



## **2023 Federal Farm Bill**

**Testimony before  
Pennsylvania House and Senate  
Committees on Agriculture and Rural Affairs**

**August 9, 2023**

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President, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau**

Chairman Pashinski and Chairman Vogel and members of the Committees, my name is Chris Hoffman. I am a first-generation hog and chicken farmer from Juniata County and President of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB). I own and operate Lazy Hog Farm, a 1,400-sow farrow to wean, 4,800-head nursery barn and 4,400-head finishing barn located in Juniata and Mifflin counties. I also have Lazy Chick Farm, where we raise 250,000 chickens annually for Empire Kosher. In November 2022, I was elected to serve as PFB's ninth president, and shortly thereafter was also elected to American Farm Bureau Federation's Board of Directors.

First, let me start off my thanking the Chairs of both Committees for holding this hearing on the most important federal legislation for the agriculture industry. I offer these remarks on behalf of PFB and our nearly 28,000 members, who primarily are small to mid-sized family farms. My testimony will focus on PFB's priorities and asks for the 2023 Farm Bill.

One of my goals since becoming President has been connecting our farmers and ranchers to consumers, and I cannot think of a better piece of legislation to achieve that, then the 2023 Farm Bill. United States (U.S.) House Agriculture Chairman "GT" Thompson has made it clear a successful farm bill is one that impacts producers, processors, and consumers. For those three groups to be included in farm bill, it means Congress must pass a unified bill that keeps farm and food programs together. Heading into farm bill, we acknowledge that funding is going to be a contentious topic. With the recent passage of several large spending packages, there may be a desire by some to rein in spending especially when the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the 2023 Farm Bill may be over a trillion dollars in spending (see Exhibit A)<sup>1</sup>. We recommend instead of focusing on the overall price tag, focus on what the individual programs mean for farmers and ranchers. Having said that, the overarching ask of Farm Bureau in farm bill is to increase baseline spending.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/farm-bill-math-updated-again-in-may-cbo-baseline>

## *Title I: Commodity Programs*

Everyday our farmers and ranchers work to produce the food that feeds the nation knowing there are risks they cannot control. Weather is the true curveball in a farmers' income. Flash foods, strong winds, drought, and frost can destroy a profitable crop. Congress needs to pass a farm bill with solid risk management programs that will assure producers are not left empty handed due to mother nature. We support the continuation of the two largest crop commodity programs – the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). Although, it is crucial to modernize funding for those programs by increasing the reference price for all Title I commodities and their loan rates. Furthermore, we would ask that Title I payments be based on historic, rather than planted, acres.

PFB also asks for improvement to risk management programs such as the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) program and the Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) program. NAP needs simplified and expanded. Specifically, our ask would be to provide financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops, including those grown for food or horticulture. The goal is to protect farmers against natural disasters that prevent crop planting or result in economic loss. Additionally, we would like to see the NAP crop insurance planting deadline altered to provide multiple planting deadlines for long season crops such as vegetables<sup>2</sup>. WFRP provides critical crop insurance for specialty crop growers. It is critical that it remain a pilot program which allows additional flexibilities to meet farmers' needs. Also, WFRP must ensure that farmers are able to access the program for their specific crop needs.

Regarding disaster assistance, we are looking for improvement that better meets the needs of farmers, particularly the Northeast. In 2022, the Northeast states experienced significant drought, which left producers in a scramble to try and break-even because most drought funds

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/State-Offices/Washington/newsletters/2022/53000202203.pdf>

are directed out West. However, our drought conditions are different from the West and the programs should respond appropriately. Likewise, we would ask for more timely and expedited assistance to producers in the cases of drought, extreme rain, and snow. For example, currently hurricane damage covers wind damage, not rain. The Northeast states typically are impacted more by rainfall than wind in these storm events. It is important to note though that Farm Bureau is currently not supporting a permanent disaster assistance program.

### Dairy

Dairy is also included under Title I. Pennsylvania (PA) ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in total milk production. The commodity supports 52,000 jobs and contributes \$14.7 billion to the state's economy<sup>3</sup>. Our major ask is to modify and improve the current Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC). The DMC program has proven to be a valuable risk management tool for PA's dairy farms, and it is important to continue the program in the 2023 Farm Bill with some updates. We would suggest for DMC to increase the 5-million-pound limit for Tier 1 and increase the margin coverage from \$9.50 to adjust for inflationary costs. Moreover, we would ask all federal dairy insurance programs take into consideration negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) to ensure farmers receive the margin that they insured.

