Bill Faces Difficult Road to Passage

**Date:** 07/16/2012

**By:** Gary Truitt

The House Ag Committee passed its version of the Farm Bill last week; but the legislation, vital to American agriculture, faces an uncertain future. Mary Kay Thatcher, American Farm Bureau Federation's Farm Policy Specialist, says key differences between the House bill and the one passed by the Senate last month may make it difficult for the House version to move forward, "There are 12 titles to the farm bill and for the most part the titles dealing with things like conservation, research, rural development, livestock, specialty crops – those are very, very similar. The real differences are in the commodity title and the nutrition title. In nutrition, the House side cut four times more money than the Senate side. In the commodity title, you have the major change being that the Senate offered an option where a producer could pick a shallow loss revenue type program based on county averages or individual farm yield averages, where on the House side they said pick between target prices and a county level revenue program."

While the focus of the House floor debate will likely be over the nutrition programs, farm groups are divided on the commodity title of the House legislation. AFBF President Bob Stallman stated, "For more than a year, we have been advocating farm policy that protects and strengthens risk management programs for all farmers. This legislation maintains proven program features such as the marketing loan provision and strengthens the crop insurance program while setting a clear example of fiscal responsibility with significant but fair reductions in agriculture spending over the next decade." But National Corn Growers Association President Garry Niemeyer said in a statement, "The National Corn Growers Association is disappointed the House Agriculture Committee's passed version of the 2012 farm bill does not include a more viable market-oriented risk management program. We feel there needs to be significant changes made to the legislation."

One thing that all farm groups do agree on, however, is that Congress needs to take action on the legislation quickly. Thatcher says the worsening drought conditions in the Midwest may help put pressure on Congress to keep the legislation moving forward, "I think right now, with the drought situation that's happening in the country, that members of Congress are seeing when they go home the problems; and, hopefully, they're

understanding that we have to pass this bill because we need a strong crop insurance program and we need those livestock disaster programs to be retroactive in 2012. So hopefully we can push this bill along.” Niemeyer urged House leaders to follow the example of the Senate and put the bill on the floor during July, “We support moving the legislative process forward and urge Speaker Boehner to schedule time for full House floor consideration before the August recess.”

House leadership isn’t making any promises on floor time for the farm bill. According to House Speaker John Boehner there are some good reforms in the farm bill – and there are other parts he has concerns about. According to Boehner – we have a Soviet-style dairy program in the country today – and one of the proposals in the farm bill actually makes it worse. The Speaker is reserving further comments on the legislation approved by the House Ag Committee until he gets a closer look. Majority Leader Eric Cantor didn’t even discuss floor time following committee passage.

Thatcher is not optimistic that House Farm Bill action will be possible, “Our best option is probably to have some kind of a conference committee between what the House Ag Committee approved yesterday and what the Senate approved and hope to find a vehicle that’s moving. Possibly one of the tax extenders that’s expiring in December and the lame duck session tying this to that using some of the cost savings presumably somewhere between the 23 and the 35 billion dollars that is being saved and trying to use that to offset the cost of extending a tax provision and to get the farm bill done.” Stallman said farmers are not going to receive all the provisions they had hoped for in this bill, but he commended, “The bipartisan efforts that went into providing farmers and ranchers the risk management, marketing, conservation and trade tools necessary to ensure a solid, predictable agricultural economy over the next few years.”

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## Congress delays farm bill despite the fact millions would benefit from passage

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Speaker Boehner (R-OH) right and Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA) are both in favor of the farm bill even though the House Agriculture Committee on a short-term basis. Why?

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(<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0712/78832.html>) that Republican Leadership in the House of Representatives is kicking the proverbial can down the road on the farm bill

(<http://www.examiner.com/topic/farm-bill>). “In the midst of a severe drought (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/drought>), the House Republican leaders are proposing to walk away from farm states and decades of precedent by not calling up the new five-year plan before the current law expires Sept. 30,” he wrote.

The strange thing about the Republican stall on the farm bill is that would cut \$10 billion dollars out of the budget over the next decade saving taxpayers a billion dollars a year. Republicans campaigned on cutting spending. So what's up?

Never before in modern times has a farm bill that was reported from the House Agriculture Committee been blocked by House leadership. POLITICO looked back at 50 years of farm bills and found nothing like this. There have been long debates, often torturous negotiations with the Senate and a famous meltdown in 1995 when the House Agriculture Committee couldn't produce a bill. But no House farm bill, once out of committee, has been kept off the floor while its deadline passes.

If Republicans delay the farm bill until the lame-duck session after the election farmers will be competing with Medicare physicians whose pay will be running out, idled workers worried about jobless benefits, and very likely, millions of families faced with the expiring Bush tax cuts. On top of that, they will be tossed into the middle of the debate over raising the debt ceiling. We all know how much fun that is.

This is not the first rodeo for the Republicans under Boehner, Cantor, McCarthy, & Rodgers (<http://www.examiner.com/article/obstruction-things-congress-is-not-doing-but-should-be-doing>) since they ascended into power after the 2010 elections. They let the highway bill go past the deadline and extended it several times. They let the FAA shut down for two weeks. They nearly closed down the federal government in order to stop funding for Planned Parenthood. And they went to the wire on extending the debt ceiling and caused the first downgrade of our credit rating in history.

This is the *rule* not the exception under Republicans of Congress. Rep. George Miller (<http://georgemiller.house.gov/>) (D-CA.) told POLITICO. “If you were looking at the United States from outside, you look and you say, ‘What are these people? Fools?’” People in this country know they are in fact, fools.

The farm bill came out of the House Agriculture Committee on a strong bipartisan 35-11 vote July 12. Nearly a year after the August debt accords — and eight months after the November collapse of the deficit super committee — it is the closest this Congress has come to enacting real deficit reduction from mandatory spending.

Boehner (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/boehner>) says there are not 218 votes for passage. Rather than wrestle with this problem, it's easier to run out the clock with symbolic anti-abortion bills, and anti-red tape, anti-tax votes on which the GOP is more united, but will do nothing to govern the country.

The delay is curious. The farm bill is a five-year event and so fundamental to one bright spot in the economy. The nation is gripped by drought. Why would Congress delay passing a bill that could help

those ravaged by this event? By failing to act, Congress can seem even more detached from the real lives of everyday people.

Republicans on the Agriculture Committee who forged a bi-partisan compromise with Democrats on the bill are shocked to see their own leadership—Boehner and Cantor stonewall this bill. The morning after his late night markup, Republican Committee Chairman [Frank Lucas \(http://lucas.house.gov/\)](http://lucas.house.gov/) (R-OK) sought out Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor (RTP-VA.) face to face. “They thanked me, smiled at me and left it at that,” Lucas said.

If the bill is not enacted by Sept 30, there will be no farm programs and no food stamps. Congress will likely resort to a 30 or 60 day extension like they do on everything these days.

Lucas is worried that simply passing a short-term extension of the current farm law will not be an easy matter in September. Having spent the better part of a year saying direct payments must end will Congress want to extend them by extending the law they all say they hate?

Meanwhile, Republican Congress members will be campaigning for re-election bragging about all they accomplished to reduce the deficit, but their inaction on the farm bill will mean the deficit will actually grow and Americans will be hurt.

Unfortunately, hardly anyone notices.

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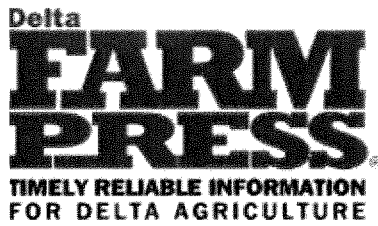
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**Robert Bowen, Economic Policy Examiner**

Currently a businessman, Robert Bowen served in the Colorado legislature in the 1980s as a moderate Democrat. He was also appointed by three different governors to serve on various boards and commissions. He has followed political news, national news headlines and international news closely for...

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## Rep. Lucas vows to do all he can to complete farm bill

Tue, 2012-07-24 15:08

[Ron Smith](#)

U.S. Representative Frank Lucas, R-Okla., Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, says he will “do everything I can” to get a farm bill done by late September.

“But the magnitude of changes,” he says, “dramatically alters commodity titles.”

[House leadership lambasted for farm bill intransigence](#)

Lucas, keynote speaker at the recent Southern Peanut Growers’ Conference in Panama City Beach, Fla., said the House needs to act soon to get the bill passed and into conference with the Senate.

Even with quick passage, Congress may need to extend current policy until new rules can be written and implemented, Lucas said. Wheat farmers, for instance, will be planting by mid-to-late September and need farm policy in place.

Also, livestock insurance provisions created in the 2008 farm law will expire, leaving them without adequate protection.

[Video: Magnitude of farm bill changes](#)

“We have to get the bill out of the House to a conference committee,” Lucas said during a press briefing following his prepared remarks.

Lucas said the next farm bill must be comprehensive, allowing all commodities to participate, or it will not be a true farm bill. A good farm bill “allows everybody to participate. I understand the perspectives of various regions. But it is a struggle and I am getting pushback. The House bill is good for peanuts,” he said.

Lucas said the House bill “offers substantial savings,” mostly from elimination of direct payments.

Partisan politics will pose a serious challenge for quick passage on the House floor, Lucas said, even though the bill “leaves the House Ag Committee with bi-partisan support.”

