



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE I: COMMODITIES

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**Title I: Commodities.** Aids farmers in managing risk and provides assistance following precipitous declines in commodity prices. Through the reauthorization and enhancement of commodity, marketing loan, sugar, dairy, and disaster programs, producers are provided some certainty in times of unpredictability.

**Increases support for the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) programs to account for persistent inflation and rising costs of production.**

- Includes a 10% to 20% increase to the statutory reference price for all covered commodities based on an analysis of the average annual increase in per-unit cost of production since such reference prices were established in the 2014 Farm Bill.
- By increasing the statutory reference price, the maximum effective reference price is also increased.
- Increases the ARC guarantee to 90% of the benchmark revenue for both ARC-IC and ARC-CO.
- Increases the maximum payment rate for ARC-IC and ARC-CO to 12.5% of benchmark revenue.
- Maintains an annual election between ARC and PLC.
- Streamlines the administration of payment limitations for certain entities like LLCs and S-Corps and provides for an inflation-adjusted limitation if an operation derives 75% or more of its income from farming, ranching, or forestry.

**Provides authority to expand base acres to include producers who currently cannot participate in ARC/PLC.**

- Maintains all current base acres.
- Provides a one-time opportunity to establish base acres for producers who currently do not have base or whose average planted and prevent plant acres exceed the current base acres on the farm.
- Uses the reference period of crop years 2019 through 2023 to determine the number of eligible acres on the farm.
- Contains provisions to allow eligible acres to include a portion of acres planted to non-covered commodities.
- Includes provisions to establish payment yields on the additional base acres.
- Base update is available to any producer whose planted acres exceed existing base, regardless of demographics or socially disadvantaged status.

**Modernizes marketing loans and sugar policy.**

- Includes modest increases in loan rates for most loan commodities.
- Provides for a more substantial increase in loan rates for commodities that did not receive an increase in the 2018 Farm Bill.

- Enhances flexibility for loan redemption of upland cotton and modernizes loan provisions for extra-long staple cotton.
- To account for persistent inflation and support the domestic textile industry, increases the payment rate from 3 cents to 5 cents under Economic Adjustment Assistance for Textile Mills.
- Modernizes the administration of the tariff-rate quota for raw cane sugar and marketing allotments for sugar beet processors.
- Authorizes the Secretary to study and further define “refined” sugar.

**Bolsters dairy programs to continue providing vital assistance.**

- Increases the cap on Tier I coverage for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program to 6 million pounds, as seen in [H.R. 4125](#).
- Provides an opportunity to update production history for DMC.
- Provides a 25% discount on DMC premiums for operations that enroll in coverage for the life of the 2024 Farm Bill.
- Mandates biennial cost surveys to ensure make allowances accurately reflect the cost of manufacturing dairy products as seen in [H.R. 1756](#).
- Restores the “higher-of” formula for the calculation of the price of Class I (fluid) milk until such time that updates to a Federal Milk Marketing Order are ratified, a modification of the provisions of [H.R. 1756](#).
- Ensures the Dairy Forward Pricing Program does not expire.

**Enhances standing disaster programs and expands eligibility for assistance.**

- Enhances the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) by:
  - Increasing the payment rate to 100% of the fair market value of the animal if the loss is caused by an attack by a federally protected species, similar to provisions within [H.R. 2695](#).
  - Allowing for a supplemental indemnity payment for the loss of unborn livestock if the loss of the gestating animal qualifies for assistance, as seen in [H.R. 8229](#)
  - Streamlining regulations.
- Clarifies the treatment of losses to honeybees and crawfish under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) program.
- Improves the Tree Assistance (TAP) program by adopting the provisions of [H.R. 4739](#) such as:
  - Reducing the mortality threshold.
  - Increasing the reimbursement rate for rehabilitation of damaged trees, bushes, and vines.
  - Providing more flexibility for producers to replant alternative varieties, stand densities, or locations.
- Creates standing authority for any future ad hoc disaster assistance to be delivered via block grants to States, inspired by [H.R. 662](#).
- Includes [H.R. 4127](#) to ensure farming operations are eligible for assistance under LIP, ELAP, TAP, Livestock Forage Program (LFP), and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) if the operation derives 75% or more of its income from farming, ranching, or forestry.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE II: CONSERVATION

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**Title II: Conservation.** Provides farmers, ranchers, and growers with financial and technical assistance to address a variety of natural resource concerns such as soil health and erosion, water quality and quantity, and wildlife habitat. The 2024 Farm Bill continues to support our proven system of voluntary, incentive-based, and locally led conservation through various improvements.

**Provides historic, long-term investments in Title II by reallocating Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) conservation dollars.**

- Removes the IRA's climate sideboards to restore the locally led nature of conservation programs and provide flexibility for States.
- Rescinds and reallocates all unobligated IRA conservation funding into conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L.566).
- Reinvests IRA conservation dollars to create continuous funding for orphan and new programs:
  - Feral Swine Eradication and Control Program
    - Provides \$150 million and designates 60% of funding for APHIS and 40% for NRCS, as seen in [H.R.3984](#).
  - The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)
    - Includes [H.R. 5186](#) to reauthorize VPA-HIP at \$150 million.
  - Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP)
    - Repeals the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) and replaces it with FCEP, inspired by [H.R. 3424](#) and modeled after ACEP, to provide an entity-held easement option for working forests.

**Protects and enhances working lands conservation programs to ensure they remain producer-first, flexible, and locally led.**

- Enhances EQIP by incorporating proven technologies and innovative programs.
  - Incorporates precision agriculture into EQIP, based on provisions from [H.R.1459](#), by adding precision agriculture technologies to the 90% payment, water conservation and irrigation efficiency practices, incentive contracts, and conservation innovation grants.
  - Restores the EQIP minimum livestock allocation at 50% and maintains the wildlife habitat minimum allocation at 10%.
  - Includes the Southern Border Initiative as seen in [H.R. 6921](#).
- Improves CSP and provides additional soil health tools.

- Adds the planning, adoption, and acquisition of precision agriculture practices and technologies as eligible for CSP payments, as seen in [H.R.1459](#).
- Authorizes a matching grant program for States and eligible Indian Tribes to improve soil health on agricultural lands through the implementation of State and Tribal soil health programs, as inspired by [H.R. 4163](#) and [H.R. 1840](#).
- Increases the CSP minimum payment to \$2,500.

**Modernizes the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by incentivizing enrollment of marginal lands and emphasizing state partnerships.**

- Modernizes, clarifies, and simplifies the CRP statute for the first time since the program's creation in the 1985 Farm Bill.
- Incentivizes the enrollment of marginal lands by basing rental rates on the land capability classification and paying a higher rental rate for land capability classes III through VII than other eligible lands, as seen in [H.R.8270](#).
- Encourages the program to be more locally led by codifying the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative and combining it with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to create a new State Partnership Initiative enrollment option that maintains all the existing authorities of both programs.
- Maintains an acreage cap for the program and requires state allocations to be based on historical allocations.
- Clarifies that activities eligible for cost-share payments include establishing vegetation, stabilizing vegetation for erosion control, installing fencing, adopting practices to exclude livestock from riparian areas, implementing fencing and water practices to transition to grazing on grasslands, allowing mid-contract management for permanent cover, and implementing water quality conservation practices, as seen in [H.R.8270](#).
- Increases the payment limitation from \$50,000 to \$125,000 per year.

**Includes commonsense easement reforms through a variety of ACEP improvements.**

- Agricultural Land Easement Program (ALE):
  - Increases the federal cost-share from 50% to 65%.
  - Clarifies the certification process for experienced entities to participate in the program, which will help reduce administrative burdens, provide flexibility, and encourage participation.
  - To facilitate states in reconciling easement deed terms with the minimum terms of an easement supported by ACEP, the bill allows for eligible entities to accept a lower cost-share option while setting the terms and conditions of the easement deed (without a federal contingent right of enforcement), if the terms remain consistent with the program.
  - Allows for 90% cost-share for socially disadvantaged farmers and rancher with 50% or more ownership.
  - Removes the definition of buy, protect, sell language from statute.

- Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE):
  - Elevates stewardship responsibilities to mirror easement acquisition and restoration by creating a separate section for stewardship actions under wetland reserve easements (WRE).
  - Provides for an evaluation of stewardship need.
  - Clarifies that contracts or agreements may be entered into to carry out necessary restoration, enhancement, or maintenance, repair, assessment or monitoring of a wetland reserve easement.
- Program Administration:
  - Includes improved and clear authorities for easement modifications and exchanges if consistent with the terms of the easement and the program goals.
  - Allows separate application pooling and ranking for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in both ALE and WRE.
  - Eliminates the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation.

**Streamlines and improves RCPP administration and implementation.**

- Links RCPP back to the covered programs with flexibility to alter program rules as was provided in the 2014 version of RCPP.
- Requires USDA to streamline RCPP partnership agreements and sets various timelines for administrative actions and decisions, including 180 days for agreement approvals and 30 days for payments to partners.
- Includes [H.R. 3972](#) to amend the purposes of RCPP to expand flood resiliency and prevent and mitigate the impacts of flooding and drought.
- Allows for up to 10% of the funds for an RCPP partnership agreement to reimburse the partner for administrative expenses related to the project.
- Ensures certified entities are afforded the same benefits they enjoy in ACEP.
- Includes the restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat connectivity and wildlife mitigation corridors as critical conservation areas, as inspired by provisions in [H.R. 8104](#).

**Updates critical watershed programs and responds to watershed resource needs.**

- Modernizes P.L. 566 and requires ongoing streamlining and data transparency.
  - Authorizes funding for remedial actions which address the deterioration of a component of structure at an abnormal rate, the planned service exceeding the life of a component, or structural damage caused by a storm or weather event.
  - Increases the Federal cost-share for Dam Rehab from 65% to 90%.
  - Provides \$150 million per year.
- Updates the Emergency Watershed Program by authorizing financial and technical assistance for restoring and maintaining vegetative cover and hydrological restoration measures.
- Establishes a national agriculture flood vulnerability study as seen in [H.R. 5250](#).

**Emphasizes science, technology, and innovation through the conservation title.**

- Includes [H.R. 6877](#), which requires USDA to create a process for public participation in updating conservation practice standards and make more frequent updates, beginning with one year after enactment and every subsequent 5 years.
- Creates an Office of Innovation within the Office of the Secretary, which will be staffed by existing employees and funded through annual appropriations, as seen in [H.R. 6867](#).
- The bill also defines both “precision agriculture” and “precision agriculture technology” and incorporates both into EQIP and CSP.

**Improves program implementation across the conservation title.**

- Includes provisions from [H.R. 3036](#) to streamline the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program.
  - Requires USDA to establish clear approval processes and timelines, including a process to approve a non-federal entity to become a certifier and to approve the application within 60 days upon receipt.
  - Establishes a streamlined process for approved certifiers to certify a third-party provider and requires a timely decision for third-party provider applications.
  - Requires a review of the TSP certification process and requires USDA to adjust accordingly.
- Maintains the NRCS experienced services program.
- Provides direct hire authority for NRCS.
- Removes the AGI limitations for program participants that earn 75% or more of their income from agriculture, based on [H.R. 4800](#).
- Includes provisions from [H.R. 6717](#) to improve the Emergency Conservation Program by authorizing advance payments of up to 75% of the cost of the emergency measures.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE III: TRADE

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**Title III: Trade.** Agriculture is the backbone to most of the world's economies, and robust promotion programs not only create market access, but protect our agricultural interests and act as a catalyst for innovation and economic growth. By expanding the reach and impact of the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program, the 2024 farm bill will mitigate global food insecurity while providing U.S. producers new markets, improving local economies, and lessening the damage of this Administration's ineffective trade agenda.

**Substantially increases funding for MAP/FMD.**

- Upon enactment, doubles the funding provided to MAP/FMD, inspired by nearly unanimous, bipartisan consensus in recognizing the need for heightened market access and trade promotion.

**Prioritizes U.S. commodities rather than unlimited market-based assistance.**

- Inspired by [H.R. 4293](#), reserves 50 percent of Food for Peace resources for U.S. grown commodities and ocean shipping, recognizing the original intent of the program while addressing the shortage of commodities necessary to address crisis hunger levels.

**Balances the authorities of USAID with those of USDA.**

- Mandates the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) consult with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to promote partnership in the administration of Food for Peace.

**Lessens the bureaucracy associated with programs meant to respond to immediate crises.**

- Retains USAID as the humanitarian aid authority while recognizing that a more streamlined release mechanism prevents USAID from using commodities as an option of last resort. Inspired by [H.R. 4293](#), this provision responds to the fallout of the 2022 drawdown of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, ensuring a seamless process in future.

**Addresses trade barriers and infrastructure deficiencies.**

- A limiting factor to growing export markets for U.S. food and agriculture products is insufficient infrastructure capabilities. Inspired by the intent of [H.R. 4612](#), eligible trade organizations can enhance the capabilities of infrastructure in new and developing foreign markets, including infrastructure related to cold chain

capacity and port improvements via needs assessments, technical assistance, and training.

- It is imperative the U.S. protect American food products from unfair trade practices by foreign countries. Therefore, as seen in [H.R. 3423](#), USDA is directed to secure foreign markets for goods using common names (i.e., parmesan, bologna), preventing foreign countries from using their economic and political influence to implement unfair trade practices under the guise of protecting geographic indicators.
- After public notice and comment, requires the Secretary to submit a report to Congress detailing the policies or practices of foreign countries that act as significant barriers to specialty crop exports or those that enhance the competitiveness of imported specialty crops with domestic producers.

**Fosters education partnerships to ensure developing countries can benefit from our nation's advanced research and developing technologies.**

- Enhances the International Agricultural Education Fellowship program to promote cultural exchange and immersion programming focused on agricultural sciences, food systems, and food and nutrition education in developing countries.





# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE IV: NUTRITION

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**Title IV: Nutrition.** Supports access to families formerly disallowed to receive benefits, refocuses work programs to support upward mobility, invests in and modernizes food distribution programs to create parity with urban programming, promotes program integrity and State accountability, and advances policies related to healthy eating, healthy behaviors, and healthy outcomes.

**Provides additional financial resources across multiple programs that have successfully benefited tribal communities, seniors, and households pursuing healthier options.**

- Increases funding for Community Food Projects, creating new opportunities to mitigate hunger through community outreach and comprehensive service.
- Responds to the needs of our nation's food banks through increased resources for commodities, Farm to Food Bank programming, and critical infrastructure like cold chain storage.
- Allows certain States to directly purchase commodities for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), similar to [H.R. 5059](#).
- Codifies the Elderly Simplified Application Project, as seen in both [H.R. 8199](#) and [H.R. 3474](#), streamlining access for households that do not have earned income and in which all adult members are over the age of 60 and/or have a disability.
- Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into self-determination contracts with Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations to operationalize SNAP, as seen in [H.R. 5970](#).
- Expands the offerings of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), as seen in [H.R. 7667](#).
- Expands access to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program through a standard deduction of Social Security Medicare Part B, a program delivery pilot that prioritizes rural communities similar to [H.R. 4745](#), and through a Demonstration Program for Tribal Organizations.
- Increases funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), improves year-round availability of incentives through the use of all forms of produce (frozen, fresh, canned, and dried), and corrects the inequities in program availability by waiving the federal match in persistent poverty counties, each championed via [H.R. 3127](#) and [H.R. 4856](#).
- Increases retail outlet access for low-income consumers via an increased authorization of appropriation for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.
- Akin to the intent seen in [H.R. 5589](#), establishes a food box pilot program designed to supplement, not supplant, the nutrition of low-income households, expand the capacity of faith-based and community-based organizations, and support rural communities who lack access to traditional channels of food distribution.

