AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 2022

BROADBAND

ISSUE: Applying historic public investments in telecommunications, specifically broadband, to deliver symmetrical services to homes and businesses and at the field, timber, and rangeland level across the United States.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUEST: Ensure 5G buildout reaches rural areas.

BACKGROUND: The current process favors upgrading existing infrastructure to 5G service. However, existing infrastructure leaves many rural areas with significant gaps in coverage by legacy cellular and satellite-based systems. U.S. farmers and ranchers require equivalent telecommunication services for precision agriculture technologies that allow them to conserve inputs and manage the production of food, fiber and renewable fuel as efficiently as possible. These outcomes are in addition to the need to communicate with their suppliers, markets and employees; seize real-time market opportunities; participate in online education and training; and telehealth services.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUEST: Amend Broadband DATA Act to require the FCC Digital Opportunity Data Collection to gather "field level" data to verify mobile provider coverage and quality of service.

BACKGROUND: In its Third Report and Order (FCC 21-20 released Jan. 19, 2021) in the Matter of Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection (WC Docket 19-195) and Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program (WC Docket No. 11-10) , the FCC concludes that infrastructure information be used to verify mobile broadband coverage. Farmers, ranchers and others who rely on mobile telecommunication service would be better served to verify coverage using speed test data as well as infrastructure data. AAW is concerned that efforts to document the Fabric on which future broadband investments will be laid, may not expose gaps in existing coverage as a priority for funding.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUEST: Develop tools through the Farm Bill to support affordable and practical applications of precision agriculture technology.

BACKGROUND: Much of the technology that supports precision agriculture is too costly for smaller farmers and cooperatives. Additionally, to maximize the precision capabilities that will help farmers, ranchers and the environment, more technical support is needed for hardware troubleshooting and software programming that allows individual farmers to adapt the precision tools to implement their management decisions. Creating standards of interoperability among equipment manufacturers will also help farmers better afford and apply the technology.