## Polarization an issue

He admits that the polarization that has been the rule in the House for the last decade creates obstacles to passing a comprehensive farm bill by late September.

He said committee discussions “were civil; debate was meaningful. I will try to make that happen on the House floor, but we have elements to deal with.”

He still has hope. “We have to have faith in the majority of our colleagues that they will do what’s right for the country.”

Lucas said members of Congress who would like to split up the “three-legged stool,” that is the foundation of the farm bill have not thought through the ramifications of removing any of those three supports — commodities, nutrition and conservation.

“There are reasons we include nutrition in the farm bill.” He said agriculture commodities were able to stand alone in farm bill debates from the 1930s into the 1960s. “But things changed.” He said Jack Kennedy, as president, proposed nutrition aspects of the farm bill that later became the food stamp program under President Lyndon Johnson. Conservation was added later as the third leg of the stool.

Nutrition programs, Lucas said, added urban voters to rural voters to support farm bill proposals. Adding conservation expanded the base even more.

“Now, some folks want to split it up. Some want to kill part of it, but I want a comprehensive farm bill.”

## Cuts in nutrition program

He said the House bill makes substantial cuts in the nutrition program but “does not take one calorie off the plate of those who qualify. One segment of the House wants to feed everyone. This will be a challenge.”

He said Collin Peterson, D-Minn., ranking member of the House Ag committee, “stood with me” on the nutrition cuts, along with other Democrat members of the committee. “We have to assure that the resources go to the people who need them,” he said.

Lucas says he prefers to pass a farm bill the usual way, on the House Floor and then through conference committee with the Senate, but failing that, other options may exist.

Pre-conferencing the conference — working with the ranking members and ag committee chairman, among others, to work through the issues—could be possible. They would then take the bill to the full House and Senate for “an up or down” vote.

“All sorts of scenarios are possible,” Lucas said, possibly even working through an appropriations bill.

“But I’d rather do it the regular way.”

**Source URL:** <http://deltafarmpress.com/government/rep-lucas-vows-do-all-he-can-complete-farm-bill>

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## Redwood Falls, MN Portal

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### House Leaders Push Extension of Current Farm Bill

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WASHINGTON (DTN) -- A new scenario for passing a farm bill this year emerged Thursday under which the House, with Democratic support, would pass a one-year extension of the 2008 farm bill next week that would include livestock and fruit and vegetable disaster aid.



(Illustration by Nick Scalise)

This would allow House Agriculture Committee leaders to use that bill to hold conference with the Senate in September over its version of the farm bill.

The vote could occur as early as Wednesday. House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., has already begun asking freshmen members to vote for the bill, National Journal Daily reported.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., said the bill needed to be passed before the August recess and this was a logical approach, National Journal reported.

"If you're going to provide certainty out in the drought areas, if you're going to enable an orderly transition from the completion of the regular farm bill, then a one-year [extension] makes sense," Lucas said.

Lucas also told National Journal that House leadership was on board for the vote. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, told reporters Thursday he believes the House will address the need for livestock disaster aid, and he is working with Lucas "on a path forward."

Boehner did not answer a follow-up question on whether that would be attached to an extension or to a new farm bill.

House Agriculture Committee ranking member Collin Peterson, D-Minn., who had earlier opposed an extension, said today that Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., had called to ask him to support the extension, and that she and Senate Agriculture ranking member Pat Roberts, R-Kan., support this approach.

Peterson said House passage of the extension would allow staff to work during August on a conference report that would be brought up in September. Peterson said he had initially wanted an ironclad promise of a conference, but after speaking with the House Parliamentarian he was assured that "if the Senate wants a conference, Boehner can't do anything to stop it."

Stabenow said in an email to DTN, "If the House intends to send us a bill that will be used to negotiate the farm bill during August, I am open to that approach. However, a short-term extension is bad for farmers and our agricultural economy. If

Congress does what Congress always does and kicks the can down the road with a short-term extension, there will be no reform, direct payments will continue, we'll lose the opportunity for major deficit reduction and we'll deliver a real blow to our economic recovery. What's important is at the end of the day we give our farmers certainty with a full farm bill and keep our agriculture economy growing."

Peterson said he is encouraging House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., to take this approach.

"It's pretty clear Republicans can't get enough votes without me," Peterson said.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., said on the House floor Thursday that the Republicans want to address disaster aid next week and he hopes Hoyer will support the bill.

Hoyer said he hopes there will be a bill he can support "without making the deficit worse."

Passing a one-year extension would allow the House to avoid a floor fight over cuts to the food stamp program in an election year. House conservatives want a big cut to food stamps while liberals want no cut at all.

Meanwhile, Food Research and Action Center President Jim Weill told DTN that anti-hunger advocates favor a one-year extension of the farm bill with no cuts to the food stamp program over a five-year bill.

"A process that makes sure there are no cuts in SNAP [the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] this year is a good outcome for struggling families," Weill said in an interview on the sidelines of The Diane Rehm Show.

Peterson said he was aware of FRAC's view, but believes he has "damped down" that viewpoint among House members.

The House farm bill that apparently will now not be considered on the House floor would cut food stamps by \$16.5 billion over 10 years, while the Senate bill would cut \$4.5 billion over 10 years. FRAC and other anti-hunger groups have opposed all cuts, but 66 senators voted against an amendment offered by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., that would have restored the funds cut in the Senate bill.

Pressure continues to build for passage of a farm bill this year.

"Congress can and should finish its work on a 2012 farm bill," the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition said in an email Wednesday.

(CC/CZ)


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## Cynical Extension Cuts Conservation, Extends Direct Payments

Posted by [Scott Faber](#) in [2012 Farm Bill](#), [Conservation](#) on July 31, 2012 | [no responses](#)

0 Like 0  5 1



The one-year extension of the farm bill likely to come up on the House floor this week would perpetuate funding for the worst aspects of American farm policy and would cut funding for the best.

The extension bill produced by House Agriculture Committee leaders would slash conservation programs by more than \$750 million.

Although these programs account for less than one-third of all farm spending and flow to all farmers in all regions of the country, they will “offset” the cost of an extension of the current farm bill and drought assistance.

Among the worthwhile efforts slated for sharp reductions: [the Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) and [the Conservation Security Program](#).

What’s more, the extension bill offers no support for organic farmers, new farmers and farmers’ markets. Yet it extends “direct” payments – subsidies paid regardless of need to crop farmers – for another year at a cost of nearly \$5 billion.

A sensible extension would end direct payments, use some of the savings to help drought-stricken livestock operators and direct the rest to deficit reduction.

But the [extension proposed by leaders of House Agriculture Committee](#) does none of that.

Instead, their extension pays lip service to the popular notion of cutting direct payments but actually proposes no cuts to direct payments in FY2013 and a paltry \$29 million cut in FY 2014.

By 2014, anything this extension does will be moot: a new farm bill will presumably be in effect.

The only thing that could be worse than this cynical extension – which won’t be subject to open debate on the floor – would be using it as a pretense to negotiate a five-year farm bill with the Senate, which has already passed its version of the \$1 trillion bill.

The House should reject this extension.

Comments are closed.

Still working. Still committed.



# POLITICO

## **GOP ditches farm bill extension**

By: David Rogers

July 31, 2012 11:29 AM EDT

Facing certain defeat, Republicans pulled their one-year farm bill extension from the House docket late Tuesday in favor of a narrower \$383 million disaster aid package to address the immediate needs of drought-stricken livestock producers.

The abrupt turnaround came just minutes before the House Rules Committee had been slated to take up the extension in anticipation of floor votes Wednesday. Within hours, the slimmer 22-page disaster bill had been filed with the promise of floor votes Thursday.

The action shows how much the GOP leadership — having boxed itself in by refusing to take up a five-year farm bill — is scrambling now to find something the party's candidates can take home to farm states in August given the severe drought plaguing much of the country.

The substitute will restore livestock indemnity and forage programs that have expired in the current farm program, with some assistance also for specialty crops.

To keep down costs, the aid will apply only to 2012, while offsets will come from imposing caps on two conservation programs much as the House Appropriations Committee has already proposed in its 2013 budget bill. Early estimates indicate the net savings would be about \$256 million.

"My priority remains to get a five-year farm bill on the books and put those policies in place," said House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.). "But the most pressing business before us is to provide disaster assistance to those producers impacted by the drought conditions who are currently exposed."

"The House is expected to consider a disaster assistance package on Thursday and I encourage my colleagues to support it. ... The challenges our farmers and ranchers are currently facing only underscores how important it is that we complete a five-year farm bill this year."

As this week began, the leadership was still talking boldly of going forward with the extension — but the odds only grew longer by the hour.

Stepping into the debate Tuesday morning, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack dismissed the extension as "just an excuse not to put in the work to build a coalition" needed for a long-term plan for producers but also all of "rural America."

"We need a five-year bill," Vilsack told POLITICO. "If folks care about rural America they will get this done."

The “rural America” theme is one that the former Iowa governor has sounded before, emphasizing the economic development, energy and land conservation elements of the farm bills. And with Iowa in play in the presidential campaign—not to mention Vilsack’s wife, Christie, running for Congress back home against Republican Rep. Steve King—the farm bill’s import can no longer be ignored.

Vilsack upped the ante himself, saying that rural communities can survive the drought but that their economic turnaround could be seriously hurt by the stalemate in Congress.