**Offers significant opportunities for individuals to remain on their current career pathways without choosing between SNAP and employment or education.**

- Inspired by the communication of information as found in [H.R. 3100](#), directs the Secretary to issue formal guidance to States on how to identify and notify college students eligible for SNAP.
- Like [H.R. 4815](#), ensures the income of employed young people, through the age of 21 and in secondary school, is not used against the eligibility of the total SNAP household.
- Excludes specific SNAP Employment and Training allowances, earnings, and payments when determining eligibility for SNAP, as championed by [H.R. 3087](#).
- Increases the earned income deduction for purposes of SNAP eligibility, allowing families to keep more of their earned wages.

**Creates new access for participants either formerly disallowed or beholden to arcane restriction.**

- Corrects a draconian, outdated option to allow individuals with past drug offenses to receive SNAP, as seen in [H.R. 3479](#), aligning federal policy with the will of dozens of states across the nation.
- Increases resources available to the Nutrition Assistance Program block grant for Puerto Rico, and encourages both USDA and Puerto Rico to continue to formulate a financially and operationally viable pathway toward a transition from the block grant to SNAP.

**Corrects egregious Executive branch overreach and disallows future unelected bureaucrats from arbitrarily increasing or decimating SNAP benefits.**

- The Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), introduced in 1975, is the lowest cost of the four food plans produced by USDA; it represents the cost of a nutritious, practical, cost-effective diet prepared at home for a family of four, which is defined in law as an adult male and female, ages 20-50, and two children, ages 6-8 and 9-11.
- Section 4002 of [H.R. 2](#) (2018 Farm Bill) mandated that “by 2022 and at five-year intervals thereafter, the Secretary shall reevaluate and publish the market baskets of the Thrifty Food Plan based on current food prices, food composition data, consumption patterns, and dietary guidance.” Before this statutory mandate, the TFP had not been updated since 2006, and before that 1999 and 1983. This provision, based on more than 40 years of precedent, was expected to remain cost neutral, affirmed by both the Congressional Budget Office and via U.S. Department of Agriculture bipartisan technical assistance.
- In January 2021, President Biden issued an Executive Order related to his “Build Back Better” agenda, requiring all executive agencies to “promptly identify actions they can take within existing authorities to address the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic,” which demanded the execution and implementation of the TFP review by USDA. The reevaluation, a process significantly shortened for political gain, resulted in a \$256 billion increase to the

farm bill baseline over the ten-year period, violated the Congressional Review Act, and eroded public trust.

- Further, per an analysis by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), USDA gathered external input, but given time constraints, did not fully incorporate this input in its reevaluation. Specifically, USDA substituted a limited internal review of the TFP report for the formal peer review it had initially planned. This review was conducted by USDA officials who had been involved in the TFP reevaluation, and therefore was not independent. The TFP report lacked a comprehensive, external peer review to assess the transparency, clarity, or interpretation of the results. As a result, the review also did not meet relevant Office of Management and Budget and USDA guidelines, such as the requirement to publish a report with the results of a peer review.
- The complexity of the economic model USDA uses to calculate the TFP led officials to make numerous methodological and policy decisions during the 2021 reevaluation, as they had in past reevaluations. However, GAO found that key decisions did not fully meet standards for economic analysis, primarily due to failure to fully disclose the rationale for decisions, insufficient analysis of the effects of decisions, and lack of documentation.
- Beginning in 2027, Congressional intent will be reasserted by prescribing a cost neutral process by which future thrifty food plan updates are to be conducted.
- Updates will continue to reflect food prices and composition, consumption patterns, and dietary guidance, and will include annual cost-of-living adjustments per the Consumer Price Index.
- All updates will be subject to public notice and comment.
- Additionally, and inspired by [H.R. 5181](#), addresses the wrongheaded approach to Hawaii, ensuring both urban and rural communities in the State are used in any future analyses of the market basket.

**Creates a stronger, more sustainable connection between health and federal feeding programs.**

- Reforms the Dietary Guidelines for Americans process to emphasize science, integrity, and transparency, and de-emphasize politics and issues irrelevant to food and nutrition science from impacting consumer choice and behavior.
- Refocuses the purpose of SNAP as defined in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to a program that promotes a healthy lifestyle, and for the first time, calls attention to diet-related chronic disease that has impacted military readiness, health care costs, and increased disability claims.
- Strengthens nutrition education's impact by highlighting the need for expanded partnerships and pragmatic consultation with health care practitioners, community health workers, and educators.
- Requires USDA to annually report on the food security and diet quality of both participants and nonparticipants in SNAP, including how any legislative or executive branch action impacts each.

- Enforces the variety requirements of the final rule entitled “Enhancing Retailer Standards in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” as published by USDA in 2016 but circumvented since then via the annual appropriations process.
- Expands the reach, funding, and impact of dairy incentive and school meals programs by including full fat fluid milk, flavored or unflavored, as seen in both [H.R. 5099](#) and [H.R. 1147](#).
- Requires nutrition standards for foods provided through commodity distribution programs.
- Requires the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to scan historical evidence and report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives on program access, diet quality, and purchasing power related to the termination of the prohibition on hot and prepared foods.

**Holds USDA and States accountable to the generosity of the American taxpayer.**

- Inspired by [H.R. 6501](#), eliminates any threshold for erroneous payments as is seen across other safety net program, farm and otherwise; an error is an error and States should have no grace.
- Reasserts Congressional intent, mandating USDA act on the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, which prevents duplicative participation across multiple States.
- Makes certain States are incentivized to recoup fraudulently obtained benefits by permitting them to keep more of those dollars to reinvest in their own integrity practices, developing technologies, and general program administration.
- Holds USDA accountable to public notice and comment before any action is taken related to substantive quality control updates.
- Creates an office of program integrity within FNS to focus on SNAP and other federal feeding programs under the jurisdiction of the Committee that long have gone without OIG intervention or Department accountability.
- Mandates the collection and dissemination of a statistically significant sample of retailer transaction data to better understand the purchase patterns of SNAP and non-SNAP households.
- Zeroes in on instances of bad actors in the retail space, mitigating instances of fraudulent behavior.
- Inspired by [H.R. 6657](#), suspends and reviews household accounts in instances where the household has not used their SNAP benefits in the State they reside in for a period longer than 90 days, and limits the redemptions of benefits by households that include members who are the owner/operator of authorized retailers.
- Allows States to make more decisions about the implementation of certain aspects of the program.
- Promotes Buy American principles in school meals programs, a provision that has long been deliberated and amended in farm bills.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE V: CREDIT

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**Title V: Credit.** Our nation's producers borrow more capital in a single harvest season than most Americans do in their entire lives. Interest rates have exploded under the Biden Administration, resulting in skyrocketing borrowing costs which fall especially hard on our nation's younger, less established producers. Programs within the credit title are instrumental in helping producers both start and maintain their operations.

### **Enhances financing options for producers who are unable to obtain credit from a commercial lender.**

- Includes the provisions of [H.R. 5631](#)
  - Updates loan limits
    - Guaranteed Operating Loans – \$3 million
      - Indexed to CPI
    - Guaranteed Ownership Loans – \$3.5 million
      - Indexed to land values
    - Direct Operating Loans – \$750,000
    - Direct Ownership Loans – \$850,000
    - Microloans – \$100,000
    - Aligns Down Payment Loan Program with Direct Ownership Loans
  - Allows for refinancing of distressed guaranteed loans into direct loans, subject to certain conditions.
- Expands the EZGuarantee Loan Program to ensure faster approval times for certain guaranteed loans, a modified concept from [H.R. 5877](#).

### **Provides resources to new, young, beginning, and veteran farmers in their transition to farming and ranching.**

- Reduces and streamlines the experience requirements to expand access for beginning farmers, inspired by [H.R. 5172](#).
- Cuts red tape related to regulations on the type of entity structures that can be used when transitioning a farm operation from one generation to another.
- Reauthorizes the Heirs Property Relending Program from the 2018 Farm Bill and allows USDA to enter into cooperative agreements with public interest legal service providers to assist producers in resolving ownership records and transitioning land into agricultural production, as seen in [H.R. 8198](#).
- Establishes a pre-approval pilot program for USDA ownership loans.
- Reauthorizes Cooperative Lending Pilot Projects, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts, and maintains the 50% direct loan fund set-aside for beginning farmers and ranchers.

