



STATEMENT

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Statement by Secretary Vilsack on Passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 2014—Secretary Vilsack made the following statement on passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014:

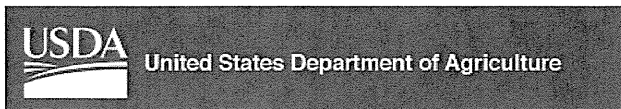
"Today's action will allow the proud men and women who feed millions around the world to invest confidently in the future. Our communities will have additional support to attract new economic opportunity and create jobs. During difficult times, children, working families, seniors and people with disabilities will have access to nutritious food. The potential of new products, treatments and discoveries will be strengthened through new agricultural research. Renewed conservation efforts will protect our fields, forests and waters creating new tourism options. This legislation is important to the entire nation.

Building on the historic economic gains in rural America over the past 5 years, this bill will accomplish those goals while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. While no legislation is perfect, this bill is a strong investment in American agriculture and supports the continued global leadership of our farmers and ranchers."

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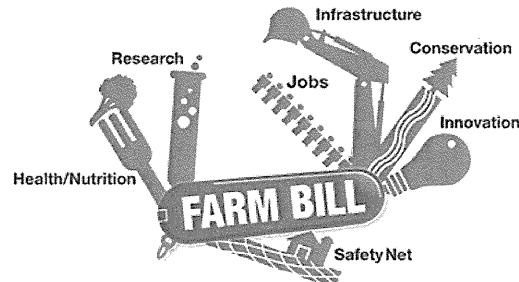
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Food, Farm and Jobs Bill



"It's like a Swiss Army knife."

- President Obama 2/7/14

The Agricultural Act of 2014 is important legislation that provides authorization for services and programs that impact every American and millions of people around the world. The new Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer.

The new Farm Bill will allow USDA to continue record accomplishments on behalf of the American people, while providing new opportunity and creating jobs across rural America. It will enable USDA to further expand markets for agricultural products at home and abroad, strengthen conservation efforts, create new opportunities for local and regional food systems and grow the biobased economy. It will provide a dependable safety net for America's farmers, ranchers and growers. It will maintain important agricultural research, and ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all Americans.

Video: Secretary Tom Vilsack on the 2014 Farm Bill [↗](#)

2014 Farm Bill Highlights (PDF, 72KB)

USDA Announces 2014 Farm Bill Stakeholder Meeting Dates (Press Release, 03/05/14)

Secretary Vilsack Addresses Commodity Classic on Farm Bill Implementation (Transcript 02/28/14)

5 Ways the Farm Bill Strengthens the Economy

Blog: The President Signs the Farm Bill: "A Jobs Bill, an Innovation Bill, a Research Bill, and a Conservation Bill"

Join the Conversation:

Secretary Vilsack asks you to use #MyFarmBill to share your stories on what the Food, Farm and Jobs Bill means to you and your communities.

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2014 Farm Bill Highlights

Farm Safety Net

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The 2008 Farm Bill continued direct payments—a system that paid producers regardless of whether they incurred losses.
- Disaster assistance programs expired in fiscal year 2011. Since then, producers impacted by disease or adverse weather conditions have not received financial assistance for losses incurred.

2014 Farm Bill

- Eliminates direct payments and continues crop insurance.
- Producers will choose between the Price Loss Coverage and Agricultural Risk Coverage. Establishes the Dairy Margin Protection program.
- Restores livestock disaster assistance for losses dating back to 2011, and establishes a permanent livestock disaster program.

Rural Development

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- USDA programs support investments in the rural economy through grants, loans and loan guarantees with an emphasis on essential infrastructure, small business development, job creation, and growth.

2014 Farm Bill

- Continues USDA Rural Development programs. Provides \$15 million to support rural business development and growth through the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program.
- Provides \$150 million for water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Reserves 10% of certain programs for regional, long-term investments to better promote economic development through regional planning and leveraging of resources.

