

Farm Bill 2018

10 Reasons to Tell Your Representative to Oppose the House Farm Bill



The partisan House Farm Bill passed the House Agriculture Committee and is heading to the House floor soon. This bill makes sweeping cuts for rural communities, farmers, and conservation.

We do not want to see this bill move ahead. Below are the top 10 reasons to tell your Representative to oppose this bill.

[Click here to read more from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition \(NSAC\).](#)

01 | Helps the big get bigger and the rich get richer

The bill includes a litany of bonuses for mega-farms, but perhaps the most egregious is the attempt to throw out a 30-year old rule preventing corporations from receiving unlimited commodity payments.



02 | Cripples conservation programs



Despite the fact Voluntary conservation programs like the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are so popular, regularly half of qualified applicants get turned away due to lack of funds. Instead of increasing support, however, the House bill cuts the farm bill conservation title by nearly \$1 billion and cuts funding for working lands conservation programs by nearly \$5 billion over 10 years.

03 | More hungry and food insecure families

The nutrition provisions of the House Farm Bill would, if enacted, increase food insecurity and hardship for more than 1 million low-income households (over 2 million people). These individuals and families would lose in part or in whole the benefits provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



04 | Less local food

The House bill would torpedo the progress that has been made in helping farmers connect to new and fast-growing markets for local and regional food, value-added products, and organic agriculture.



05 | Struggling rural communities

Small and very small business owners across rural America depend on tools and resources from USDA's rural development programs to start and sustain their operations. In addition to eliminating the programs mentioned above – which would not just hurt consumers, but also seriously undermine farmers' opportunities for profit and success – the House version of the farm bill would also harm rural economic development and job growth.



06 | Uncertain future for beginning farmers and ranchers

With the average age of the American farmer approaching 60 years and increasing numbers of producers retiring without succession plans for their land or operations in place, we are on the verge of a nationwide farmer shortage if measures are not taken to help onboard the next generation of American producers. The House bill makes a few steps in the right direction on beginning farmer and rancher issues, but still falls far short of what is needed.

07 | No closer to equity for farmers of color

In order to correct some of the historical inequities and attempt to level the playing field for all farmers, Congress created the Outreach and Technical Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers (Section 2501) program in the 1990 Farm Bill, and in the 2014 Farm Bill it was expanded to also serve military veterans.

Even though the mission of Section 2501 was expanded in the last farm bill, funds for the program were also cut in half in the very same bill. Sadly, the House bill does nothing to increase funding for the program, and actually expands the program's mission even further by adding a new programmatic priority.



08 | Public research and seed breeding falls behind



Where once America's public research and seed breeding programs were robust, today we are quickly falling behind. Without public seed breeding and research programs, family farmers are forced to rely on expensive, private options that may not have sustainability and regional-adaptability on their priorities list. The House Farm Bill fails to provide farmers and researchers with the tools and resources necessary to bring our nation's public breeding and research into the 21st century.

09 | No risk management improvements for farmers



Unfortunately, the federal crop insurance program is far from efficient or fair. The program spends billions of taxpayer dollars each year, yet persistently fails to address the needs of many producers (e.g., beginning farmers, diversified and organic farmers, smaller-scale farm operations), while also allowing other producers (e.g., the largest and wealthiest commodity crop producers) to leverage their crop insurance subsidies as a way to grow and gobble up scarce farmland.

While the House's Farm Bill does include an important improvement extending crop insurance discounts for a subset of beginning farmers, it largely fails to increase program access, equity, environmental improvement, and accountability.

10 | Food safety support takes a back seat



The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) gave the Food and Drug Administration broad new powers to prevent food safety problems, detect and respond to food safety issues, and improve the safety of imported foods.

Even with so many farmers and food processors struggling to understand and comply with both the FSMA rules and increasingly common food safety requirements from private buyers, the House Farm Bill fails to prioritize food safety training, outreach, and assistance.

What Can You Do?

Call your Representative and tell them to **oppose the House Farm Bill.**

This bill eliminates important conservation programs that help families feed themselves, and puts more money in the pockets of big agriculture.

Capitol switchboard number: (202) 224-3121

Ask to speak to your member of Congress and leave a message with the office.

Don't forget to let us know how your call went!

Email us: info@wildfarmalliance.org.

This information was adapted from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

For more information [click here to go to their website](#)