Lastly, PFB recognizes the problem of federal legislation not allowing whole milk in schools and the proposal of flavored milk being eliminated in schools. There is federal legislation that would solve this dilemma – H.R.1147, the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act*. H.R.1147 passed out of U.S. House Education and Workforce on June 6, 2023, with a bipartisan vote of 26-13. However, we would like this bill to be kept out of farm bill and passed as a stand-alone.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Business\\_Industry/dairy-future/Pages/default.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8BDairy%20Future%20Commission,billion%20to%20the%20state's%20economy](https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Business_Industry/dairy-future/Pages/default.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8BDairy%20Future%20Commission,billion%20to%20the%20state's%20economy)

## Poultry

Another significant agricultural industry for PA is poultry, so I would be remised if I failed to mention the commodity that brings in 26,600 jobs and contributes \$7.1 billion to our state's economy<sup>4</sup>. While farm bill currently does not offer any safety nets for poultry growers, Senators Coons and Wicker are looking to change that with S.2235, the *Healthy Poultry Assistance and Indemnification Act*. This bill would make all poultry growers and layer operations within a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) control area eligible to receive payments from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) compensation program<sup>5</sup>, rather than only those whose flocks are infected. PA lost more than 5 million birds<sup>6</sup> in the most recent HPAI outbreak.

Currently, only growers whose flocks tested positive are eligible for payments. Meaning, if my birds are in a controlled area and business operations are down, USDA will not reimburse for that time period. Not having the ability to send out my birds to be processed because they are in a HPAI controlled area puts me in a position where my barns are just sitting there housing profitable birds and costing me money every extra day they are in there. To remain competitive and ranked as 8<sup>th</sup> nationwide in poultry and egg sales, we would urge the Committee Members to ask Congress to include S.2235 in the 2023 Farm Bill.

## *Title II: Conservation*

For Title II, let me start out by saying that farmers and ranchers often get the black eye for pollution, but it is a false stereotype because we are environmental stewards. We want to preserve our land and the environment. We want to pass our land onto the next generation

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Documents/2021%20Pennsylvania%20Agriculture%20Economic%20Impact%20Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/2016/hpai-indemnity.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2016/hpai-indemnity.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.abc27.com/news/top-stories/live-bird-farms-ordered-to-euthanize-healthy-flocks-due-to-potential-spread-of-avian-flu/#:~:text=Since%20April%202022%2C%20five%20million,only%20in%20Pennsylvania%20but%20nationally.%E2%80%9D>

without ruining it for them and the generations that follow. We want practical solutions that work for agriculture – and the environment. On my farm, we do everything reasonably possible to be good stewards of the land. I have – and follow – a nutrient management plan. Some specific conservation practices on my two farms include dirt lagoons that were transitioned to concrete lagoons, composters for mortality, a pollinator strip and riparian buffer were installed, and a manure staking shed is utilized for our poultry.

The general ask of Farm Bureau in Title II is for these conservation programs to remain voluntary. Like I said, many of our members are already implementing these practices on their farms. Excessive regulations do not benefit either the person regulated or that which is intended to be protected. Paperwork doesn't solve problems. Practical, workable solutions can – and do – solve problems. As I mentioned earlier, we need practical solutions to protect wildlife and the environment, but we need to ensure that agriculture can continue to operate effectively and efficiently. If we fail, then we jeopardize the ability of agriculture to produce safe, affordable, and abundant food and fiber for consumers in PA, the United States and the world.

One of PFB's ask under Title II is a regional issue – the Chesapeake Bay. We are asking for additional funds for farmers in Chesapeake Bay states (Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia) and the District of Columbia. These funds are needed to ensure farm operations can implement conservation practices that contribute towards meeting the 2025 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals. Our other asks in Title II would be improvements to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). PFB has a multitude of suggestions under those programs, so we would recommend for the Committees to look over page 15 of Exhibit B.

### *Title III: Trade*

In Title III, a key bill we would like to see included so long as it has a bipartisan effort is S.2019/H.R.4417, the *Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act*. This bill would prohibit states and local government from regulating the preharvest production of agricultural products in other jurisdictions. S.2019/H.R.4417 would be the legislative solution to Proposition 12<sup>7</sup>. In 2018, California's (CA) voters passed a law called Proposition 12 that requires veal, pork, and egg raised in confined areas to have a certain space minimum.