“Production agriculture is the linchpin,” Vilsack said, but the “total package” is driven by “the natural resources of rural America” whether in recreational lands, bio-fuels or new manufacturing.

“We have the momentum now,” he said. “It’s taken a long time to get it, but they could kill it if there is no five-year farm bill.”

Leaders of the House and Senate Ag Committees had met Tuesday morning to try to find a path forward. But Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, the ranking Democrat on the House panel, refused to accept the extension absent a promise from Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) to allow House-Senate negotiations in August on the larger five-year farm plans favored by the two committees.

The Senate approved its farm bill in June, but Boehner has blocked House action for fear of a messy fight dividing his party. Instead, the speaker prevailed on Lucas to move ahead last Friday with the one-year extension together with disaster aid.

House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), who has major agricultural interests in his own home district, reached out to Peterson over the weekend. “They are beginning to figure out that this is a big albatross and want to get it off their back,” Peterson told POLITICO.

Major commodity groups backed Peterson, and he was helped too by his friendship with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). There had been concern that liberal food stamp advocates would back the extension—since it spared nutrition programs. But Pelosi’s close ally, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), joined in opposition to the bill Tuesday making it harder to the GOP to get to a majority.

“If we really want to help producers hurt by the drought, we would do so with a clean bill,” DeLauro wrote her colleagues. “I urge you to oppose this shell extension.”

As his statement indicates, Lucas himself wants to move ahead with a five-year bill and has been put in a difficult spot by his leadership. Friday’s unveiling was more haphazard than is the chairman’s style. His typically close working relationship with Peterson is showing some strains. And despite the fact that Lucas included substantial disaster aid in his extension, it met a steady drumbeat of complaints from the right and left.

Fiscal conservatives and taxpayer groups were upset that the bill walked away from earlier promises to end costly direct cash payments to farmers. Environmentalists were agitated by the fact that the greatest share of the cuts to pay for the disaster aid would come from conservation programs.

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## **House Leaders Drop Farm Bill Extension, Will Instead Push Disaster Relief**

By: [David Dayen](#) Wednesday August 1, 2012  
8:15 am



Forget about the farm bill. The House GOP leadership has dropped their efforts to pass a one-year extension of farm programs under current policy, weeks after they dropped efforts to pass a Republican version of the farm bill which has passed the House Agriculture Committee. With substantial opposition on both sides to continuing a program that would deliver direct payments to farmers, something everyone wants to phase out, there was little chance that the one-year extension could pass. Instead, Republicans will try to pass a separate disaster relief bill dealing with livestock producers and their struggles with this summer's historic drought:

The substitute will restore livestock indemnity and forage programs that have expired in the current farm program, with some assistance also for specialty crops.

To keep down costs, the aid will apply only to 2012, while offsets will come from imposing caps on two conservation programs much as the House Appropriations Committee has already proposed in its 2013 budget bill. Early estimates indicate the net savings would be about \$256 million.

“My priority remains to get a five-year farm bill on the books and put those policies in place,” said House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.). “But the most pressing business before us is to provide disaster assistance to those producers impacted by the drought conditions who are currently exposed.”

The conservation offsets are also in the farm bill, but they don’t have support among Democrats. So this is not only a punt, but a downshift into a partisan bill that will have trouble passing the Senate. And it’s offensive that the norm has been furthered that relief from a natural disaster must be paid for by cuts elsewhere. This is all set up just to give rural Republican members a set of talking points as they go home for the August recess.

Meanwhile, while the drought has taken its toll on commodity prices, farmers will still probably make out OK because of several good years and the widespread adoption of crop insurance programs. The victims of the drought are largely the livestock producers, because it has sent the cost of their feed soaring. We could probably alleviate this merely by reversing the mandate that forces the production of corn ethanol, given the corn shortage.

The dangers of not passing a farm bill by September 30 and allowing all food programs to expire and revert back to obsolete 1949-era standards, on the other hand, is a serious problem, one that can only be solved by Congressional action.

#### 6 Comments

Tags: [Republicans](#), [House of Representatives](#), [agriculture](#), [disaster relief](#), [farm bill](#), [crop insurance](#), [Frank Lucas](#)

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## **6 Responses to “House Leaders Drop Farm Bill Extension, Will Instead Push Disaster Relief”**

[Abdul Abulbul Amir](#) August 1st, 2012 at 10:56 am

1

while the drought has taken its toll on commodity prices

What? The price of corn is at an all time high. The toll will be taken on food consumers. We are now importing corn. The ethanol fuel program should be suspended for a year.

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## **In Case You Missed It... NYT: "Riding Herd on G.O.P. Effort to Produce a Farm Bill in the House"**

*The New York Times*

By Rebecca Berg

August 1, 2012

WASHINGTON — When Representative Frank D. Lucas arrived in Washington in 1994, he was less concerned with building a name for himself around the Capitol than with quietly shaping the agricultural policy that is the bread and butter of his constituents in rural western Oklahoma.

Nearly two decades later, Mr. Lucas is the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and has found himself thrust squarely into the national spotlight. He is in the middle of an intraparty standoff between agriculture-centric Republicans like himself and those, like Speaker John A. Boehner, who think the farm bill passed by Mr. Lucas' committee could put some fellow Republicans on the spot over spending.

As a result, Mr. Boehner has refused to bring the farm bill to the floor, and the House instead on Thursday is expected to consider an emergency drought relief package, delaying the bill until September at the earliest.

Across the rotunda, Senator Debbie Stabenow, the Michigan Democrat who is chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, took a proactive approach to working with the leadership and ferrying the Senate version of the legislation to passage.

Mr. Lucas, whose plan would overhaul parts of the nation's agriculture policy and cut spending on food stamps, has been comparatively patient with his party's leadership, whom he refers to as "the management."

"There will be a farm bill," he said Tuesday, smiling and apparently unconcerned. He added, "I'm just trying to enlighten everybody as I go along."

Not all of his colleagues have agreed with that approach.

"He's got a big problem with his leadership," said Representative Collin C. Peterson of Minnesota, the senior Democrat on the Agriculture Committee, who has worked closely with Mr. Lucas on the farm bill. "I wouldn't be anywhere near as nice as he's being if they were doing this to me."

The emergency drought bill would provide loan and disaster assistance to cattle, pork, poultry and other livestock producers. Producers of honey and farm-raised fish are also covered under the programs. The United States Department of Agriculture said it had paid out more than \$4 billion to producers in previous disasters, but could not provide assistance to farmers during the current crisis because the program had expired.

Though he wanted to move ahead with his farm bill rather than settle for the emergency aid, Mr. Lucas, himself a farmer and rancher from the small town of Cheyenne, Okla., is not the type to stir up trouble.

"People can be resolute in different ways, and Frank's not going to go pound the table and be confrontational, but he'll still meet his objectives and move people in his direction," said Allen Wright, who worked previously as Mr. Lucas's chief of staff in Congress and met Mr. Lucas when they attended the same high school in Cheyenne.

Even before then, Mr. Lucas was raised in an environment that melded agriculture and politics. His father, a farmer and the owner of a lumber yard, was a county chairman for Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964 and ran for county commissioner thereafter. In college, Frank Lucas became actively involved in politics himself, participating in student government and working as the county chairman for the Republican Party.

"Frank's had a plan for a long time," Mr. Wright said. "He's been moving political chess pieces for as long as I've known him."

It came as no surprise, then, when shortly after he graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in agricultural economics, Mr. Lucas began his first bid for the state House of Representatives. After he lost two races, he tried again at the urging of Gov. Henry Bellmon. On his third attempt, in 1988, Mr. Lucas won.

His office in the Statehouse was a low-ceilinged vault that had formerly been used by the state treasurer, and Mr. Lucas, at 6-foot-4, had to duck whenever he entered. He shared the office with Jim Reese, who works today as the secretary and commissioner of agriculture in Oklahoma.

Even then, Mr. Lucas was "just very steady," Mr. Reese said. "He's not a showboat. He just goes about doing his work and tries to work with everybody and is not about getting credit for himself. He's just about getting the job done."

When Mr. Lucas was elected to Congress in 1994, Mr. Reese said, "at the time I don't think being the Agriculture Committee chairman was his only priority, but agriculture was all that he was interested in."

Today, Mr. Lucas and his wife, Lynda, own 480 acres of land in Roger Mills County, Okla., where they grow wheat and run a cow-calf operation. When Oklahoma was hit hard last year by drought, Mr. and Mrs. Lucas

were forced to sell off some of their herd, which Mr. Lucas said makes him well-attuned to farmers' concerns in the Midwest.

"Watching my wife agonize over her mama cows, that's never any fun," he said. "When you're compelled by drought to sell, it's a very traumatic experience."

The opportunity now to craft a five-year farm bill is of personal significance to Mr. Lucas, for whom farming is a family tradition stretching back 100 years to Oklahoma's Dust Bowl, a story he compares to John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath."

"I want to make sure the mistakes that inflicted such pain on my grandparents' and parents' generations, that we avoid those things," Mr. Lucas said. "I can't make it rain, but I can make sure that we have good, comprehensive federal farm policy."