Trade and Foreign Agriculture

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- USDA expands markets for U.S. agricultural goods through the Foreign Market Development Program and Market Access Program. Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) authorized as a pilot to provide international development assistance and expedite food aid.

2014 Farm Bill

- Continues authorization for \$200 million annually for international market development.
- Authorizes up to \$80 million for LRP and makes the program permanent.
- Provides more flexibility for USAID to use cash assistance in administering the Food for Peace program.
- Increases flexibility for assistance in emergency situations.

Research

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- USDA advances scientific knowledge related to agriculture through research, extension, and education. Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) funded at \$40 million annually.

2014 Farm Bill

- Endows \$200 million for a foundation for agricultural research.
- Doubles the funding for SCRI to \$80 million annually

Conservation

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The 2008 Farm Bill built on past farm bills, providing further conservation opportunities for farms and ranchers.

2014 Farm Bill

- Consolidates conservation programs for flexibility, accountability and adaptability at the local level.
- Links basic conservation practices to crop insurance premium subsidy for highly erodible lands and wetlands.
- Builds upon previous successful partnerships and encourages agricultural producers and partners to design conservation projects that focus on and address regional priorities.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The 2008 Farm Bill established new energy programs, including the Biorefinery Assistance Program, the Biobased Marketing Program and the Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

2014 Farm Bill

- Reauthorizes and provides \$880 million for energy programs established in the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Expands Biorefinery Assistance Program to include biobased product and renewable chemical manufacturing.
- Expands Biopreferred program to include forestry products.

Forestry

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The Forest Service (FS) was granted Stewardship Contracting Authority through FY14.
- Good Neighbor Authority allowed State Foresters in CO and UT to conduct restoration services on National Forest System Lands. Expanded to include all states in FY14, through FY18.

2014 Farm Bill

- Makes Stewardship Contracting Authority permanent, allowing FS to conduct restoration work and stimulate job growth.
- Makes the Good Neighbor Authority permanent and available nationwide.

Nutrition

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the cornerstone of the Nation's food assistance safety net, helping families put food on the table.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) supports food banks and food pantries.

2014 Farm Bill

- Maintains SNAP eligibility for millions of low-income families.
- Provides \$200 million for job training and \$100 million to increase fruit and vegetable purchases.
- Provides \$250 million in additional funding for TEFAP.
- Authorizes \$125 million for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative to make nutritious food more accessible.

Next Generation Farmers and Ranchers

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The 2008 Farm Bill established the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program with \$75 million for FY 2009 to FY 2012.

2014 Farm Bill

- Provides \$100 million for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program.
- Increases access to capital and supports crop insurance and risk management tools, including reducing crop insurance premiums during the first 5 years of farming.

Local and Regional Food Systems

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) funded at \$10 million annually.

2014 Farm Bill

- Renames FMPP to "Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program" and provides \$30 million annually.
- Continues to reserve funds in the Business & Industry Loan Program for locally- and regionally- focused businesses.
- Advances growth of local and regional food systems with \$65 million for Value Added Product Market Development Grants.

Specialty Crops and Organics

Before the 2014 Farm Bill

- Funded the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG) at \$52 million annually to promote fruit and vegetable production.
- The 2008 Farm Bill provided \$55 million to strengthen the nation's infrastructure for pest detection and threat mitigation, and to safeguard nursery production.

2014 Farm Bill

- Provides \$72.5 million annually for SCBG.
- Provides new resources for organic farmers, including funding the Organic Cost Share program at \$11.5 million annually.
- Increases funding for pest and disease management and disaster prevention to \$62.5 million per year, and \$75 million in FY 2018 and beyond.

the WHITE HOUSE



5 WAYS THE FARM BILL STRENGTHENS THE ECONOMY

A comprehensive farm bill reaches way beyond our farms — it touches all Americans' lives in addition to helping American families and businesses in rural communities.

ONE

Reduces our deficits by making the biggest reforms to our agricultural programs in decades — cutting wasteful loopholes and targeting support to farmers who most need our help.