Egg-laying hens must be cage-free; sows must have at least 24 square feet of usable floor space; and cows used for veal must have at least 43 square feet of usable floor space. AFBF and National Pork sued CA claiming a violation of the Interstate Commerce Clause. AFBF and National Pork gained the support of the U.S. Solicitor General, the highest ranking official of the Department of Justice. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of CA. The decision was very close, and almost every Justice had a different reasoning for why they decided the way they did.

Since the Supreme Court's decision, CA's Department of Agriculture (CDFA) has gotten flooded with questions concerning producer compliancy with Prop 12. CDFA has not been able to answer many of the questions from producers thus far. Recently, the pork requirement was supposed to be implemented on July 1, 2023, but it was postponed to January 1, 2024.

This issue hits home for me because Proposition 12 and Massachusetts' Question 3<sup>8</sup> will devastate the pork industry. CA accounts for about fifteen percent of the country's pork consumption, but less than six percent of U.S. pork producers are compliant with Proposition

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/fd/mb-fdp-03-2022-a.asp>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nationalhogfarmer.com/news/what-timeline-massachusetts-question-3>

12<sup>9</sup>. It is not practical for businesses to have to invest millions of dollars into their operation to comply with a law that was emotional based rather than science driven. The EATS Act must pass whether through farm bill or a stand-alone.

*Title IV: Nutrition*

PFB's vision for Title IV is promoting U.S.-produced agricultural goods, allowing for more fresh produce and nutritious meats to be purchased, and using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to gain customer appreciation and education for what our farmers do on a daily basis. Every five years, we have the same elephant in the room for farm bill debate – SNAP. PFB made this a priority because we want to show Congress that Title IV should not create this harsh divide. Rather, Title IV should be the part of farm bill where consumers and producers come together. SNAP is another outlet for our farmers and ranchers, and at the same time it provides people with the temporary assistance to put food on their families' tables during challenging times.

PFB and Reading Terminal Market (RTM) in Philadelphia have been working to foster a relationship that connects our farmers and ranchers to their consumers. Our goal with RTM is to help them educate their primarily urban consumers on where their food comes from and collaborate on ways to increase the accessibility for fresh food. One of the ways farm bill can help here is by providing technical and monetary assistance that would allow farmers to do online SNAP transactions and streamline the requirement to be able to collect SNAP benefits. Only the big-name grocery stores are currently accepting SNAP payments online<sup>10</sup>. It is unfortunate that one of America's largest public markets (RTM) does not have the ability to do

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gro-intelligence.com/insights/california-law-has-us-pork-industry-bracing-for-excess-supplies>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>



online SNAP sales, especially since they are one of the highest SNAP redemption sites in the Commonwealth<sup>11</sup>.

#### *Title VI: Rural Development*

While we are discussing making sure everyone is fed, let's also recognize the need to provide our rural communities with affordable childcare and broadband. These are additional necessities for families, no matter if they are in downtown Philadelphia or in the rolling hills of Juniata County. Senators Brown and Marshall along with Representatives Marie Gluesenkamp Perez and Tracey Mann are leading S.1867/H.R.3922, the *Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act*. This bill would direct USDA to prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities. Farm Bureau members across the nation prioritized this issue for farm bill because it has been an increasing challenge.

We all know the agriculture industry has had a severe workforce shortage for years but over time it has gotten worse. Having said that, grandma and grandpop may want to continue working on the farm, rather than babysitting. S.1867/H.R.3922 would take a big weight off of our rural families who either do not have the money to send their children to daycare or there is no local childcare near them. For these reasons, we are asking Congress to include the *Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act* in farm bill.

Additionally, Title VI is a prime opportunity to continue finding ways to grow the broadband connectivity in rural communities. I know we are preaching to the choir here, but broadband is a necessity, not a luxury. When broadband is available in rural communities, our farmers and ranchers can use precision agriculture to increase production efficiency; school

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<sup>11</sup> <https://readingterminalmarket.org/food-assistance-programs/#:~:text=Reading%20Terminal%20Market%20is%20one,Merchants%20that%20currently%20accept%20EBT.&text=Subscribe%20to%20receive%20the%20latest%20on%20events%2C%20deals%20and%20much%20more>

districts are able to utilize virtual learning; a person can schedule a telemedicine appointment; and agriculture businesses have modern technology to be competitive.

