



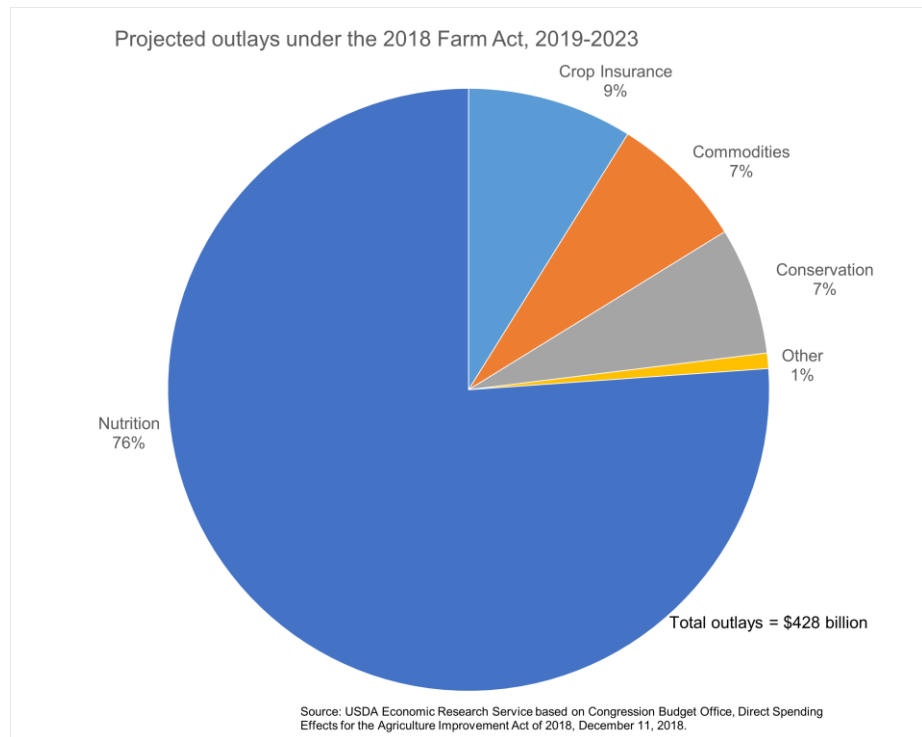
## AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 2022

### 2023 FARM BILL RECOMMENDATIONS

**ISSUE:** American Agri-Women (AAW) support a robust food and agriculture sector based on ownership of private property because it leads to innovation and continual increases in production to feed, clothe and provide fuel to our domestic population and much of the world. **A Farm Bill is needed for food security and national security as well as playing roles in maintaining a positive trade balance in agriculture and sustaining rural economies throughout the U.S.**

The USDA Economic Research Service created this pie chart to illustrate projected outlays from the 2018 Farm Bill which are the current expenditures.

AAW supports maintaining food and nutrition assistance within the Farm Bill.



#### AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUESTS:

- Consistent definitions of “rural,” “disadvantaged,” and “underserved” throughout USDA programs.
  - Include women and young farmers, even those with farming experience through FFA supervised agricultural experiences and other youth entrepreneurship programs, in the definition of disadvantaged and underserved farmers.
  - Consider expanding the definition to include Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher.
  - Require U.S. citizenship to participate in USDA programs as recipients of loans, grants, easements and other assistance.
- USDA develop a “U.S. Grown” label to apply to all U.S. grown produce and commodities sold for domestic and international consumption. Partner with the Ad Council to actively promote U.S. farmers and U.S. grown products.
- USDA partner with “Made in the USA” labeling efforts to denote U.S. Grown where agricultural products were sourced from U.S. growers.



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#### TITLE 2 CONSERVATION:

- Allow farmers and ranchers flexibility in selecting their choice of private industry technical experts and service providers that meet NRCS technical criteria and qualifications.
- Remove criteria from easements that limit livestock grazing patterns during hunting seasons (ex. Wyoming private land grazing prohibited during elk/mule deer seasons).
- If Conservation Reserve Program parameters change, farmers who have existing contracts should be notified immediately and able to choose if they want to continue.
- Ensure the EPA Advisory role for USDA, established in the 2014 Farm Bill, is implemented and has ongoing, scientific input into the EPA rulemaking regarding issues that impact agriculture, specifically but not limited to pesticide, water and air programs.
- Ensure that the rate for easements is less than local cash rental rates so they do not increase the cost of production to farmers.
- Farmers and ranchers, not government or its contractors, should choose crops each growing season for their lands.
- Apply conservation funding to accelerate adoption of precision agriculture technologies on farms and ranches.
- Enable joint research capabilities between NRCS and qualified institutions of higher learning with strong agriculture programs, including but not limited to land-grant universities.
- Conservation incentives and compliance tied to conservation agreements *not* to crop insurance or other programs.
- Prioritize highly erodible ground and areas for nutrient management for conversation program funding.
- Provide technical assistance and funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for design and installation of conservation practices.
- No new wetland reserve program acres.
- Oppose conservation easements in perpetuity.
- Oppose easements or buyouts to nonprofit groups that removes agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.