*Ron Nixon contributed reporting.*

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## Boehner confirms no farm bill until lame duck session

National Farmers Union president reacts

Thu, 2012-09-20 15:22

[David Bennett](#)

On Thursday morning (September 20), House Speaker John Boehner confirmed that the House will not take up the “farm bill issue” until after November elections. Current law is set to expire at the end of this month.

The announcement is hardly a surprise with House leadership having repeatedly refused to allow floor time for the farm bill passed out of the House Agriculture Committee in early July. The full Senate passed its farm bill in June.

*For full farm bill coverage, see [here](#).*

Shortly after Boehner’s comments, *Farm Press* spoke with Roger Johnson, president of [National Farmers Union](#) (NFU) about the legislation’s status.

Despite House leadership claims to the contrary, Johnson insists there are enough votes to pass a new farm bill. “We just had a fly-in (to D.C. around) two weeks ago. We visited with every member in the House and Senate. Half of those were pre-scheduled with our fly-in participants. Overwhelmingly, they came back and reported that the (lawmakers they met with) wanted the farm bill to go ahead. It’s not that the votes aren’t there.”

In recent days, both Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee, have also said the House could pass the farm bill if it was allowed to be voted on.

*For more, see [here](#).*

During a Thursday afternoon press briefing, Stabenow wanted “to make it very clear we’re going to do everything possible to get this done in the lame duck session. Right now, 16 million people working in agriculture are left hanging by the House leadership. ... I really am shocked that there hasn’t been action this month before the September 30 deadline.”

Stabenow believes that if Boehner “is comfortable moving forward and getting bipartisan votes, the votes are there. If he feels – as he has on many issues – that he has to have the majority, or all, of his own caucus, then there is a problem in moving this forward.

“We know the Republican caucus is split. Frankly, the Democratic caucus is split. But there are enough votes if you bring this up and allow a bipartisan vote to occur.”

Johnson, too, said the House could pass a new farm bill. “For crying out loud, this passed two-to-one in the Senate on a bipartisan basis. The House Agriculture Committee passed (its farm bill) three-to-one on a bipartisan basis.

“This isn’t about not having the votes. This, I believe, is about Speaker Boehner not wanting to have the Republican caucus divided and arguing about whether there should even be a farm bill before the election.”

Johnson said the House budget that passed “contained something like \$160 billion in cuts to the farm bill. About \$130 billion (of that) were out of nutrition. The House Agriculture Committee made about \$16 billion in (nutrition program) cuts and the Senate cut just over \$4 billion.

“So, there’s a huge difference between what the Ryan budget cut out of the farm bill and what the House Agriculture Committee cut out of the farm bill.”

Johnson also pointed to Tea Party Republicans who have been, “making the case that we don’t need a farm bill or that we need to divide the Nutrition Title away from the rest of the farm bill. Well, if you do that, you’ll kill them both.”

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack also met with NFU members during the recent NFU fly-in. Vilsack “makes the argument that this isn’t just about cuts to nutrition. This is about cuts some in the Republican party have in mind for all of agriculture: cutting the commodity programs, crop insurance programs – cutting everything by major amounts. And they know they can’t do that before the elections. So they’re waiting to do it after the elections.

“I think that’s what this is about. And that’s why all of us in agriculture have united to try and put as much political pressure as possible on Congress to take the vote before the election.”

On September 12, attempting to force a House vote on a new farm bill, Iowa Rep. Bruce Braley filed a discharge petition. To be successful, a majority of the House, 218 members, must sign on.

*More [here](#).*

Johnson said the discharge petition “doesn’t have a chance. There are reports that Republican leadership is strong-arming their members telling them not to sign that discharge petition.”

Further, he charged, the filing of the discharge petition at such a late date is more proof of House leadership machinations.

“The House Agriculture Committee passed (its) farm bill in early July. That bill was bottled up and not released to Congress until a week ago. Under the rules, that was the first time that a discharge petition could be filed.

“So, even through folks had said, ‘we’ll do a discharge petition,’ they were prevented from doing so by the procedural tactics that the House leadership took to keep the bill bottled up in committee.”

## Blame game, warnings on lame duck

What about recent comments by Boehner friends that blame House Leader Eric Cantor for the farm bill impasse?

“Boehner or Cantor -- does it matter?” Regardless, “We know that it’s House Republican leadership that is preventing the farm bill from coming to the floor. ... There’s too much unfinished business – including the farm bill -- to be going home and campaigning.”

Farmers should be calling their congressmen and insisting that a House vote be taken before recess, said Johnson, as dealing with the farm bill during the coming lame duck session is too risky.

“Here’s the problem: there is no specificity about what will happen in the lame duck session. It used to be that there were no lame duck sessions. Those are done to deal with issues too political to be tackled before elections.

“In the coming lame duck session, there will be the huge issues of sequestration, tax rates, the fiscal cliff, postal reform. There will be many really big issues.”

Throwing the farm bill into that volatile mix presents two problems.

“One is if the House would just pass a farm bill before the election recess there could be a conference between (passage) and the lame duck session. They could come back during the lame duck and just have an up or down vote. While there is debate allowed on a conference report, there can be no amendments. But they aren’t doing that. Instead, (House leaders) are saying, ‘Put the whole thing into the lame duck.’”

That means the House will have to take up the farm bill, have a debate, make amendments, and ultimately pass it. Only then will it go over the Senate for conference.

“That conference committee will have to do its work during the lame duck session and then bring the final bill back (to both chambers). All of that has to be done in the lame duck. That’s a lot that has to happen. ... Logistically it’s a big problem for the House to not have at least passed a farm bill version so we could just deal with reconciliation in the lame duck.”

The second big problem with the lame duck, according to Johnson, is the non-farm bill issues that must be dealt with will garner the majority of attention. His worry is that in that bigger debate the farm bill will become a pawn.

What often happens in a lame duck session is all the dicey issues not dealt with prior to election “are all rolled into one big package. They’ll trade this off for that in order to find some sort of grand bargain compromise to vote on. Who knows what could happen to the farm bill in that environment? We may come out just fine but it’s a very risky maneuver.”

**Source URL:** <http://deltafarmpress.com/government/boehner-confirms-no-farm-bill-until-lame-duck-session>



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[Reporter: Phil WhiteEmail](#)[Back to HomePage](#)

## Farmers, Congressman Hopeful For Farm Bill Passage

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[Farmers, Congressman Hopeful For Farm Bill Passage](#) [Farmers, Congressman Hopeful For Farm Bill Passage](#)

### Friday, September 28, 2012?b>

A Kansas Congressman is hopeful Congress will still pass a new farm bill before the end of this year. However, some farmers are less optimistic.

The current farm bill, passed in 2008, is set to expire at midnight on Sept. 30. Farm policy will then revert to permanent laws passed in 1949 and 1938.

U.S. Rep. Mike Pompeo told farmers and agribusiness leaders gathered at a luncheon of the Agribusiness Council of Wichita Friday he believes Congress can find enough middle ground to to pass a farm bill this year.

"I think there's a pretty good chance that sometime between Election Day and the end of the year, a farm bill is taken up in the House and, ultimately, moved through the legislature," Pompeo said.



Sedgwick County farmer Mic Rausch is not as optimistic.

"It's going to be a lame duck Congress," he said. "You don't really know what's going to happen."

Congress left Washington, D.C., on a seven-week recess without passing a new farm bill or extending the one set to expire.

That leaves food producers in an uncertain spot.

"How do we make decisions on proceeding forward when we don't have a clue what they're going to be writing here in the next farm bill," Rausch asked.

The term farm bill is a bit of a misnomer.

About 80 percent of spending in the nearly \$1 trillion measure goes toward food stamps and other nutrition programs. Those programs are holding the bill up in the House.

That chamber's version of the bill cuts food stamp spending by two percent. In an election year, Democrats do not want any cuts made to the programs; Republicans want deeper cuts than those contained in the measure.

"We need to do more work to make sure that we have an appropriate nutrition program and not the one that we have today," Pompeo said.

The U.S. Senate passed its version of the farm bill in June, in a bipartisan 64-35 vote. That bill cut agriculture spending by \$23.6 billion, including a cut of about \$4.5 billion from food stamps.

House leaders were reluctant to bring nearly \$1 trillion dollars of spending up before the November election.

Farmers, meanwhile, are fetching good prices for their commodities, but, Rausch said, that does not mean they are getting rich.

"Commodity prices are driven by supply and demand," he said. "With the drought this year, we didn't have the crop that we normally raise, so we're getting a high price, but we're not really seeing the benefit of that because our production is so much lower."

Prices for production inputs such as fuel and fertilizer are higher now, too, Rausch pointed out.

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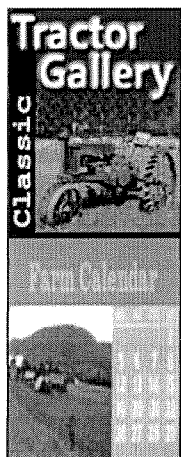
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## Holden: 2012 Farm Bill Not Likely to Happen

9/29/2012 7:00 AM

By Charlene M. Shupp Espenshade Special Sections Editor



HARRISBURG, Pa. — Congress headed home empty-handed last week, leaving farmers frustrated as the much-anticipated Farm Bill stalled in the House of Representatives.

U.S. Rep. Tim Holden, D-Pa., and staff members from Democratic Sen. Bob Casey and Republican Rep. Glenn Thompson's offices talked about the status of the Farm Bill at Monday's meeting of the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations in Harrisburg.