PFB is asking for two precision agriculture bills to be included in farm bill. First, S.719/H.R.1495, the *Precision Agriculture Loan (PAL) Act*, which would offer low-cost and long-term loans to producers who want to adopt precision agriculture technologies but cannot afford to through traditional financing. Second, S.720/H.R.1459. the *Producing Responsible Energy and Conservation Incentives and Solutions for the Environment (PRECISE) Act*, which would provide funding through existing USDA loan programs to help producers purchase precision agriculture equipment. For U.S. agriculture to remain innovative and be globally competitive, these two bills are essential to achieving that goal.

#### *Title VII: Research and Related Matters*

Regarding Title VII, many of you know I sit on Pennsylvania State University's (PSU) Board of Trustees representing the agriculture community. PSU is the only land grant university in the Commonwealth, so it should funded as such. Being the competitive person I am, PSU Extension in my eyes should be on top. However, right now the state of our facilities will not get us there. The federal government needs to invest significant funds for our land grant universities to remain competitive and innovative.

Furthermore, in Title VII, we would ask for S.1837/H.R.3867, the *Spotted Lanternfly Research and Development Act* to be included. This bill would designate spotted lanternflies as a high priority pest under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to direct more federal research dollars to combat these insects. The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) has had a devastating impact in PA, with the first SLF in the U.S. sighting in Berks County, the insect has invaded thousands of PA agricultural land. Two other research asks PFB would like to see included are

conducting studies on PFAS' impacts on farms as well as assistance for impacted operations and specialty crop research.

*Title X: Horticulture*

Under Title X, PFB would request that S.980/H.R.3755, the *Industrial Hemp Act* be included in farm bill. The bill would exempt farmers exclusively growing industrial hemp from the burdensome background checks and costly sampling and testing protocols required for farmers growing cannabinoid hemp like that used in the extraction of CBD. In 2023, PA's Department of Agriculture issued 215 hemp growing permits and 52 processing permits. The specialty crop is increasing in popularity among farmers with most hemp being grown in southeastern PA. Recently, PA's Department of Agriculture announced \$392,265<sup>12</sup> in grant for three agriculture nonprofits to invest more into growing and researching hemp. Hemp has great potential in the Commonwealth, which is why PFB is asking for S.980/H.R.3755, the *Industrial Hemp Act* to be included in Title X. This bill would exempt farmers exclusively growing industrial hemp from the burdensome background checks, costly sampling, and testing protocols required for farmers growing cannabinoid hemp.

*Title XI: Crop Insurance*

Similar to my remarks relating to risk management and disaster assistance under Title I, crop insurance – Title XI – is another essential safety net for our farmers. One of the bills that PFB and American Mushroom Institute are particularly advocating under Title XI is S.1816/H.R.3815, the *Protecting Mushrooms Act*. This bill would require USDA to conduct a study to see what crop insurance would like for mushrooms. Obviously, mushrooms are grown in a controlled environment, but there are still risks. For example, they must be grown precisely around 58 degrees, so extreme heat and cold have posed a threat to the crop.

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/agriculture\\_details.aspx?newsid=1322](https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/agriculture_details.aspx?newsid=1322)

Additionally, there are two pests found only in mushroom houses – the mushroom phorid fly and mushroom sciarid flies. These flies carry fungal pathogens that will wreak havoc on mushroom crops. S.1816/H.R.3815 is especially important to PA because the Commonwealth is the number one producer of mushrooms in the nation. Chester County is primarily where all the mushrooms are grown, and they produce more than 500 million pounds of mushrooms a year which contributes to \$4 billion in revenue<sup>13</sup>. For this reason, S.1816/H.R.3815 needs to be included in the 2023 Farm Bill to assure PA’s mushroom industry remains the leader and our farmers have something to fallback on in case of unexpected climate issues or invasive pests. As a whole though, PFB would like to see more specialty crops be made eligible for crop insurance. We understand that adding specialty crops to crop insurance is a complex process, so we are open to ways to make it simpler and efficient.