TWO

Generates \$35 in economic benefits for every dollar invested by promoting trade to **keep farm incomes strong**.

THREE

Authorizes and directs key rural programs that help **promote local economic development** — from connecting rural communities to broadband Internet to setting up telemedicine programs in remote areas.

FOUR

Invests in programs and services that will **help existing farmers stay prosperous and stay on their land** — and prioritizes veterans seeking assistance under existing programs.

FIVE

Renews conservation efforts to protect our fields, forests, and waters — and create new recreation and tourism opportunities.

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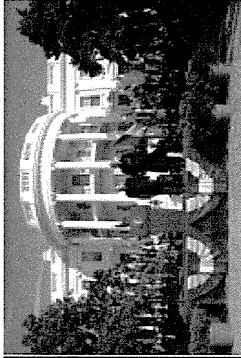
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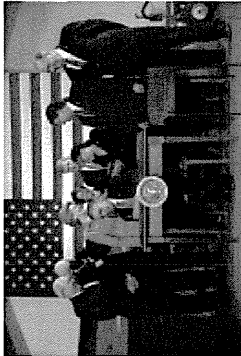
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Inside the French State Visit



This is "Not Your Father's Farm Bill"

The President Signs the Farm Bill: "A Jobs Bill, an Innovation Bill, a Research Bill, and a Conservation Bill"

Today, President Obama traveled to Michigan State University's equine performance center in East Lansing to deliver remarks on and sign into law the Agriculture Act of 2014 -- also known as the Farm Bill, which Congress passed earlier this week.

It's a bill whose reach extends far beyond our farms -- it includes smart reforms to reduce our deficit, and the investments it makes in our rural communities will help strengthen our economy across the board.

To see exactly what that looks like, take a look at five ways the Farm Bill strengthens our economy -- and if you learn something new, pass it on.



Lindsay Holst
February 07, 2014
03:00 PM EST

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5 WAYS THE FARM BILL STRENGTHENS THE ECONOMY

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- FIVE**
Renews conservation efforts to protect our fields, forests, and waters — and create new recreation and tourism opportunities.

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In his remarks, the President detailed how the Farm Bill makes key investments in rural communities across the board -- from funding for hospitals, schools, and affordable housing to support for businesses working to develop cutting-edge biofuels -- all the while cutting down on loopholes that used to allow people to receive benefits year after year, whether they farmed anything or not.

Besides keeping our rural communities thriving, the President said, the Farm Bill helps vulnerable families keep food on the table by providing funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. In 2012, SNAP kept nearly 5 million people -- including more than 2 million children -- out of poverty.