"I don't have any good news for you," Holden said. "The current Farm Bill expires at the end of the month, and there is political deadlock in the House."

Holden is the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry. He is also a member of the Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry.

Drought assistance, milk income loss contract (MILC) and conservation programs will expire Sept. 30. Food stamp programs will continue.

Holden, like many members of Congress interested in the bill's passage, had been asking House leadership and committee chairs for it to be brought up for a vote.

No such luck.

"That's such a shame. When we did the last one, it was a bipartisan bill," he said. "We all had to give and take, and at the end of the day helped to pass the best Farm Bill ever put into law."

The Senate passed its version of the Farm Bill in June. The House Agriculture Committee passed a bipartisan bill in July, but it has languished since then because the House leadership has been reluctant to bring it up for a vote.

Much of the problem is with the food stamps portion of the bill. For Republicans, the cuts do not go far enough. For Democrats, they go too far.

Holden and Thompson have spent time talking with their colleagues but have been unsuccessful in changing votes in the Pennsylvania delegation.

John Busovsky, speaking on behalf of Thompson, said the congressman is trying to educate many of the new members of the House about the impact that agriculture programs have on their districts. He recognizes that "the real roadblock" is SNAP, or the food stamp program.

"Politically, it's a very uncertain atmosphere," Busovsky said, assessing the bill's chance for passage in the lame duck session. There is a push from the House leadership for no "lame-duck packages."

Holden also said there are only three weeks after the election for the House to pass a bill, get it to conference and then passed by Congress and on the president's desk for his signature.

Liz Hermesen of Casey's office echoed Holden's comments, adding that the fate of the bill will rest on the outcome of the election.

"It all depends on Nov. 6," she said. "It really depends on how things shift on that day."

Several council members expressed frustration over the lack of a Farm Bill and the greater inaction of Congress this past session.

The panelists were frank, the bill has a tough road ahead. There is also the risk that House votes for the bill will not be there even if it is brought to the floor.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, told reporters last week that he would deal with the Farm Bill after the election because he did not believe there were 218 votes to pass either an extension or new legislation.

"The current situation that we face is that we've got people who believe there's not enough reform in the Farm Bill that came out of committee, and others who believe there's too much reform in the bill that came out of committee," Boehner said. "But when we get back, we will deal with the issue of the Farm Bill."

Amendments could also make the bill less likely, rather than more, to gather enough support for passage. The Senate had more than 300 amendments it had to sort through before passage of its version of the bill.

Holden said that in states where agriculture is a large economic driver, farmers and farm organizations need to take action.

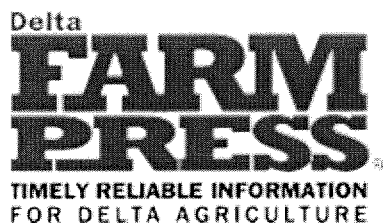
"Members of Congress need to feel the heat," he said.

Busovsky said this proposal has been painted as an example of overspending, which he finds highly ironic.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report on farm subsidies in advanced economies, governments' farm spending has been shrinking.

Subsidies have shrunk to an all-time average low of 19 percent of total farm income in the 34 countries surveyed. U.S. government payments make up just 9 percent of farm income, down from 22 percent a quarter-century ago and a lower proportion than anywhere else but Chile, New Zealand and Argentina.

"This bill actually reduces spending. It gets rid of direct payments and reduces a number of programs," Busovsky said. "It's made out to be a huge handout to the farm industry and it's not."

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## Farm bill expires, blame game and fallout begins

Mon, 2012-10-01 16:27

[David Bennett](#)

October 1 is the first day of the 2008 farm bill's expiration.

Agriculture groups marked the occasion with a series of statements underlining the importance of new farm legislation for rural America. Democrats marked it by scolding House leadership for not bringing the legislation to a vote since it was passed out of the House Agriculture Committee in early July.

"While expiration of farm bill program authorities has little or no effect on some important programs, it has terminated a number of important programs and will very adversely affect many farmers and ranchers, as well as ongoing market development and conservation efforts," said a joint statement released by, among others, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers Association and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

The group said in the absence of a new farm bill the main challenge "will be in planning for 2013. This includes lining up the critical financial assistance needed from lending institutions which prefer, if not demand, to see business plans presented in black and white. That will be difficult when producers don't know when to expect a new farm bill -- or what type of financial safety net is likely to be included in that bill."

*For full farm bill coverage, see [here](#).*

Striking the same chord, Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee said, "It is unbelievable that we're in this position now where the farm bill will expire and create so much uncertainty for farmers, ranchers, and small businesses."

The expiration, said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Monday (Oct. 1) afternoon, will quickly impact "many" programs administered by the USDA. "I think it's important for folks to know that there are a number of programs -- very important programs -- that expired, or are frozen, absent Congressional action. There are deep concerns about the uncertainty this has caused for producers."

Speaking from Wisconsin, Vilsack said residents of the state "are well aware of the fact that the dairy industry will no longer be able to take advantage of the [MILC](#) (Milk Income Loss Contract Program) program...

"I have particular sensitivity to the dairy industry because it's been under a great deal of stress and pressure. The last thing it needed was for Congress to leave town early, not get its work done and put these producers in a position where they no longer even get the MILC payment, which may have been

very significant for a number of producers facing difficult situations with their profitability being impacted by high feed costs.”

While dairy producers may receive a check, or two, after October 1, “that’s because of what they were entitled to receive prior to (the farm bill expiration). ... If a dairy producer has an FSA loan and was counting on the continuation of MILC, that producer will probably have to go into an FSA office and see if there’s any way of providing some latitude.”

Vilsack insisted this would cause “a rippling effect” in the countryside.

Further, “I think there will probably be extensive pressure put on our credit programs.” That isn’t just for those who wonder how to “continue to make payments but also folks who won’t be able to convince a commercial banker to provide the resource absent a guarantee by the FSA. That commercial banker isn’t sure what the safety net is going to be because there is no safety outside crop insurance.”

Vilsack also believes ranchers who are “stretched may also be faced with serious credit issues.”

## Other impacts, lame duck worries

Other programs impacted are the Specialty Crop Block Grant program and Specialty Crop Research Initiative that won’t be continued “absent passage by Congress of a (farm bill),” said Vilsack.

Conservation Reserve Program new contract sign-ups are now frozen while the USDA is “somewhat limited” on the CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program). “We still have some resource that can be used. But that resource could be used up fairly quickly and we won’t get anywhere near the Congressional mandate is relative to the number of acres they’re interested in enrolling in CSP.”

Export assistance is also reduced. “On the Export Assistance Program, we’re not going to be in a position to provide directly the help and assistance we’ve provided through the Market Access Program and some of the other trade promotion programs,” said Vilsack.

The USDA also will not “provide any additional assistance” to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program.

These are only some of the “casualties of Congressional inaction,” said Vilsack. “It’s unfortunate but, hopefully, when Congress returns after the election they’ll focus on the five-year (farm bill) done, starting with the House completing its work.”

The lack of a farm bill has caused “a great deal of stress. It didn’t have to be. There was plenty of time to get this done and there were the votes, in my view, to get it done.”

The reason it wasn’t, said Vilsack, “is there are folks in Congress who want to have much deeper and more significant cuts – not just to the nutrition programs but to the farm safety net, crop insurance, subsidies and conservation payments in the Commodity Title. They weren’t interested in having that conversation before the (November) elections. They prefer to have it afterwards.”

And lurking in the shadows is the possibility of sequestration. If the budget deal wrangled by the White House and Congress goes into effect, Vilsack said for most USDA programs it would mean “an across-the

-board reduction line item at USDA ... of about 8.2 percent. That would have a significant impact on the availability of offices and personnel to administer programs.”

Sequestration would “likely” mean “the need for furloughs in the food inspection area. Of course, a furlough could result in the potential for shutting down processing. If there isn’t an inspector, you can’t keep the plant open.”

The coming lame duck session “will feature a plethora of important issues that have also gone unresolved by this Congress, including the sequestration process, numerous tax and spending issues, and U.S. Postal Service reform,” said Roger Johnson, National Farmers Union president. “Therefore, it is absolutely critical that House Speaker John Boehner brings the farm bill to the floor early in the session to ensure it can be conferenced and finalized before Congress returns to their districts yet another recess in December.

“The longer Congress drags its feet, the harder their inaction will be felt by farmers, ranchers and, ultimately, all Americans.”

**Source URL:** <http://deltafarmpress.com/government/farm-bill-expires-blame-game-and-fallout-begins>



ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

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Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - EWG Farm Bill Platform

Published April 16, 2012



[Download the PDF \[1\]](#)

This year's effort to renew America's food and farm policy through the farm bill creates an opportunity for Congress to do more to support family farmers, protect the environment, encourage healthy diets and ensure better access to healthy food - all while supporting working families. EWG believes that Congress should enact farm and food policy legislation that: provides producers with an effective safety net at a lower cost to taxpayers; creates new markets for farm products; invests in conservation and nutrition programs that benefit all farmers and consumers; promotes increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; delivers greater transparency and accountability; and meets the nation's deficit reduction goals.