#### *Title XII: Miscellaneous*

Finally, we have received several comments from our members that USDA staffing must be addressed in the 2023 Farm Bill. For our producers to do their job effectively and efficiently, USDA needs to provide prompt responses and action. As an example, during the most recent HPAI outbreak, APHIS staff was overwhelmed and understaffed. We need to assure when agriculture has a major biosecurity issue, APHIS staff is prepared and fully staffed. While funding for staff and technical assistance at USDA is needed, we want to recognize the importance of retention. Keeping staff there is critical because years of knowledge and experience is hard to replace, no matter how much you pay someone.

#### **Conclusion**

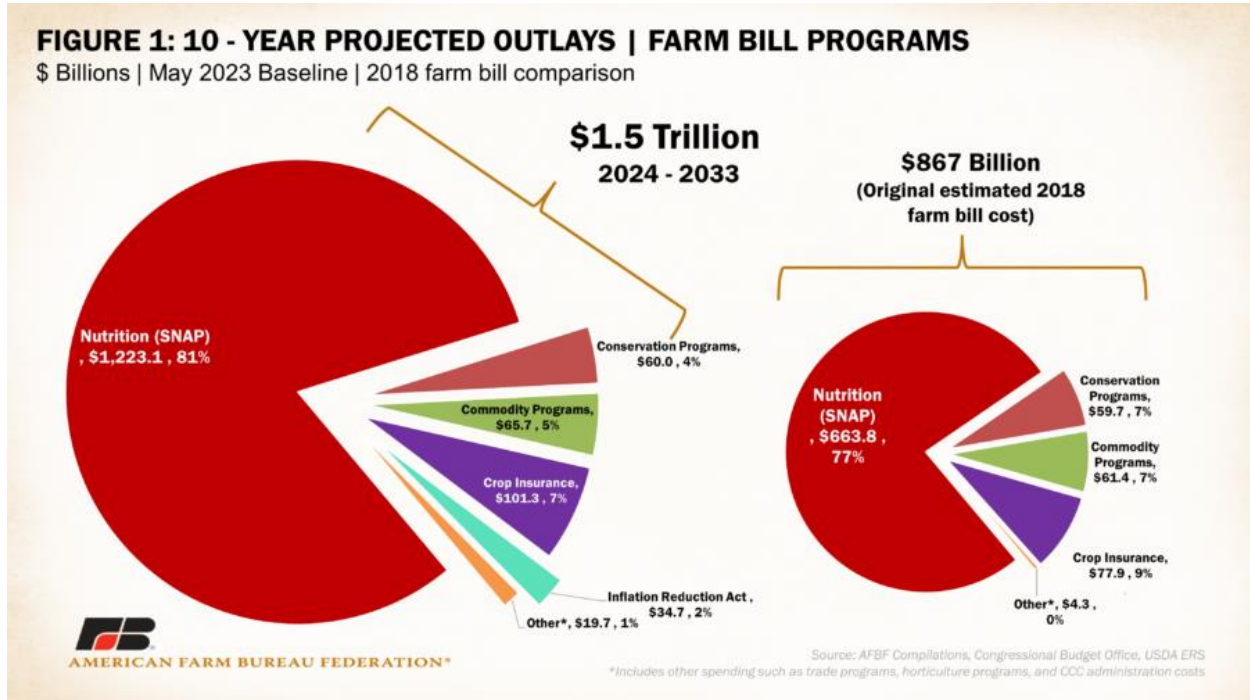
I will wrap up my comments by saying that PFB’s goal for the 2023 Farm Bill is a unified farm bill with farm and nutrition programs which meet the needs of producers,

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<sup>13</sup> <https://whyy.org/articles/chester-county-kennett-square-mushroom-capital-festival/>

processors, and consumers in both rural and urban communities. Additionally, I'd like to commend Chairman Pashinski and Chairman Vogel and members of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees for their continued efforts to grow PA agriculture and engage with our farmers on the federal farm bill. We are looking forward to the passage of the 2023 Farm Bill this year, and seeing what the legislation has to offer for the Commonwealth. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to respond to your questions.

## EXHIBIT A



Source: AFBF, Market Intel, <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/farm-bill-math-updated-again-in-may-cbo-baseline>

## EXHIBIT B



## AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

### 2023 Farm Bill Policy Priorities

- We support the following principles to guide development of programs in the next farm bill:
  - Increase baseline for farm bill program spending;
  - Maintain a unified farm bill which keeps nutrition programs and farm programs together;
  - Any changes to current farm legislation must be an amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 or the Agricultural Act of 1949;
  - Prioritize risk management tools and funding for both federal crop insurance and commodity programs; and
  - Ensure adequate USDA staffing capacity and technical assistance.