### **Protects and enhances the ability of commercial lenders to provide rural America with a reliable source of credit and capital.**

- Expands access to the secondary market for certain guaranteed energy loans.

- Provides authority for Farm Credit Administration (FCA) to evaluate and establish alternative limitations for certain Farmer Mac activities.
- Incorporates [H.R. 2423](#) to clarify that the FCA is the regulator of Farm Credit institutions and requires those institutions to report certain loan data to FCA rather than the CFPB.
- Achieves the goals of [H.R. 4736](#) by providing Farm Credit institutions with the ability to partner with community banks and other lenders in financing essential community facilities such as those providing healthcare, childcare, and emergency services.
- Provides flexibility for financing agricultural exports.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE VI: RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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**Title VI: Rural Development.** Programs offered by the USDA's Rural Development play a vital role in enhancing rural life and fostering economic growth. The 2024 farm bill continues the long history of bipartisan support for rural development initiatives and implements important improvements to ensure a robust rural economy.

### **Strengthens broadband connectivity to rural communities.**

- ReConnect Rural Broadband Program
  - Integrates the ReConnect Program into the the Farm Bill Broadband Program, now renamed the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4374](#), [H.R. 3216](#), and [H.R. 4227](#).
  - Raises the minimum eligibility speeds from 25/3 Mbps to 50/25 Mbps.
    - To qualify for a loan or loan guarantee, 75% of the proposed service area must lack 50/25 Mbps.
    - To qualify for a grant, 90% of the proposed service area must lack 50/25 Mbps.
  - Provides the Secretary the authority to adjust the minimum eligibility speed, within limitations, through a 30-day notice and comment period.
  - Provides the highest priority for proposed project areas that have less than 25/3 Mbps connectivity. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4374](#), and [H.R. 3964](#),
  - Increases the project buildout speed agreements, based on a multiple of the minimum eligibility speed, similar to a concept found in the 2018 Farm Bill ([H.R. 2](#)).
    - For broadband project buildout agreement of less than 8 years, providers must build out to 100/50 Mbps (2 times the minimum eligibility speed).
    - For broadband project buildout agreement between 8-14 years, providers must build out to 250/125 Mbps (5 times the minimum eligibility speed).
    - For broadband project buildout agreement of more than 14 years, providers must build out to 500/250 Mbps (10 times the minimum eligibility speed).
  - Clarifies the list of eligible entities who may apply for assistance under the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program. Based on language found in [H.R. 4227](#).
  - Provides the Secretary with the authority to provide financial assistance to affiliates of eligible entities to construct broadband networks in rural areas. Based on language found in [H.R. 3216](#).

- Prioritizes applications of eligible entities who have provided broadband service or other utility service for at least 5 years in rural areas in the State in which the project would be carried out. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4227](#) and [H.R. 3964](#).
- Prioritizes applications who can demonstrate the potential for upgrading the physical infrastructure of the network to comply with the highest broadband buildout standards at the time of submission of the application.
- Sunsets ReConnect and requires any unobligated dollars from ReConnect to be transferred to the new ReConnect Rural Broadband Program. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4374](#), [H.R. 3216](#), and [H.R. 4227](#).
- Authorizes the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program at \$350 million per year for 5 years.
- Middle Mile Program
  - Reauthorizes USDA's Middle Mile Program at \$10 million per year for 5 years.
    - This program provides grants, loans, and loan guarantees to build out infrastructure that connects local networks to the larger internet backbone.
- Community Connect Program
  - Reauthorizes the Community Connect Program at \$50 million per year for 5 years.
    - This program provides grants for the construction of retail broadband networks for "community-oriented" connectivity by providing free service at all participating community facilities and free access points for at least two-years, in addition to retail service.
  - Raises the minimum eligibility speeds from 10/1 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps.
  - Establishes a project buildout agreement speed of 250/125 Mbps.
- Innovative Broadband Advancement Program
  - Reauthorizes the Innovative Broadband Advancement Program (IBAP) at \$10 million per year for 5 years.
    - This program provides USDA with flexibility to finance novel and unique demonstration projects that hold promise to be replicable in other rural communities.
  - Modifies IBAP to include both terrestrial broadband demonstration projects and satellite broadband demonstration projects.
  - For terrestrial broadband demonstration projects, the Farm Bill includes project diversity language. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4374](#),
  - For satellite broadband demonstration projects, the Farm Bill provides the Secretary the authority to make grants to entities to cover the cost for purchasing, installing, or both, of satellite broadband equipment to facilitate access to satellite broadband services in remote areas.
- Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program



- Reauthorizes the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program at \$82 million per year for 5 years. Based on language found in [H.R. 5308](#).
  - This program provides grants to eligible entities for the construction of broadband facilities and equipment related to tele-presence activities.
- Broadband Technical Assistance Program
  - Codifies the Broadband Technical Assistance Program and allows entities to receive technical assistance for all USDA broadband programs. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4374](#), [H.R. 4227](#), and [H.R. 3964](#).
- Miscellaneous Broadband Provisions
  - As part of the existing challenge process within USDA Rural Utilities Service for broadband applications, the Farm Bill clarifies that the Secretary must verify the information presented by the challenger, subsequently issue an agency determination to the challenger, provide an opportunity for the submitter to provide a response. Finally, the Secretary shall deliver a conclusive determination, which is non-appealable. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 3216](#).
  - As part of the existing notice requirements, the Farm Bill further clarifies that the applicant must submit a complete shapefile map of the proposed service area with each application submitted for all retail broadband projects. Based on language found in [H.R. 3216](#).
  - Provides USDA the authority to award grants to certain entities for collecting local broadband service information. Based on language found in [H.R. 4374](#).

**Improves precision agriculture practices and increasing accessibility of precision agriculture services.**

- Establishes a partnership between the federal government and the private sector to create voluntary interconnectivity standards and prioritize the cybersecurity needs for precision agriculture technologies. Based on language found in [H.R. 1697](#).
- Helps rural entities expand the adoption of precision agriculture practices, including by financing the acquisition of precision agriculture technology. Based on language found in [H.R. 1459](#).
- Reauthorizes the Federal Communications Commission's Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States for 1 additional year to:
  - Assess international standards/guidelines relevant to precision ag policies, determining their suitability within the U.S. regulatory framework; and
  - Examine the competitive and security implications of precision agricultural technology deployment by foreign governments or state-sponsored entities in third countries.

### **Protects access to health care in rural America.**

- Codifies and improves the Rural Hospital Technical Assistance Program, which provides technical assistance for rural health care facilities to help prevent closures, strengthen essential health care services in rural communities, and improve financial and operational performance. Based on language found in [H.R. 4713](#).
- Provides certain health care facilities the opportunity to refinance certain debt obligations contingent upon its commitment to undergoing financial and managerial planning aimed at improving the long-term viability of the institution. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 5989](#).
- Maintains the set-aside and prioritization through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program for telemedicine projects that offer substance use disorder treatment while expanding the provision to encompass behavioral health, mental health, and maternal health treatment services as well. Based on language found in [H.R. 4603](#).

### **Enhances efforts to meet the childcare demands of rural areas.**

- Establishes a 3-year rural childcare initiative at USDA, which directs USDA to prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities through the Community Facilities Program, the Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program, the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, and the Intermediary Relending Program. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 3922](#).
- Requires the Secretary to conduct a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the projects carried out using assistance provided under the rural childcare initiative upon its completion and submit the evaluation to Congress. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 3922](#).

### **Addresses existing workforce challenges within rural communities to effectively meet their needs.**

- Reauthorizes and strengthens the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program, which offers flexible grant funding for rural areas to maximize job opportunities and support private investment in regional economies.
- Modifies RISE to provide funding for career pathway programs and industry or sector partnerships to build out workforce pipelines for specific industry sectors in rural America. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 5344](#) and [H.R. 7015](#).
  - Industry sectors include:
    - telecommunications or broadband services
    - water, wastewater, and disposal services
    - electric supply services
    - forestry and logging operations
    - conservation practices and management
    - health care and childcare
    - manufacturing
    - agribusiness related to production, processing, and distribution.