In particular, Congress should:

### Support Family Farmers

Congress should support family farmers by ending subsidies that flow to the largest farm businesses regardless of need. In particular, Congress should:

- End direct payments - Congress should end direct farm payments, which are provided regardless of need.
- Replace insurance subsidies with free yield insurance - Congress should replace costly insurance subsidies for commodity "program crops" such as corn, wheat, soybeans, cotton and rice with yield insurance policies designed to help farmers recover from "deep" losses caused by bad weather.
- Maintain the conservation compact - Congress should ensure that farmers implement practices that protect wetlands, grasslands and soil health in exchange for a taxpayer-financed safety net, including farm insurance.
- Support beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers - Congress should reform farm subsidy programs so as to level the playing field for all farmers and invest in programs that help beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers by easing access to conservation, crop insurance, credit, loan and grant programs.
- Expand local and regional markets - Congress should invest in loan and grant programs that help create local and regional markets for farm products.

### Support Stewardship

Congress should invest in research and provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to protect and restore water quality and wildlife habitat. In particular, Congress should:

- Reject cuts to conservation - Congress should reject cuts to voluntary conservation programs and instead provide \$30 billion over the next five years to share with farmers the cost of a clean environment.
- Promote collaborative partnerships - Congress should deliver 25 percent of conservation funding in grants selected for their potential for environmental benefit and awarded to groups of farmers and local partners working together.

- Reform easement and incentive programs - Congress should reform conservation programs to achieve administrative efficiencies, better target incentive and easement funds and provide loans for infrastructure projects.
- Support organic food - Congress should invest in grant and loan programs that help farmers switch to organic food production.
- Support research - Support and modify research, education and extension programs to better focus on organic and sustainable crop and livestock production and healthy food.

## Support Healthy Diets

Fewer than 5 percent of American adults eat USDA-recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, and more than one-third are obese, increasing the nation's health care costs by \$127 billion a year.

To support healthy diets, Congress should:

- Support Feeding Assistance Programs - Congress should protect and strengthen SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs.
- Support Nutrition Education - Congress should support efforts to help Americans eat healthier diets through nutrition education.
- Promote Fruit and Vegetable Consumption - Congress should strengthen the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program and reform specialty crop programs so as to increase consumption of local fruits and vegetables.
- Increase Access to Healthy Food - Congress should provide grants for incentive programs that encourage SNAP recipients to buy and consume more fruits and vegetables, including at farmers markets and other food retailers.
- Support Better School Food - Congress should allow schools to use more school lunch and breakfast funds to purchase local fruits and vegetables.
- Maintain funding for research - Congress should underwrite sound research on nutrition, hunger and food security, and obesity prevention.

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### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/ewg-farm-bill-platform>

### Links:

[1] <http://static.ewg.org/pdf/farm-bill-platform-2012.pdf>



THE POWER OF INFORMATION

Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - 2012 Senate Farm Bill Does More Harm Than Good

Published April 20, 2012

Statement of Craig Cox, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Environmental Working Group, on the Senate Agriculture Committee's 2012 farm bill.

"The 2012 farm bill should do more to support family farmers, protect the environment, promote healthy diets and support working families. Unfortunately, the bill produced today by the Senate Agriculture Committee will do more harm than good. It needlessly sacrifices conservation and feeding assistance programs to finance unlimited insurance subsidies and a new entitlement program for highly profitable farm businesses. Rather than simply ending the widely discredited direct payment program, the Senate Agriculture Committee has created an expensive new entitlement program that guarantees most of the income of farm businesses already enjoying record profits. Replacing direct payments with a revenue guarantee program is a cynical game of bait-and-switch that should be rejected by Congress.

"The proposed legislation doubles down on unlimited subsidies to buy and deliver farm insurance - at a cost of \$90 billion over the next ten years. Modest reforms to these heavily subsidized insurance programs, such as means-testing and capping premium subsidies, would save enough money to spare conservation and anti-hunger programs from the proposed cuts. Crop insurance has not only become an expensive new subsidy for large farm businesses, it has also become an entitlement program for insurance agents and insurers, including companies based in tax havens such as Bermuda and Switzerland.

"EWG is disappointed that the Committee failed to address the impact of fence-row to fence-row agricultural production, which is putting unprecedented pressure on our land, water and wildlife. Although the Committee extended conservation compliance to the revenue guarantee program, we are disappointed that the Committee failed to require that farmers protect wetlands, grasslands and soil health in exchange for insurance subsidies. In combination, a new entitlement program, unlimited secret insurance subsidies, cuts to conservation programs and high commodity prices will create powerful incentives to plow up fragile wetlands and grasslands and erase many of the environmental gains made by agriculture in recent years.

"We applaud the provisions in the bill that create and expand programs that support healthy diets and organic farmers, as well as expanding links between local farmers and consumers. We also support efforts to reform conservation programs to get more conservation bang for the buck.

"But for the leadership of Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), this proposal would have been far worse. We look forward to working with Sen. Stabenow and other members of the Committee to strengthen conservation and nutrition provisions of the bill and to place reasonable limits on subsidies for highly-profitable farm businesses."

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### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/2012-senate-farm-bill-does-more-harm-good>



ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

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Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - EWG statement on Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012

Published April 26, 2012

Statement of Craig Cox, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources of the Environmental Working Group, on the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012:

“A farm bill that cuts programs for the hungry and the environment to help finance a new entitlement program and unlimited insurance subsidies for the largest and most profitable farm operations should not be called a ‘reform’ bill.

“A real reform bill would have ended direct payments, rejected new farm entitlements and made important reforms to crop insurance subsidies that are slated to cost \$90 billion over the next 10 years. Modest reforms to these heavily subsidized insurance programs, such as payment limits, could provide significant savings and eliminate the need to cut conservation and anti-hunger programs, as well as allowing for additional investments to support healthy diets and access to local food.

“Fortunately, the Senate Agriculture Committee took an important step to limit insurance subsidies for farmers who plow up grasslands in order to grow crops. The combination of high prices and unlimited insurance subsidies has placed unprecedented pressure on our land, water and wildlife. We hope the full Senate will take additional steps to ensure that farmers who receive these insurance subsidies commit to protect soil health and wetlands.

“We also applaud provisions of the bill that support healthy diets, expand links between local farmers and consumers and help new farmers.

“In particular, we thank Senator Debbie Stabenow for her efforts to expand incentives that encourage low income consumers to purchase more fruits and vegetables and increase access to local foods at farmers’ markets. But for the leadership of Chairwoman Stabenow, the bill produced today by the Senate Agriculture Committee could have been far worse.

“We look forward to working with Senator Stabenow and other senators to strengthen conservation and nutrition provisions of the bill and to place reasonable limits on insurance subsidies for farm businesses.”

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### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/ewg-statement-agriculture-reform-food-and-jobs-act-2012>




THE POWER OF INFORMATION

Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - Government Records Show Crop Insurance Subsidies Are A Boon To Big Farm Interests

Published May 31, 2012

**Washington, D.C.** - A new analysis [1]  of over a million government records never before made public and obtained by the Environmental Working Group through the Freedom of Information Act has found that in 2011 more than 10,000 individual farming operations have received federal crop insurance premium subsidies ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$1 million apiece. Some 26 farming operations received subsidies of \$1 million or more last year.

It is the most detailed disclosure of federal crop insurance benefits to date, tracking subsidies across 686,273 insurance policies issued to 486,867 policyholders last year, when the program's costs exceeded a record \$11 billion. Yet one crucial detail is missing, deliberately and by an act of Congress: the names of the beneficiaries.

"The eye-opening analysis shows crop insurance is not only very expensive, but also very, very generous to large and highly profitable farm businesses," said Craig Cox, EWG senior vice president of agriculture and natural resources. "Now the public needs to know who they are."

Using FOIA requests, EWG collected information from U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency about crop insurance policies and premium subsidies for individual policyholders in each U.S. state and county. The records analyzed by EWG establish that the holders of subsidized crop insurance policies, unlike other Americans engaged in professional and commercial enterprises, enjoy extraordinarily costly federal perks in the form of premium subsidies.

U.S. taxpayers pick up an average of about 62 percent of the crop insurance premiums for farm businesses. Their share of these premiums has soared from \$1.5 billion in 2002 to \$7.4 billion in 2011. The subsidies go to large operators with no conservation strings attached to protect water and soil, no means testing, and no payment limit on how much a farm business can collect.

Among the facts disclosed by the documents:

- A single farm business in Florida received \$1.9 million in subsidies for premiums to insure crops of tomatoes and peppers in five counties.
- A Minnesota farm business insuring corn and soybeans in eight counties received \$1.7 million in federal crop insurance subsidies.
- In Texas, the 10 percent of farm businesses that received the greatest amount of insurance subsidies harvested 63 percent of all the crop insurance subsidies that went into the state last year.
- The 10 percent of North Dakota farm businesses that received the greatest amount of insurance subsidies took in 45 percent of the subsidies going to all farms in the state.

The analysis also shows that while crop insurance benefits, like farm subsidies, are concentrated in the hands of a small number of large farming operations, premium subsidies are modest for the overwhelming majority of crop insurance policyholders. Those farm operations would be unaffected by premium subsidy limits now being debated in Congress, such as the \$40,000 limit analyzed by the Government Accountability Office earlier this year. The bottom 80 percent of policyholders (389,494 operations), for instance, received subsidies worth just over \$5,000 in 2011.

