



Farm Bill Priorities

HELP FARMERS PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Security Program (CSP): Fund the CSP at \$3 billion. The Program offers financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who develop and maintain conservation systems that solve critical natural resource and environmental concerns, rewarding them for investments of labor, management, and capital aimed at fostering healthy, productive, and noneroding soils, clean air and water, energy savings, and wildlife habitat. The CSP represents the first serious attempt in the US federal farm policy to move towards green payments -- an outcome-based conservation program that rewards environmental performance rather than commodity production. An adequate and protected funding mechanism should be provided to ensure implementation of a true nationwide program serving all of agriculture. The CSP should be enhanced by further accelerating the movement toward outcome-based criteria and payment structures, in order to foster transitions to more sustainable agricultural conservation systems. The CSP tiered structure and payment mix should be revised to foster increased conservation results at lower cost. Program should provide a program priority for certified organic producers.

Organic Conversion and Stewardship Program in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Within EQIP, add a new subsection to establish a national organic agriculture conversion and stewardship focus within the program that provides cost-share and incentive payments and technical assistance to eligible producers for (1) developing and implementing practices to convert all or part of non-organic farms to certified organic farms; and (2) adopting advanced organic farming conservation systems. Contracts limited to five or fewer years, with conservation payments capped at \$20,000 per farm annually. Within EQIP funding, \$50 million per year, split equally between technical and financial assistance, would be set aside for this purpose.

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI): Require the Secretary to hold back a certain percentage of EQIP funds to award competitive grants to eligible partners to address specific resources of concern. Eligible partners include states, producer associations or cooperatives, extension associations or conservation organizations that have a history of working cooperatively with producers on resource concerns related to agricultural production.

Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program: Increase funding to \$300 million for Program that provides matching funds to state and local government entities and nongovernmental organizations to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting farmland in danger of development.

Organic Farming Systems Research and Extension Initiative (CSREES): Increase funding for the *Organic Farming Competitive Grants Integrated Program* from \$3 million a year to \$15 million.

STRENGTHEN LOCAL ECONOMIES AND INCREASE FARM VIABILITY

Direct to Consumer Marketing Assistance Program (Farmers Market Promotion Program)s: Provide \$25 million to promote new market opportunities for farmers and ranchers by a year in grants to establish and promote farmer's markets and other direct to consumer sales activities.

Value-Added Producer Grants: Provide \$60 million a year for grants to help farmers and ranchers increase farm revenue by taking advantage of marketing opportunities in value-added agriculture.

Healthy Food Enterprise Development Program: This new program helps enhance producers' share of the retail product price by providing \$5 million a year in grants for feasibility studies and \$25 million a year in loans

and loan guarantees for infrastructure and equipment to improve farmer access to processing and distribution systems which help deliver local foods to consumers and underserved communities.

Local Food Preferences: Help promote local food production by allowing government agencies, including schools, to use geographic preferences in their bidding and procurement programs and providing start-up grants for to help promote the purchase of local food.

National Organic Certification Cost Share Program: Reauthorize Program to provide modest assistance to farmers and handlers to help with rising certification costs. Increase farm bill funding to \$25 million over the life of the farm bill. Retain the 75% cost-share rate but increase the per farm cost-share limit to \$750.

Organic Crop Insurance – Premium Surcharge; Price Election: Prohibit the practices of requiring farmers to pay premium surcharges for using organic farming practices and add a new provision requiring a price election at the actual organic market price of the agricultural commodity by 2009.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD AND BUILD NEW MARKETS

WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program: Help promote good nutrition and increased market opportunities for local farmers by increasing funding up to \$75 million a year for this program to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to low-income women and children.

Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program: Help promote good nutrition and increased market opportunities for local farmers by increasing funding up to \$75 million a year for this program to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to low-income senior citizens.

Community Food Project Competitive Grants: Help increase food security in communities by providing \$60.5 million a year in grants to support projects that bring the whole food system together to create systems - including production, processing, transportation, and retail - that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs.

Farm to Cafeteria Program: Help promote child nutrition and increased market opportunities for local farmers by increasing funding for farm to school cafeteria programs, including providing local fruits and vegetables as part of school meals, up to \$20 million a year.

Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Program: Expand Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to \$300 million annually and expand to a minimum of 100 schools per state. Program provides free fresh produce to schools to encourage children to snack on fruits and vegetables in order to improve their overall health, and reduce their risk of obesity. The program began as a pilot program covering over 100 schools in 4 States and 7 schools on Indian reservations.

Section 32 Specialty Crop Purchases and DOD Fresh Program: Provides increased fruit and vegetable purchases in schools by increasing funding to Section 32 purchases to \$400 million and the DOD Fresh Program to \$125 and requiring that purchases better reflect USDA’s *2005 Dietary Guidelines*.

Food Stamp Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program: This new program helps promote child nutrition and increased market opportunities for farmers by assisting states to provide an incentive program for food stamp recipients to purchase additional fruits and vegetables.

BUILD A NEW GENERATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL FARMERS

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program: Provide \$25 million for competitive grants program that supports education, extension, and technical assistance initiatives directed at new farmers.

Outreach and Technical Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program: Provide direct funding and technical assistance to ensure viability and success of minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and enable full access to USDA conservation programs.