- any other sectors that are identified by the local workforce development board serving the region to be an in-demand industry sector or occupation.

**Strengthens essential rural services.**

- Codifies the Circuit Rider Program, which provides technical assistance for rural water systems, and allows funds to be used to address cybersecurity and emergency disaster response related needs. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 3809](#).
- Reauthorizes the Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program, which provides funding for essential water infrastructure such as clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, solid waste management, and stormwater drainage in rural communities.
- Allows the Secretary to issue zero and low-interest loans, modify existing loans, and forgive principal for distressed water systems, while requiring recipients of assistance develop long-term financial plans and receive financial planning assistance.
- Establishes a meat and poultry processing and rendering grant program at USDA Rural Development to support both new and expanding meat and poultry processors and renderers, while also facilitating producer investments to foster competition within the packing sector. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4140](#) and [H.R. 945](#).
- Broadens the Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program to support new investments in food infrastructure across aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution for a more resilient and diverse U.S. food supply chain. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4873](#).
- Establishes a technical assistance program for geographically underserved and distressed areas. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 6621](#).
- Reauthorizes and improves the Rural Decentralized Water Systems Program to allow for the testing of ground well water contamination to better address its treatment. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 1721](#).
- Reauthorizes and modifies the Rural Energy Savings Program, which provides low-interest loans to rural electric cooperatives and utilities, enabling rural consumers to implement energy efficiency improvements and upgrades in their homes or businesses. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 3849](#).
- Establishing a 3% cap on guaranteed loan lender fees for all guaranteed loan programs at USDA Rural Development.
- Reauthorizes and improves the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, which provides financial and technical assistance to rural microenterprises, supporting entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic development in rural communities. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 5284](#).

- Reauthorizes the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program, which provides financial assistance to rural utilities, which then distribute the funds to local businesses and organizations for projects aimed at fostering economic development in rural areas. Based on concepts found in [H.R. 4835](#).
  - Additionally, the Farm Bill permits REDLG awardees to provide other forms of collateral to secure loans besides a letter of credit.

**Encourages private capital investments in rural communities.**

- Reauthorizes the Rural Business Investment Program at \$20 million per year for 5 years, which aims to promote economic development in rural areas by providing venture capital to rural businesses through licensed Rural Business Investment Companies (RBICs). These RBICs are privately managed investment funds that invest equity capital in small and emerging rural businesses.
  - Additionally, the Farm Bill increases the cap on how much a Farm Credit System institution can invest in a RBIC fund from 50% to 75%.

**Streamlines the permitting process for Rural Development projects.**

- Excludes USDA Rural Development programs from certain requirements under NEPA, on the same basis as loans and loan guarantees provided by the Small Business Administration. Based on language found in the Fiscal Responsibility Act ([H.R. 3746](#)).
- Repeals a duplicative provision prohibiting USDA Community Facility Loans from being used to finance projects near wetlands, despite complying with existing wetland regulations.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE VII: RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND RELATED MATTERS

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**Title VII: Research, Extension, and Related Matters.** Keeps American agriculture at the forefront of innovation and productivity through cutting-edge research and supports the nation's land-grant and non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.

**Supports the modernization of agricultural research facilities by providing funding for the Research Facilities Act.**

- Provides at least \$1 billion in mandatory funding for the competitive grant program that was established in the 2018 Farm Bill under the Research Facilities Act.

**Increases funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.**

- Increases the mandatory funding level for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to \$175 million per year, a \$95 million increase per year from the 2018 Farm Bill, based on a request in [H.R. 5199](#).
- Allows the Secretary to waive the matching funds requirement for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative based on a concept found in [H.R. 679](#).

**Allocates funding for research and development of mechanization and automation technologies for the specialty crop industry.**

- Provides \$20 million per year from the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to fund a new Specialty Crop Mechanization and Automation Research and Extension Program inspired by [H.R. 4173](#).
- Establishes a High-Priority Research and Extension Initiative for Specialty Crop Mechanization and Automation Research based on a concept found in [H.R. 4162](#).

**Maintains funding for the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program.**

- Provides \$25 million per year from the Specialty crop Research Initiative to fund the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program.

**Provides continued funding for scholarships for students at 1890 institutions.**

- Builds on the success of the program created in the 2018 Farm Bill that supports scholarships for students at 1890 institutions by providing \$100 million in mandatory funding available until expended for the program based on a request in [H.R. 1436](#).
- Provides further support for 1890 institutions, including:
  - Increases the authorization of appropriations for Extension at 1890 institutions to an amount not less than 40% of appropriations for the Smith-Lever Act.

- Increases the authorization of appropriations for agricultural research at 1890 institutions to an amount not less than 40% of appropriations for the Hatch Act of 1887.
- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct outreach to State governments regarding their matching funds requirement to 1890 institutions and requires States governments to submit attestations related to the States' ability to meet such requirements based on a concept from [H.R. 5780](#).
- Increases the number of 1890 Centers of Excellence to not less than 8 and establishes two new focus areas based on a concept from [H.R. 4236](#).

**Promotes interagency coordination to further agricultural research at other Federal agencies.**

- Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into memoranda of understanding with the Secretary of Energy and the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities based on a concept from [H.R. 1713](#).

**Supports capacity funding for research, extension, and education activities.**

- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Smith-Lever Act to support capacity funding programs at 1862 land-grants.
- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for the Evans-Allen Program and 1890s Extension to support capacity funding programs at 1890 land-grants.
- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for the Equity in Education Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 to support capacity funding programs at 1994 land-grants and improves program delivery, including:
  - Removes the \$100,000 cap per institution for payments to the 1994 institutions; and
  - Removes the requirement that research grants to 1994 institutions must be performed under a cooperative agreement.
- Maintains the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962 which supports forestry research at state forestry schools and colleges.
- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for the Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture Institutions.

**Supports competitive funding for research, extension, and education activities.**

- Reauthorizes the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative—the flagship competitive grant program—and refines priorities to ensure the program reflects the current needs of the agriculture industry, including:
  - Regionally adapted cultivars and breeding for environmental resilience inspired by provisions in [H.R. 1840](#);
  - Methods of increasing survival rate and adaptability of shellfish inspired by provisions in [H.R. 5087](#);
  - Hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics, and other production technologies used in controlled environment agriculture production inspired by provisions in [H.R. 5915](#);
  - Supply chain coordination and capacity building; and

- Workforce training and development, including meat and poultry processing, rendering, and precision agriculture inspired by provisions in [H.R. 559](#), [H.R. 945](#), and [H.R. 5459](#).
- Reforms the process for designating Centers of Excellence and directing the Secretary to establish at least 15 Centers of Excellence for various focus areas.
- Authorizes Grants for Community College Agricultural and Natural Resources Programs inspired by [H.R. 3425](#).
- Maintains mandatory funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative at \$50 million per year.
- Maintains mandatory funding for the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) program at \$50 million per year which supports the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) and the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501 Program).
- Reauthorizes the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AgARDA) and makes minor improvements inspired by [H.R. 2385](#) and [H.R. 3844](#).
- Reauthorizes the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) and makes improvements based on concepts from [H.R. 6379](#) and [H.R. 5246](#).
- Reauthorizes Grants and Fellowships for Food and Agricultural Sciences Education inspired by [H.R. 6292](#);
- Reauthorizes the Genome to Phenome Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 3905](#);
- Reauthorizes the Grants for Youth Organization Program inspired by [H.R. 5622](#);
- Improves and reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities (AgrAbility) based on a concept from [H.R. 4586](#);
- Codifies the Agriculture Grants for Veteran Education and Training Services (AgVets) program to establish farming and ranching opportunities for military veterans as found in [H.R. 7920](#);
- Refines the High-Priority Research and Extension Initiatives to include the:
  - Tropical Plant Health Initiative based on concepts from [H.R. 965](#), [H.R. 966](#), [H.R. 1426](#), [H.R. 1454](#), [H.R. 1455](#), and [H.R. 3856](#);
  - Biochar Research Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 1645](#);
  - Wildfire Smoke Exposure Research Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 4359](#);
  - Invasive Species Research Initiative based on concepts from [H.R. 4162](#), [H.R. 3867](#), and [H.R. 7798](#);
  - Microplastics and Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances on Farmland Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 3871](#);
  - Soil Health Research Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 6811](#);
  - White Oak Research Initiative based on a concept from [H.R. 5582](#);
  - Alternative Growing Media Research Initiative; and
  - Rangeland Research Initiative.