#### TITLE 3 TRADE:

- Ensure a USDA Undersecretary for Trade is appointed (prior to Farm Bill passage).
- Support the Market Access Program (MAP).
- USDA develop a “U.S. Grown” label to apply to all U.S. grown produce and commodities sold for domestic and international consumption. Partner with the Ad Council to actively promote U.S. farmers and U.S. grown products.
- USDA partner with “Made in the USA” labeling efforts to denote U.S. Grown where agricultural products were sourced from U.S. growers.
- Supplement the efforts of African countries and other underdeveloped nations to develop agri-food systems, specifically their own university and extension services while enhancing U.S. research and extension.
- Support establishing a position for Specialty Crops in the U.S. Trade Representative’s agricultural office.

American Agri-Women

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#### TITLE 4 NUTRITION:

- Qualify recipients of food assistance programs based on consistent eligibility requirements that reflect regional costs of living and streamline the accounting and reporting system.
- Allow food subsidy programs to be used at farmers' markets and enhance the ability of farmers to accept program payment.
- Support fresh fruits and veggies snack program in eligible schools with preference to U.S.-grown products.

Support school lunch program including dairy, meats, fruits, grains and vegetables with preference to U.S.-grown products.

#### TITLE 5 CREDIT:

- Include women and young farmers, even those with farming experience through FFA supervised agricultural experiences and other youth entrepreneurship programs that could generate farm and/or wage income, in the definition of disadvantaged and underserved farmers.
- Expand the definition to include Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher that could include multi-generational farmers.
- Expand new and beginning farmer loan and grant funds to include "Innovative Farmer" funds for farmers who are attempting to diversify their cropping patterns to include direct-to-consumer sales.
- Require U.S. citizenship to participate in USDA programs as recipients of loans, grants, easements and other assistance.
- Require documentation of past business experience by individuals and their business affiliations in credit applications and review.
- Include criteria for direct experience in farming and ranching (ex. on-farm wage earning, internships in agricultural industry) when scoring credit applications.
- Microloans for food processors and farmers to comply with regulations and to enter new markets.
- Support individual and cooperative efforts by producers to improve income with processing and marketing methods which add value to farm products while maintaining food safety.
- Support data collection through the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS), Risk Management Agency (RMA) and other agencies for the purposes of establishing program targets and priorities.

#### TITLE 6 RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Modify Rural Innovation Stronger Economies (RISE) grant to allow collaborative efforts that build entrepreneurship, enable innovation through partnerships, rather than centralizing activities at one brick and mortar location. Partners in the grant would be eligible to receive funds to carry out their portion of the deliverables.



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- Target rural development grant funds for programs including but not limited to RISE, Community Facilities Grants to entities that are based in rural areas, not entities that are based in urban areas and file on behalf of a rural initiative.
- Work with Agricultural Research Service and Rural Utility Service to ensure data is collected on field-, pasture-, timberlands-, rangeland-level internet connectivity, measuring for all aspects of service including latency, jitter, packet loss for up and down data transfers.
- Groundtruth data service levels delivered by broadband grantees receiving funds since the programs' inception.
- Invest in pilot initiatives for “Edge Compute” to advance precision agriculture and community development efforts.
- Enact policies to encourage ‘undergrounding’ of utilities when possible for the long-term prevention of forest and range fires as well as improving safety in agricultural equipment operations above ground.
- Prepare a development playbook that includes models for rural governing bodies to consider for road and bridge agreements to mitigate or limit damages.
- Authorize adequate funding to meet demand for rural water treatment systems (supplement and/or complement USEPA infrastructure funding) and for water distribution systems.
- Expand funding and eligibility requirements for rural broadband efforts to allow companies to apply where more than two incumbent providers exist, review cost and quality factors as part of application. Explore USDA allocating portion of Universal Access funds held by Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- Establish micro-loans at low rates for infrastructure upgrades for farmers and cooperative-owned processors to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

#### **TITLE 7 RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND RELATED MATTERS:**

- Incentivize university technology being commercialized in rural areas to create job opportunities and improve economic vitality.
- Encourage collaboration between all qualified institutions of higher education with established agriculture programs to provide regional research, and to increase technical training and re-training for agricultural, food and fuel jobs.
- Increase research and development grants for landgrants and other qualified institutions to work with established producers of all sizes and products as well as USDA subagencies to adapt new technologies into their operations (ex. vertical agriculture with existing specialty crop growers; precision agriculture planning in row crops and livestock).
- Invest in international agricultural research funding over time to match private investments and to inform domestic efforts to deal with variability in growing conditions as well as increasing pressures from invasive pests and plants.