The insurance subsidies are so controversial, and so lucrative to the companies that administer it, that the industry's powerful lobbyists prevailed on Congress to bar the U.S. Department of Agriculture from disclosing identities of individual policyholders who reap the benefits.

"Taxpayers don't know who is getting our money," said EWG president Ken Cook. "Why hasn't Congress done its job and released the names for everyone to see, instead of serving the interests of the crop insurance lobby?"

EWG has long advocated for increased transparency and accountability in the burgeoning federal crop insurance program.

"Senate agriculture committee leaders ought to lift the veil of secrecy before the 2012 farm bill hits the floor next month," said Cook. "We must stop giving big payouts that guarantee income to big agribusiness and pass a fair and equitable farm bill that makes meaningful reforms to crop insurance, feeds the hungry, and improves the environment and public health," said Cook.

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**Source URL:**

<http://www.ewg.org/release/government-records-show-crop-insurance-subsidies-are-boon-big-farm-interests>

**Links:**

[1] <http://static.ewg.org/pdf/2012cropinsurance.pdf>



THE POWER OF INFORMATION

Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - EWG Praises Crop Insurance Reform Amendments

Published June 7, 2012

Washington, D.C. - Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., and Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., today introduced amendments that would save taxpayers billions of dollars and take important steps toward reforming the heavily subsidized federal crop insurance program.

The Coburn-Durbin amendment would reduce premium subsidies by 15 percent for farm businesses with adjusted gross incomes of more than \$750,000. It would save about \$1.2 billion over 10 years.

On average, taxpayers pick up 62 percent of the crop insurance premium bought by farmers. The cost of these subsidies to the federal government has soared from \$1.5 billion in 2002 to \$7.4 billion in 2011.

"The federal government cannot justify providing extraordinarily costly subsidies to the most profitable and financially secure farm businesses that can easily afford to share more of the cost of their crop insurance," said Craig Cox, senior vice president of agriculture and natural resources at EWG.

The Shaheen-Toomey amendment would place a \$40,000 cap on the amount an individual can receive in premium subsidies each year. It would save about \$5.2 billion over 10 years.

EWG's recent [analysis](#) [1] of government documents found that more than 10,000 individual farming operations received premium subsidies ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$1 million apiece last year. Some 26 farming operations received subsidies of \$1 million or more.

"The Shaheen-Toomey amendment simply proposes the same payment limitations that have been applied to direct payments for years," said Scott Faber, vice president of government affairs at EWG. "This makes perfect sense as crop insurance has become the primary farm safety net."

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### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/environmental-working-group-praises-crop-insurance-reform-amendments>

### Links:

[1] <http://www.ewg.org/release/government-records-show-crop-insurance-subsidies-are-boon-big-farm-interests>



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## News Release - Senate Puts Crop Insurance Companies Ahead of Needy Children

Published June 19, 2012

Environmental Working Group issued the following statement on the Senate's failure to pass Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's, D-N.Y., amendment:

"Today, the Senate put the needs of crop insurance companies ahead of the the needs of our children. Rather than restore cuts to nutrition assistance programs and invest in healthy diets, the Senate today voted to support windfall profits for insurance companies, many of which are based in insurance tax havens like Bermuda and Switzerland. We applaud Sen. Gillibrand for her leadership," said Scott Faber, vice president of government affairs at EWG.

The Gillibrand amendment would have reduced subsidies to crop insurance companies to restore proposed cuts to nutrition assistance programs and to increase funding for the fresh fruit and vegetable snack program.

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**Source URL:**

<http://www.ewg.org/release/senate-puts-crop-insurance-companies-ahead-needy-children>



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## **News Release - Senate Adopts Common Sense Reform to Crop Insurance Subsidies**

Published June 20, 2012

Environmental Working Group released this statement on the passage of the Coburn-Durbin amendment to reduce premium subsidies by 15 percent for farm businesses with adjusted gross incomes of more than \$750,000.

“Thanks to the leadership of Senators Coburn and Durbin, the Senate today adopted a common sense reform to our crop insurance subsidies that will help level the playing field for family farmers. We applaud the senators for their efforts to place reasonable limits on crop insurance, which has become the primary safety net for farmers, that will simply require the largest and most profitable farm businesses to share a fair share of their risk protection costs with the taxpayer,” said Scott Faber, vice president of government affairs.

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**Source URL:**

<http://www.ewg.org/release/senate-adopts-common-sense-reform-crop-insurance-subsidies>



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## News Release - Statement of Environmental Working Group on Senate farm bill

Published June 21, 2012

"The farm bill reflects a rare opportunity to renew our farm and food policies to do more to support family farmers, protect the environment, encourage healthier diets, and support working families," said Ken Cook, president of Environmental Working Group. "The bill passed today by the Senate builds upon past efforts to support healthy diets and expands links between consumers and farmers. It also includes important reforms to crop insurance subsidies."

"However, the bill needlessly cuts vital nutrition and conservation funding, threatening a decade of environmental progress," said Cook. "Cutting food assistance programs at a time when many families are struggling to feed their children is unacceptable."

"Common sense reforms to the crop insurance program would have provided farmers a robust safety net and eliminated the need to cut programs designed to improve our drinking water and reduce hunger," said Cook. "The Senate was not allowed to debate amendments that would have capped crop insurance subsidies and eliminated or reformed costly new revenue guarantees."

"While we do not support this bill, we applaud the provisions that require farmers who receive crop insurance subsidies to carry out basic environmental protections on their farms and to reduce insurance subsidies for the largest and most successful agribusinesses," said Cook.

"The debate over the Senate farm bill also holds important lessons for public interest advocacy," Cook said. "When conservationists stood our ground and fought, we won against the supposedly invincible crop insurance industry. Too many in the conservation community didn't fight at all against massive spending cuts to conservation programs that have already been hit by massive reductions in recent years. As a consequence, conservation funding took the largest proportionate hit in this bill. For the "food movement", the Senate farm bill has been another, rather sobering reminder that until we develop political muscle to match our passion for a sustainable food system, we'll continue to see billions of dollars misspent on industrial agriculture."

"We look forward to working with House leaders to strengthen conservation and nutrition provisions of the bill, to increase transparency, and to place reasonable limits on insurance subsidies," said Cook.

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### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/statement-environmental-working-group-senate-farm-bill>



THE POWER OF INFORMATION

Published on Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org>)

## News Release - Taxpayers Paid \$6.2 Million in Farm Subsidies to Members of Congress, Families

Published June 28, 2012

Washington, D.C. - Environmental Working Group's latest update of the [EWG farm subsidy database](#) [1] shows that 23 members of Congress, or their family members, benefitted from \$6,181,137 in taxpayer-funded farm subsidy payments between 1995 and 2011. The much-referenced database tracks \$240 billion in commodity, crop insurance, and disaster programs and \$37 billion in conservation subsidies paid to farmers in that period.

"Members of Congress who receive farm subsidies are part of a system that cries out for reform and poses stark choices between propping up the largest and most successful businesses or helping working farmers, struggling families and the environment," said Craig Cox, senior vice president of agriculture and natural resources at EWG.

According to EWG's analysis of the data, derived from U.S. Department of Agriculture records, among those members of the House of Representatives who received substantial subsidies were:

- Rep. Stephen Fincher, R-Tenn. and his wife received \$3,528,295
- Rep. Kristi Noem, R-S.D received \$480,790
- Rep. Tom Latham, R-Iowa received \$313,776

The distribution of subsidies among lawmakers reflects the highly distorted distribution of farm subsidies in the U.S. Just five crops - corn, cotton, rice wheat and soybeans - account for 90 percent of all farm subsidies. Since 1995, just 10 percent of subsidized farms have raked in 75 percent of all subsidy payments.

"These farm payments are not improper or illegal, but they do create a conflict of interest for these members of Congress," said Cox. "Some of them are major players in the 2012 farm bill debate and all of these lawmakers will be forced to cast a vote on the final bill."

The recently passed Senate farm bill would do away with the discredited direct payments, which go out regardless of economic need and cost taxpayers \$5 billion a year. However, it includes a provision to replace those wasteful subsidies with another potentially more expensive entitlement that would guarantee income for the same farm businesses that have benefitted from the lion's share of traditional farm subsidies.

The same congressional families that benefitted from farm subsidies have likely received crop insurance premium subsidies too. That question cannot be answered until Congress changes the law that bars the federal government from releasing recipients' names. An EWG analysis found that 26 policyholders nationwide each received more than \$1 million in premium subsidies and more than 10,000 policyholders each received \$100,000 or more in 2011. With the identities of individuals cloaked, it is not possible to establish the extent to which members of Congress and their families reaped crop insurance subsidies.

"We are deeply disturbed by the public's inability to see who gets what when it comes to taxpayer-funded insurance subsidies," said Scott Faber, EWG vice president of government affairs. "The names of recipients should not be a state secret."

EWG supported a farm bill amendment introduced by Sens. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, and John McCain, R-Ariz. that would have lifted the veil of secrecy that has protected crop insurance subsidy recipients' identities for more than a decade, but it was never considered on the Senate floor.

"House lawmakers have a real opportunity to increase government transparency and make meaningful reforms that will create a safety net for working family farmers who need the help and will improve America's diets and protect the environment," Faber said.

Members of Congress who have received checks from the federal government include:

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (in alphabetical order)

Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.)