**Establishes a Commission on National Agricultural Statistics Service Modernization to improve the efficiency of NASS data collection and quality of the statistics reported, as seen in [H.R. 6351](#).**



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE VIII: FORESTRY

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**Title VIII: Forestry.** Promotes active forest management through incentivizing public-private partnerships creating new market opportunities and revitalizing rural communities while reducing wildfire risk and improving forest health to ensure healthy and productive Federal, State, Tribal and private forests.

**Expands, streamlines, and creates new public-private partnerships to encourage active forest management and enhance forest health.**

- Includes [H.R. 1450](#) to authorize counties and tribes to retain and use timber sale receipts on land covered by the GNA agreement.
- Codifies the option for up to 20-year contracts for stewardship end result contracting, regardless of landscape condition.
- Reauthorizes and improves the Water Source Protection Program based on [H.R. 4018](#).
- Reauthorizes the National Forest Foundation and creates a White Oak Restoration Fund, as seen in [H.R. 5582](#), to assist with white oak regeneration.
- Authorizes additional cooperative agreements and contracts for prescribed fire and establishes the authority for Tribes to conduct prescribed burn demonstration projects on Federal lands.
- Codifies the Special Forests Products Program as seen in [H.R. 5335](#).
- Establishes the public-private wildfire technology deployment and testbed partnership program from [H.R. 4235](#).
- Codifies the Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetics Resources Program by including provisions from [H.R. 5381](#).
- Includes [H.R. 3562](#) to provide flexible housing partnerships to alleviate rural housing challenges and provide up to 100-year lease terms and renewals on administrative sites.
- Directs the Secretary to develop a strategy, as seen in [H.R. 7666](#), to utilize livestock grazing as a wildfire risk reduction strategy on Federal land.

**Creates new and enhances existing market opportunities for forest products, including leveraging data sources and tools, investing in innovative wood products, and expanding the use of biochar.**

- Reauthorizes, renames, and enhances the Community Wood Facilities Grant Program, as seen in [H.R. 2386](#), by increasing the maximum grant for a project, the maximum capacity of a community facility energy system, and the federal cost-share.
- Reauthorizes and modernizes the Wood Innovation Grant Program, reduces the non-Federal match, and authorizes grants for hauling hazardous fuels reduction materials to locations that can utilize it.



- Includes provisions from [H.R. 5044](#) to support innovative wood products through WIG and establish a platform to track forest and wood products data.
- Includes [H.R. 3990](#) to modernize and standardize Forest Inventory Analysis data collection and increase data accessibility, usability and transparency.
- Authorizes a biochar application demonstration project to facilitate the use of biochar, develop new biochar applications, and support the commercialization of biochar.
- Reauthorizes and renames the National Agroforestry Centers, directs the Secretary to establish one or more additional regional centers, and requires national agroforestry products survey every 5 years.

**Revitalizes rural communities and improves forest health through cross-boundary authorities.**

- Allows the flexible use of funding for the development and implementation of State forest action plans.
- Reauthorizes the Landscape-Scale Restoration Program.
- Reauthorizes and modernizes the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, as seen in [H.R. 4197](#), to consider proposals using innovative implementation mechanisms, reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire or increasing ecological restoration activities in specific areas, and enhancing watershed health and drinking water sources.
- Reauthorizes the funding authorizations for hazardous fuel reduction on Federal land, cross-boundary wildfire mitigation, and insect infestations and related diseases.
- Reauthorizes the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Program.

**Simplifies environmental process requirements, while ensuring environmental protection by building upon the success of categorical exclusions and other streamlined authorities.**

- Expands the insect and disease CE to 10,000 acres.
- Expands the wildfire resilience CE to 10,000 acres.
- Expands the fuel break CE to 10,000 acres.
- Provides technical corrections to the greater sage grouse and mule deer habitat CE and allows for up to 4,500 acres in forested ecosystems and 7,500 acres in rangeland ecosystems.
- Establishes a CE for high priority hazard tree activities.
- Includes [H.R. 200](#), the Cottonwood Fix.
- Reduces bureaucracy in the removal of trees around electrical lines, as seen in [H.R. 6012](#).
- Includes [H.R. 2989](#) to establish a comprehensive approach to addressing the demise of the giant sequoia tree species and provide the Secretary with emergency authorities.

**Improves Forest Service administration and implementation of programs and authorities by reducing bureaucratic red tape, clarifying processes, and increasing agency accountability and transparency.**

- Increases the threshold required to advertise timber sales on National Forest System land to reflect inflation.
- Updates the definition of an “at-risk community” under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to enable projects in areas at the highest risk of wildfire.
- Ensures accurate accounting of agency accomplishments as seen in [H.R. 1567](#).
- Extends the authorization of Resource Advisory Committees and the Regional Forester appointment pilot program.
- Waives administrative fees for special use authorizations for non-profit amateur stations or operators or amateur radio services.
- Requires transparency and public engagement in the Forest Service Legacy Road and Trail Remediation Program.
- Permanently authorizes the Experienced Services Program.
- Includes provisions from [H.R. 6717](#) to improve the Emergency Forest Restoration Program by offering advance payments of up to 75% of the cost of the emergency measures.
- Provides the Forest Service direct hire authority for Job Corps graduates.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE IX: ENERGY

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**Title IX: Energy.** Increases access to energy system and efficiency updates for farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses while encouraging growth and innovation for biofuels, bioproducts, and related feedstocks.

**Allow for critical cost and energy savings by increasing access to the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).**

- Increases the maximum loan guarantee to \$50,000,000 and increases the federal cost-share to 50% for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers and ranchers and 35% for all other grantees, as inspired by [H.R. 5051](#).
- Includes project diversity language to encourage underutilized technologies in program implementation.
- Requires the Secretary to consider the potential improvements to the financial condition of a REAP applicant when scoring applications.

**Streamlines program delivery and enhances program integrity for biobased market programs and biofuels and bioproducts development programs.**

- Reauthorizes and improves the BioPreferred Program by requiring the Secretary to issue procurement guidance to agencies, implementing more thorough reporting procedures for agency procurement, and increasing procurement accountability and verification, as seen in provisions from [H.R. 5134](#).
- Directs the relevant agencies to develop NAICS and NAPCS codes, establishes a report to recommend bioeconomy-related changes for the 2027 NAICS and NAPCS codes revisions, and assesses the development of a national measurement of the economic contributions of the bioeconomy.
- Establishes a study on the development of nationally uniform labeling standards for bioproducts.
- Inspired by [H.R. 6413](#), reauthorizes and improves the 9003 Program by expanding eligibility for innovative biobased product manufacturing technologies and authorizing the Secretary to waive the requirement to demonstrate commercial viability for projects adopting commercially available technologies.
- Ensures transparency and accountability in the 9003 application process by establishing a technical review agreement that outlines the specific objectives, outcomes, and conditions by which the Secretary will determine the project technically feasible.
- Affirms sustainable aviation fuel as an advanced biofuel, as seen in [H.R. 6271](#).
- Reauthorizes the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels and the Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

**Addresses concerns about the conversion of private forestland and prime farmland into ground-mounted solar panel installations.**

- Requires the Administration to study the impacts of solar installations on private forestland and prime farmland, as inspired by [H.R. 8277](#), [H.R. 7391](#), and [H.R. 1840](#).
- Limits the Secretary's authority to utilize USDA dollars to convert private forestland or prime farmland into ground-mounted solar installations, based on the policies and concepts laid out in [H.R. 7923](#).