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- Redirect climate hub funding into research combating pests and diseases in all crops and livestock.
- Support research and implementation of minimum grade quality standards for fresh fruits, vegetables and specialty crops that will improve product quality and meet consumer expectations to enhance the growers' competitive position. Conduct periodic review and revision of federal grades and standards to better reflect conditions due to modern harvest and marketing methods.
- Expand on the authorization for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.
- Establish a network of clean plant centers to ensure nurseries can continue to provide safe, virus-free plant materials for orchards, vineyards and other growers.
- Research to develop alternate/new crops for commercial food, fiber and energy uses.
- Research on plant-based feeds and the regulatory structure for an offshore aquaculture industry in the U.S.

#### **TITLE 8 FORESTRY:**

- No new dollars to the Forest Service. The agency needs to have maximum performance with existing tools.
- Increase active management of our nation's forests to reduce fuel load by contracting with experienced timber professionals to prevent widespread forest fires, mudslides and disasters. Redirect funds from fire suppression to active management in order to prevent fires.
- Redirect existing funds into creating infrastructure in the private sector to mill trees coming off minimal harvest levels set by Forest Service. Due to inconsistency in the agency (along with other federal agencies such as Bureau of Land Management) performance, no lending institution will loan without an adequate supply for facilities to operate.
- Provide a streamlined process for initiating and completing forest projects.
- Amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 to prohibit any additional consultation from being required with respect to: (1) the listing of a species as threatened or endangered, or a designation of a critical habitat, if a land management plan has been adopted by the Department of Agriculture as of the designation date; or (2) any provision of such an adopted plan. This would provide amendments in the Farm Bill to fix the lawsuit brought forth by the Cottonwood Environmental Law Center in 2004-2005.

#### **TITLE 9 ENERGY:**

- Require wind and solar investments to have a plan for parts disposal that does not impact farmland (ex. avoid graveyard for wind turbine blades as seen near Sweetwater, Texas; Casper, Wyoming and require additional uses such as grinding down to use in asphalt) as well as reclamation plans at the end of the projects projected lifespan.





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- Provide ongoing research and data to compare the economic, social and environmental viability of renewable and traditional fuels for food production and rural development, including tax implications for local governments and other utility providers.
- Support a national energy policy that includes a Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) for all transportation fuels, promotes use of bioheat in homes, and less dependence on foreign oil/minerals.
- Support the use of all domestic resources available including the mined minerals for electrical components.
- Support Rural Energy Assistance Program (REAP) through Rural Development and allow equal eligibility to family-owned farms regardless of business structure.
- Support and promote alternative uses of all grain and related by-products produced in the United States.

#### **TITLE 10 HORTICULTURE AND SPECIALTY CROPS:**

- USDA develop a “U.S. Grown” label to apply to all U.S. grown produce and commodities sold for domestic and international consumption. Partner with the Ad Council to actively promote U.S. farmers and U.S. grown products.
- Prioritize grant or loan funding for “vertical agriculture” or other indoor growing systems for established specialty crop growers who are exploring how to diversify their operations.
- Shift focus from production to developing processing and markets for industrial hemp.
- Maximize funding for Specialty Crop Block grants for state-driven priorities such as marketing, food safety, and nutrition initiatives, and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.
- Establish a new research focus on automation of the specialty crop industry.
- Providing technical assistance to producers for compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).
- When allocating funds for food production, USDA should be neutral with regards to varied production practices (ex. organic, conventional), recognizing that weather, soil health and capacity, and economics drive management decisions.
- Increase fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops for consumption in federal food programs.
- Continue education for the consumption of U.S.-grown produce, which provides tremendous health and economic benefits to both consumers and growers.

#### **TITLE 11 CROP INSURANCE:**

- Increase pilot programs for “Event-Based” add-on coverage such as post-emergent nitrogen application to help farmers mitigate price risk of prepaid inputs.
- Only consider deduction in insurance rate for cover crop planting if insurance is not coupled with any form of ecosystem or carbon credit.
- Continue discounted crop insurance rate at current levels for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, including those who are from multi-generational farms.

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- Provide coverage based on current crop history and is administered by the private sector;
- Decouple crop insurance coverage from conservation compliance;
- Provide affordably priced, adequate crop insurance coverage, which is actuarially sound and voluntary, in all regions of the country;
- Require participation for eligibility in government crop disaster programs;
- Expand funding for the crop insurance to allow the range of agricultural commodities and food crops to receive protection for farmers and growers that pay their premiums.
- Enforce crop insurance regulations to prevent abuse of the program.
- Recognize private insurers must preserve capital for possible future payouts to producers. We support the transparency of all crop insurance companies.

#### **TITLE 12 MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Support grants to nonprofits and Extension to provide educational programming for new and disadvantaged farmers.
- Establish programming to develop and support next generation farmers and scientists.