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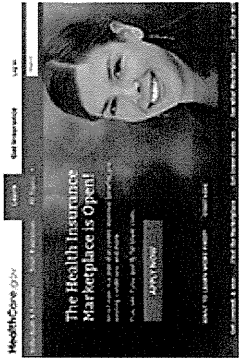
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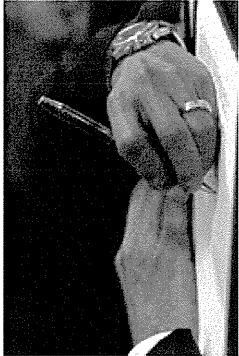
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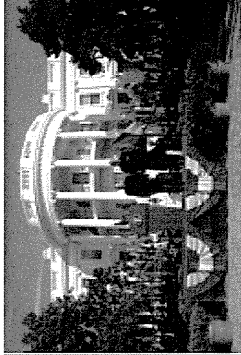
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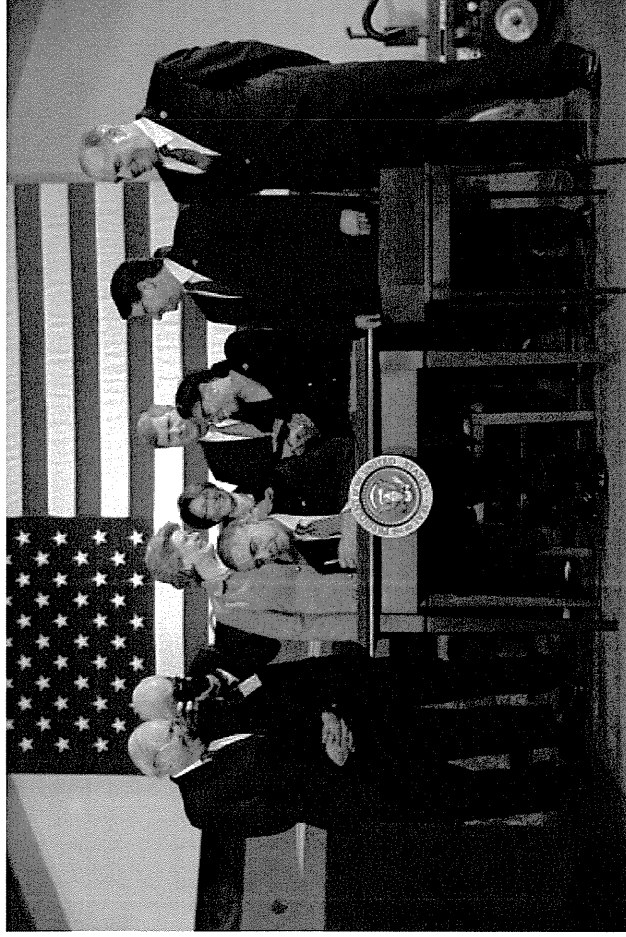
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PHOTOS OF THE DAY





President Barack Obama signs the Farm Bill at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, Feb. 7, 2014. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Today, in East Lansing Michigan, on the campus of one of our nation's first land grant colleges, President Obama signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the Farm Bill, or as Secretary Vilsack likes to call it – the Jobs Bill, the Research Bill, the Food Bill, etc.

Passed with a strong, bipartisan vote, this law will not only grow the economy, create jobs and expand opportunity in rural America, but it also contains a variety of commonsense reforms that this Administration has consistently called for – reforms that will save taxpayers billions of dollars.

For example, due to outdated policies that were in place for decades, people with farm land could receive yearly payments from the federal government, whether they planted crops on that land or not.



President Barack Obama tours Michigan Biotechnology Institute with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in Lansing, Mich., Feb. 7, 2014. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

That clearly doesn't make sense, so this law eliminates these “direct payments” and reforms the federal crop insurance program to make sure that we are being proper stewards of taxpayer dollars, while supporting our nation's farmers when they are actually in need of our help.

In addition, this law empowers the Department of Agriculture to ensure that only those directly involved in a farming operation receive assistance.

See what I mean by commonsense reforms?

Also, since fewer and fewer people are taking up farming, the law also puts special focus on new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including our nation's veterans, so that we can ensure that our country's next generation of growers and producers get off to a good start.

It also provides new grants and loans for entrepreneurs—many of whom are just beginning to farm—that want to break into expanding markets for organic and locally- and regionally-grown foods. Money spent locally very often continues to circulate locally, expanding the potential for job creation in rural small businesses and spurring economic

growth across the country.

And in order to ensure those future farmers and ranchers actually have land to farm and ranch on, this law consolidates, strengthens, and protects our conservation programs – notably in two important ways.

First, the law consolidates from 23 to 13 the number of different conservation programs, which reduces overhead costs, cuts down on duplication and confusion, and allows USDA to focus their efforts on the programs that are making the most difference.

Second, under the new law, if you participate in the federal crop insurance program, you must also practice sound crop management and conservation practices in order to protect wetlands and highly erodible soils, to make sure that the next generation has the workable land they need to thrive.

The bottom line is thanks to these commonsense reforms, decades in the making, we can continue to grow our rural economy, while saving the American taxpayers billions. That's what we mean when we say "this is not your Father's Farm Bill."

Doug McKalip is the Senior Policy Advisor for Rural Affairs with the White House Domestic Policy Council

Learn more:

- Five Ways the Farm Bill Strengthens the Economy

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