**Protects investments in rural electric systems and higher blends infrastructure.**

- Maintains existing dollars for assistance to rural electric cooperatives for emissions-reducing rural energy systems.
- Maintains the authority for and investments in the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE X: HORTICULTURE, MARKETING, AND REGULATORY REFORM

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**Title X: Horticulture, Marketing, and Regulatory Reform.** Critical investments enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and protect plant health. Delivers commonsense regulatory reforms necessary to relieve American farmers and ranchers from overregulation by the Biden Administration.

**Provides additional funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and directs program administrators to consult with specialty crop producers when setting priorities for the program.**

- Increases the mandatory funding level for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to \$100 million per year, a \$15 million increase per year from the 2018 Farm Bill.
- Establishes a stakeholder consultation process inspired [H.R. 4838](#).

**Increases funding for plant pest and disease management to further safeguard American agriculture and natural resources.**

- Increases the mandatory funding level for the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program to \$90 million per year, a \$15 million increase per year from the 2018 Farm Bill.
- Reauthorizes the National Plant Diagnostics Network.

**Maintains funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program and improves program delivery through simplified applications.**

- Continues mandatory funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program—which includes the Value-Added Producer Grant Program, Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program, and the Regional Food System Partnerships Program—at \$50 million per year.
- Includes provisions inspired by [H.R. 2723](#), including:
  - Adds food hubs as eligible entities for the Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program; and
  - Directs the Secretary to establish simplified applications for the Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program for certain project categories.

**Continues support for organic production through the National Organic Program, Organic Production and Market Data Initiative, and National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program.**

- Adds a requirement to collect and publish cost-of-production data for organic milk through the Organic Production and Market Data Initiative inspired by [H.R. 6937](#).
- Provides \$10 million in mandatory funding for the Organic Production and Market Data Initiative based on a request for increased funding in [H.R. 2720](#).

- Directs the Secretary to provide technical assistance, outreach, and education to support organic production through existing programs at various agencies throughout the Department.
- Provides \$5 million in mandatory funding for the continued database maintenance and technology upgrades.
- Continues mandatory funding for the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program at \$8 million per year.
- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for the National Organic Program.

**Enhances other horticulture and marketing programs in the title, including:**

- Amends the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production by including provisions inspired by [H.R. 5915](#), including:
  - Expands the responsibilities of the Office to include providing guidance and promoting conservation techniques for activities related to urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices;
  - Authorizes the Office to enter into cooperative agreements to support urban and innovative agricultural production; and
  - Removes the pilot status for Community Compost and Reducing Food Waste projects.
- Reauthorizes the Acer Access and Development Program and directs the Secretary to consult with maple syrup industry stakeholders when setting priorities for the program as seen in [H.R. 3512](#).
- Removes the exclusion of dates for processing from and adds almonds to the list of imported commodities to which commodity marketing orders are applicable.
- Reauthorizes the Specialty Crop Market News Allocation.



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE XI: CROP INSURANCE

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**Title XI: Crop Insurance.** Agricultural producers are greatly affected by numerous factors outside of their control, ranging from extreme weather to geopolitical instability. Crop insurance – a vital risk management tool – is available to help producers manage the unique risks of farming and is delivered through an effective public-private partnership in which the Federal government shares in the cost of the premiums, which would otherwise be unaffordable for most farmers.

**Expands premium assistance for beginning and veteran farmers.**

- Includes [H.R. 3904](#) to expand premium discounts for beginning and veteran farmers for the first 10 years of farming, consistent with the definition of beginning farmer under other USDA programs.

**Directs research and development of new policies and establishes an advisory committee for more robust engagement with specialty crop producers.**

- Establishes a specialty crop advisory committee to ensure the unique perspectives of the specialty crop industry has a seat at the table for policy development and expansion.
  - Will consist of at least 5 producers from all geographic regions of the country and up to 10 total members.
  - The Chairperson will have a seat on the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board.
  - Will have the ability to prioritize R&D and influence education and outreach regarding crop insurance for specialty crop policies and producers.
  - Will be overseen by the Specialty Crops Coordinator, a position created in the 2018 Farm Bill.
- Directs RMA undergo Research and Development such as:
  - Conduct a pilot to review the effectiveness of the coverage penalty for late planted corn and other commodities.
  - Annual review of limitations under Whole Farm Revenue Protection.
  - Revenue policies for sugar beets, certain oilseeds, alfalfa, and pulse crops.
  - Wine grape losses due to smoke exposure, [H.R. 4308](#).
  - Mushrooms, [H.R. 3815](#).
  - Expanding hurricane and tropical storm coverage options.
  - Frost or freeze index coverage, [H.R. 6186](#).
  - Double cropping coverage for winter oilseeds, [H.R. 8179](#).
  - Harvest incentives.
  - Revenue or mortality insurance for poultry.
- To ensure successful policy development and ultimately better adoption, enhances the development process for privately submitted insurance policies,

ensures adequate time and training for their deployment, and mandates routine reviews for actuarial soundness.

**Enhances certain coverage options to reduce the need for unbudgeted ad hoc disaster assistance.**

- Increases premium support for the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) to 80%, providing access for all commodities to a policy similar to the Stacked Income Protection Plan for Upland Cotton (STAX), while maintaining the option to participate in SCO and Price Loss Coverage under Title I.
- Increases the maximum coverage level to 90% for Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and SCO.

**Bolsters the private sector delivery system.**

- Increases funding for data mining and other compliance activities to enhance program integrity measures.
- Reinstates an inflation adjustment factor for the cap on Administrative and Operating Expenses (A&O), as seen in [H.R. 8055](#).
- Establishes a minimum A&O reimbursement rate for specialty crop insurance policies, also seen in [H.R. 8055](#).
- To preserve availability of services for producers, supplements Approved Insurance Provider (AIP) expenses for the increased cost of loss adjustments in states that experience widespread losses.





# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## TITLE XII: MISCELLANEOUS

**Title XII: Miscellaneous.** Brings together provisions related to livestock health and management, foreign animal disease preparedness, young and beginning farmers, and other key areas.

**Directs additional resources towards the three-legged stool to protect the livestock and poultry industry in the U.S. from catastrophic foreign animal diseases.**

- Provides \$233 million for each fiscal year through the life of the farm bill, as seen in [H.R. 3419](#):
  - \$10 million per year for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).
  - \$70 million per year for the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP).
  - \$153 million per year for the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank (NAVVCB).
- Increases funding for subsequent fiscal years from \$30 million per year to \$75 million per year. Within this, increases the NADPRP set aside from \$18 million to \$45 million.
- With the ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak and foreign animal disease threats like African swine fever (ASF) and foot and mouth disease (FMD) moving closer to our shores, this provision also clarifies that animal disease traceability is an eligible activity under NADPRP.

**Requires a review and report on the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program.**

- Inspired by [H.R. 2420](#), this directs the Secretary to enter into a contract with a university to review and report on the Programs effectiveness in preventing and reducing the spread of tick-borne illness in cattle; benefits and burdens of compliance; treatment protocols; and allocation of funds, including funds used for associated research projects.

**Supports ongoing work to detect plant and animal health diseases at our ports of entry.**

- Conceptualized in [H.R. 1480](#), this provision codifies the existing dog detection training center in Georgia, which trains specially selected dogs and their handlers to safeguard domestic agricultural and natural resources from foreign and invasive pests and diseases.
- It also requires a report to determine current and emerging pest and disease threats within the purview of the operations of the center; examine the role the center plays in protecting against such threats; evaluate improvements needed in Federal programs to minimize such threats, including strengthened

coordination among agencies; and make recommendations to strengthen the capabilities of the center, as well as improve the dog procurement and retirement process.

- Additionally, this grants the Secretary the authority to establish additional dog training facilities, as well as an off-site training program.

**Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to work in consultation with the U.S. Trade Representative to negotiate animal disease regionalization agreements with our trading partners.**

- Codifies USDA's existing authority to negotiate in advance regionalization, zoning, compartmentalization, and other agreements regarding outbreaks of animal disease threats, as seen in [H.R. 3748](#), to protect our livestock and poultry export markets.