Aderholt's wife, Caroline Aderholt [2], is a 6.3 percent owner of McDonald Farms [3] according to ownership records as of 2008. McDonald Farms received a total of \$3,262,386 in federal farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011. She received \$1,101 in commodity subsidies directly between 2009 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidies to Caroline Aderholt, using the percentage share information received by USDA, comes to \$206,631.

Rep. Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa)

Boswell [4] is listed as directly receiving a total of \$16,235 in subsidies between 2001 and 2008.

Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.)

Campbell [5] is listed as a 1.5 percent owner of the Campbell/McNee Family Farm LLC [6] according to ownership records as of 2008. The farm received a total of \$16,876 in federal farm subsidies between 2007 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Campbell received, based on the percentage share, is \$253.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.)

Costa is listed as a 50 percent owner of Lena E Costa Living Trust [7], which received \$2,494 in federal farm subsidies between 2006-2007.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Costa received, based on the percentage share information submitted to USDA, is a total of \$1,247 between 2006 and 2007.

Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-Texas)

Farenthold [8] received a total of \$1,205 in farm subsidies directly from USDA between 1999 and 2005.

Rep. Stephen Fincher (R-Tenn.)

Fincher [9] is listed as directly receiving a total of \$114,519 from USDA between 1995 and 1999. Fincher's farm, Stephen & Lynn Fincher Farms [10], is also listed in the EWG database as receiving a total of \$3,413,776 between 1999 and 2011. Fincher and his wife Lynn are each 50 percent partners in that farm.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Fincher and his wife received totaled \$3,528,295 between 1995 and 2011.

Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.)

Hartzler [11] is listed in the EWG Farm Subsidy Database, but no subsidies were directly paid to her. Her husband, Lowell Hartzler [12] is listed as 98 percent owner of Hartzler Farms [13], which received a total of \$820,768 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011. His ownership percentage rose from 53 percent in the years up to 2005 to 98 percent in 2006.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Lowell Hartzler received, based on the percentage share information (assumed to be 53 percent prior to 2006) supplied to USDA, totaled \$514,645 between 1995 and 2011.

Rep. Rush Holt (D-N.J.)

Holt [14] is listed as a 10.5 percent owner of Froelich Land Trust No. 1 [15], which received a total of \$34,623 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011. Holt's wife, Margaret Lancefield [16], is listed as a 25 percent owner of Lancefield Farm [17], which received a total of \$24,681 in subsidies between 1996 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Holt received, using the percentage share information provided to USDA, is a total of \$9,806 between 1995 and 2011.

Rep. Timothy Huelskamp (R-Kan.)

Huelskamp [18] is listed as directly receiving \$258 in 2002.

Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.)

Kline's wife, Vicky Sheldon Kline [19], is listed as a 20 percent owner of Sheldon Family Farms LP [20], which received a total of \$29,717 between 2000 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Ms. Kline received, based on the percentage share information supplied to USDA, is a total of \$5,943 between 2000 and 2011.

Rep. Tom Latham (R-Iowa)

Latham [21] is listed as part owner of four entities: 33 percent owner of Latham Seed Co. [22], which received a total of \$448,925 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2003; 25 percent owner in Latham Hospital Farm [23], which received a total of \$76,612 between 1995 and 2001; 25 percent owner in Latham Kanawha Farm [24], which received a total of \$15,648 between 1995 and 2001; and 33 percent owner in DTB Farms LLC [25], which received a total of \$432,017 between 2003 and 2008.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Latham received, based on the percentage share information submitted to USDA, is a total of \$313,776 between 1995 and 2008.

Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)

Lummis [26] is listed as a 31.3 percent owner of Lummis Livestock [27], which received a total of \$47,093 in farm subsidies in between 1996 and 2002. Lummis listed her ownership of Lummis Livestock in her 2009 financial disclosure form.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Lummis received, based on the percentage share information submitted to USDA, is a total of \$14,289 between 1996 and 2002.

Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-Texas)

Neugebauer [28] is involved in two business entities. He owns 50 percent of Lubbock Land Company Five LTD [29], which received a total of \$3,369 in farm subsidies between 1998 and 2003. He also owns 50 percent of Lubbock Land Company Two LTD [30], which received a total of \$4,608 in farm

subsidies in between 1998 and 1999. Neugebauer's financial disclosure forms for 2009 do not list either company.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Neugubauer received, based on the percentage share information submitted to USDA, is a total of \$3,989 between 1998 and 2003.

Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.)

Noem [31] is listed as having a 13.5 percent share in Racota Valley Ranch [32] between 2000 and 2001 and a 16.9 percent share between 2002 and 2008. Racota Valley Ranch received a total of \$3,198,617 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011. Noem's 2009 financial disclosure form listed her as a partner in Racota Valley Ranch.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Noem received, based on the percentage share information submitted to USDA, is \$480,790.

Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.)

Peterson [33] is listed as receiving a total of \$828 between 2005 and 2009.

Rep. Dennis Rehberg (R-Mont.)

Rehberg [34] received a total of \$7,971 directly from USDA between 1995 and 2002. Rehberg's wife, Jan Rehberg [35], also received \$1,455 directly from USDA between 2008 and 2011. Jan Rehberg also has ownership in two entities that received payments. She has a 33 percent stake in Lenhardt Property LP [36], which received a total of \$1,039 between 2006 and 2011. She also has a 5.6 percent stake in Teigen Land and Livestock Company [37], which received a total of \$31,890 between 2002 and 2003.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Rehberg and his wife received, based on the percentage share information provided to USDA, is a total of \$11,418 between 1995 and 2011.

Rep. Marlin Stutzman (R-Ind.)

Stutzman [38] is listed as directly receiving a total of \$190,226 in farm subsidies between 1997 and 2011.

Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas)

Thornberry [39] listed as William M. Thornberry, directly received a total of \$4,306 in farm subsidies from USDA between 1995 and 1999. Thornberry is also a one-third owner of Thornberry Brothers [40], which received a total of \$76,401 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011. His financial disclosure form in 2009 lists him as an owner in Thornberry Brothers Cattle.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Thornberry received, based on the percentage share information provided to USDA, is a total of \$29,773 between 1995 and 2011.

US SENATE (in alphabetical order)

Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)

Bennet's wife, Susan Daggett [41], is listed in his 2010 financial disclosure forms as 5.5 percent owner of Daggett Farms LP [42] and LMD Farms LP [43]. Daggett Farms LP received a total of \$268,969 in farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of farm subsidy benefits Daggett received, based on the percentage share information provided to USDA, is a total of \$20,419 between 1995 and 2011.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)

Grassley [44] is listed as directly receiving a total of \$316,535 in federal farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011.

Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.)

Lugar [45] is listed as a 9.39 percent owner of Lugar Stock Farm. His wife, Charlene Smeltzer [46], is listed as a 7.42 percent owner in Lugar Stock Farm [47]. Lugar Stock Farm received a total of \$168,343 in farm subsidies in between 1995 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Lugar and his wife received totals \$28,304 between 1995 and 2011.

Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.)

Tester [48] received a total of \$177,744 directly from USDA between 1995 and 2011. Testers' wife, Sharla [49], is listed as a 50 percent owner of T-Bone Farms - Tester is listed as owning the other 50 percent. T-Bone farms [50] received a total of \$306,638 in federal farm subsidies between 1995 and 2011.

EWG's estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Tester and his wife received, based on percentage share information provided to USDA, is a total of \$484,382 between 1995 and 2011.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah)

EWG'S estimate of the farm subsidy benefits Hatch and his wife received, based on the share information provided to USDA regarding Ms. Hatch's share of Edries N Hansen Properties LLC [51] which received \$189,026 in subsidies between 2008 and 2011, is a total of \$1,890 between 2008 and 2011.

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#### Source URL:

<http://www.ewg.org/release/taxpayers-paid-62-million-farm-subsidies-members-congress-or-their-family-members>

#### Links:

- [1] <http://farm.ewg.org/index.php>
- [2] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A04804470>
- [3] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09233049>
- [4] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A06618398>
- [5] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=B00245883>
- [6] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=B00158282>
- [7] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=B00056026>
- [8] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A05831718>
- [9] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A04644161>
- [10] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A10829265>
- [11] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09980762>
- [12] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A07421938>
- [13] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A05241472>
- [14] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09128778>
- [15] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A03571131>
- [16] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A10551784>
- [17] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09419044>
- [18] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A07991785>

- [19] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A11580382>
- [20] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A11434122>
- [21] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A07129810>
- [22] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A04903897>
- [23] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A04906899>
- [24] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A04922168>
- [25] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A12204346>
- [26] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09930698>
- [27] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09384056>
- [28] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A05833473>
- [29] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A10537272>
- [30] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09955176>
- [31] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A07678830>
- [32] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09529125>
- [33] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A12687965>
- [34] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A08282045>
- [35] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A08326354>
- [36] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A12297900>
- [37] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09370345>
- [38] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A10157532>
- [39] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A06069169>
- [40] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09348694>
- [41] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A05238323>
- [42] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09265331>
- [43] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A10059580>
- [44] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A06828730>
- [45] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A02638451>
- [46] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A03682052>
- [47] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A03165813>
- [48] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A08324815>
- [49] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A08324858>
- [50] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=A09375499>
- [51] <http://farm.ewg.org/persondetail.php?custnumber=B00483319>