**Requires electronic documentation records for the importation of live dogs into the United States.**

- Shaped by [H.R. 1184](#), this provision requires dogs imported into the United States to have electronic documentation prior to their importation that confirms the dog is in good health; has received all necessary vaccination and parasite treatment, demonstrated negative test results, and has a certificate by an accredited veterinarian; is officially identified by a permanent method approved by the Secretary; and in the case of a dog intended for transfer, is at least 6 months old.
- Exceptions are provided for dogs that are personal pets of United States origin returning to the United States; United States military working dogs; for research purposes; coming to the United States solely for veterinary treatment; and are less than 6 months old and are imported into the State of Hawaii from the British Isles, Australia, Guam, or New Zealand, as long as the dog is not transported out of Hawaii at less than 6 months of age.

**Reauthorizes the Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Program.**

- Provides \$3 million for fiscal year 2025, to remain available until expended.

**Clarifies that states and local governments cannot impose, directly or indirectly, as a condition for sale or consumption, a condition or standard on the production of covered livestock unless the livestock is physically located within such state or local government.**

- Provides clarity to national markets by ensuring producers must only comply with applicable production standards imposed by their own state or local government.
  - Protects producers from having to comply with a patchwork of state-by-state regulations.

- Protects the rights of States and local governments to establish standards as they deem necessary, but only for those raising covered livestock within their own borders.
- Only covers production (excluding domestic animals raised for the primary purpose of egg production), and does not include the movement, harvesting, or further processing of covered livestock.

**Directs USDA to conduct a report on their preparedness to support livestock producers and poultry growers facing economic losses in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak.**

- Setting the stage to achieve the goals laid out in [H.R. 5096](#), this provision requires USDA to assess the following:
  - Existing Federal programs that assist producers and growers during a foreign animal disease outbreak, including risk management tools, indemnity, direct payments, and herd buyout.
  - USDA's ability to utilize such programs to provide benefits to producers and growers who are experiencing economic losses as a result of having to sell livestock and poultry at a reduced price; having to quarantine, treat, destroy, or dispose of animals; or as a result of catastrophic market conditions.
  - Gaps that exist in USDA's ability to provide such economic support.
  - Recommendations to improve such protections.

**Allows livestock auction owners to invest in packing facilities, subject to capacity limitations.**

- Includes [H.R. 530](#), granting livestock auction owners the ability to invest in a packing facility, as long as:
  - With respect to cattle and sheep, the packing facility has a cumulative slaughter capacity of less than 2,000 animals per day or 700,000 animals per year.
  - With respect to hogs, the packing facility has a cumulative slaughter capacity of less than 10,000 animals per day or 3,000,000 animals per year.
- Requires that livestock auction owners disclose to sellers of livestock the existence of such investment in a packing facility.
- Clarifies that nothing within this provision limits the Secretary's existing authority under the Packers and Stockyards Act.

**Provides guidance documents and other resources for small and very small meat and poultry processing facilities.**

- Inspired by provisions in [H.R. 945](#), this requires the Secretary to make publicly available a list of scientific studies for small and very small establishments to use in developing a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan; guidelines relating to best practices and techniques used by small and very small

establishments in the production of raw or further processed meat and poultry products; and scale-appropriate model HACCP plans for small and very small establishments.

- Also instructs the Secretary to publish a guidance document providing information on the requirements that need to be met for small and very small establishments to develop a HACCP plan.

#### **Increases USDA outreach on the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program.**

- Influenced by [H.R. 945](#), this directs USDA to conduct outreach to states that have state meat and poultry inspection programs, but do not have selected establishments enrolled in CIS.
- Requires USDA to submit a report detailing the activities and results of the outreach conducted.

#### **Creates a pilot program for the life of the farm bill to allow a small number of custom exempt facilities to sell meat products direct to consumers within the State in which the facility is located.**

- Derived from the tenets of [H.R. 2814](#), this pilot program requires clear labeling to indicate:
  - The origin and processing location of covered products.
  - That such products were not processed subject to Federal inspection.
  - That such products cannot be resold.
- It also instructs custom exempt facilities participating in the pilot program to comply with:
  - Existing humane slaughter methods.
  - Applicable State and local laws.
  - Existing custom exempt requirements under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA).
  - Federal sanitation and record keeping requirements, as well as handling and disposition requirements.
  - Onsite inspection requirements by both USDA and local authorities.
- Reporting requirements detailing:
  - The number and locations of persons or custom exempt facilities participating in the pilot program.
  - The outcomes of each such pilot program.
  - Any instances in which a product was subject to emergency action, as discussed in the bullet below.
- In the event that products are adulterated, the Secretary retains his existing emergency authority to recall products and is given authority to terminate a custom exempt facility's participation in the pilot program.

#### **Enhances protections for dogs covered under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).**

- Requires USDA to conduct a report, as it relates to companion animals, to evaluate the enforcement of standards under the Animal Welfare Act; evaluate

efforts by USDA to educate and advise on all standards and requirements of the AWA; evaluate the capacity of USDA to enforce the standards established by the AWA; and make recommendations for the improvement of standards and education efforts under the AWA.

- Affirms that visual dental examinations should be included in existing veterinary requirements.
- Improves USDA response related to dogs in a state of unrelieved suffering.

#### **Continues funding for Protecting Animals with Shelter (PAWS).**

- Extends the authorization of appropriations for the Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance Grant Program through the life of the farm bill.

#### **Requires the Secretary to conduct regular assessments to identify risks and security vulnerabilities to the food and agriculture critical infrastructure sector.**

- Ensures USDA is regularly reviewing risks and security vulnerabilities to agriculture—including cybersecurity attacks, foreign dependence on agricultural inputs, intellectual property, and supply chain disruptions—and provides Congress with information related to these threats inspired by provisions from [H.R. 7062](#) and [H.R. 8003](#).

#### **Reforms certain reporting requirements under the Agriculture and Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) to ensure accuracy and transparency of data on farmland owned by foreign persons or entities.**

- Includes key provisions from [H.R. 7131](#) and [H.R. 5078](#).
- Requires USDA enter an MOU with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to ensure timely sharing of data on foreign transactions between the two agencies.
- Mandates the adoption of the recommendations contained in the GAO report entitled "Foreign Investments in U.S. Agricultural Land: Enhancing Efforts to Collect, Track, and Share Key Information Could Better Identify National Security Risks."
- Imposes a minimum penalty on any person who knowingly fails to submit or falsifies an AFIDA filing, without being punitive to individuals who self-report errors.
- Directs outreach to provide awareness of requirements under AFIDA.
- Requires a report on any agricultural land owned by citizens or entities with ties to China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and other state sponsors of terrorism and identifies potential threats from the ownership of such land.
- Establishes the position of Chief of Operations of Investigative Actions to audit and oversee activities related to AFIDA and report to CFIUS any land acquisitions that may pose a threat to national security.
- Mandates the establishment of an online filing system for AFIDA reports and the creation of a public database for all AFIDA filings.

#### **Improves processes at USDA related to civil rights.**

- Inspired by provisions from [H.R. 6527](#), including:

- Creates an Office of the Ombudsman to assist producers in navigating the civil rights review process at the Department;
- Requires USDA to bear the burden of proof for National Appeals Division hearings.

### **Reauthorizes Key Programs**

- Creates a new Agricultural Fiber Products Trust Fund and establishes baseline at \$50 million per year.
  - \$30 million per year for wool apparel manufacturers.
  - \$17.75 million per year for pima cotton spinners, manufacturers, and promotion activities.
  - \$2.25 million per year for wool research and promotion
- Reauthorizes the Commission on Farm Transitions—Needs for 2050 and makes improvements based on [H.R. 7769](#).
- Requires the USDA Office of Tribal Relations to oversee self-determination contract and self-governance compacts entered into between the Secretary and tribal organizations or Indian tribes.
- Reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations for improvements to the United States Drought Monitor.
- Reauthorizes Reports on Protection Operations for the Secretary of Agriculture, Report on Personnel, and Reports on Land Access and Farmland Ownerships Data Collection.
- Reauthorizes the Rural Emergency Medical Service Training and Equipment Assistance Programs.