**Title I:**

We support:

- The continuation of a counter-cyclical program like the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and a revenue program like the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program, including using Risk Management Agency (RMA) data as the primary source to determine a more accurate county yield as long as RMA data at the farm level is protected from FOIA. If ARC-County is continued, we support changes to make the program more effective and fair to all farmers;
- If existing programs continue, the opportunity for farmers to re-elect and/or re-enroll annually;
- Basing Title I payments on historic, rather than planted, acres;
- A reference price increase for all Title I commodities;
- Unassigned, former generic base acres being redistributed to update crop base on the same farm;
- Increased commodity loan rates;
- Restoring ARC/PLC payment base on the 20% of seed cotton base acres that were designated as unassigned and unpaid in the 2018 farm bill; and
- Keeping provisions that Loan Deficiency Payments and Marketing Loan Gains do not count against per person payment limits.

***Dairy:***

We support:

- Updated production history once every five years based on the highest of a prior three-year history, until then we support supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) production history changes;
- Retaining the current DMC with supplemental and feed cost updates;
- Increasing the DMC 5-million-pound limit for Tier 1;
- Additional transparency to milk checks including listing the percentage of pooled and de-pooled milk by each processor and PPD calculations;
- Modified block voting flexibility within coops (allowing farmers to vote independently and confidentially unless a farmer opts out after being given notice of a referendum);
- Eliminating provisions on a “no” vote on a referendum causing elimination of the entire FMMO;
- Whole milk being promoted and advanced through the special milk program through schools, nutrition assistance and the U.S. military;
- All federal insurance programs related to the dairy industry taking into consideration negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) to ensure that farmers actually receive the margin that they insured; and
- We oppose any regulations or legislation that will ban or limit flavored milk in schools.

## **Title II:**

We support:

- Maintaining funding for federal conservation programs which maintain environmental benefits;
- Working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs; and
- Streamlining the NRCS conservation practice approval process.

### ***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)***

We support:

- Capping acreage enrollment to keep land in production;
- Capping rental rates to a percentage of average county rental rates;
- Making common sense updates to emergency haying and grazing rules, especially adjustments to the turn-in dates surrounding the “primary nesting season,” bale removal, etc.;
- Encouraging prime farmland to come back into production, but retaining the program for marginal acres, land that is highly erodible or non-productive;
- Adjusting the 25% limitation. Extending the 25% limitation to a per farm basis, not just county wide;
- Prioritizing water quality and soil health benefits of CRP over wildlife protection and manage requirements of the program accordingly (such as mowing and maintenance, species mixes, and implementation of buffer/filter strips); and
- Limiting the size of pollinator tracts with an emphasis on smaller parcels and capping pollinator rates.

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)***

We support:

- Maintaining the current prioritization of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding being targeted to livestock producers;
- Maintaining an air quality program that assists producers with air quality compliance; and
- Allowing for flexibility in addressing local and regional resource challenges, including groundwater sustainability and drought relief, resilience, and preparedness.

### ***Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)***

- We support funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with greater accessibility to farmers.

### ***Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)***

We support:

- Increasing Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) funding; and
- Increasing the ceiling on the eligible federal share for ACEP conservation easement to 80% of the easement value.



## **Title XI:**

We support:

- A robust crop insurance program, with no reductions in premium cost share. We oppose means testing, income limits, or add ins, such as required production practices, that might limit the availability or adversely impact risk pools;
- Expansion of insured commodities including specialty crops. Given limitations of process in adding new commodities, examine ways in which to encourage swifter adoption of policies;
- Develop and maintain adequate risk management tools for livestock producers including contract growers;
- USDA enhancing the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage from the current 50% level on production and 55% of the established price by allowing producers to purchase a higher level up to the 65% level and the option to increase the market price option from 55% to 100%; and
- Enhancements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection insurance that provide a more appropriate level of affordable coverage and safety net, along with reducing the amount of paperwork required.

## **Miscellaneous:**

### ***Trade***

We support increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP).

### ***Credit***

We support:

- Streamlining loan programs and ensuring loan amounts keep pace with farm-level expenses; and
- Minimizing application requirements for young and beginning farmer guarantee programs so they are more aligned with agricultural lenders.

### ***Rural Development***

We support:

- A consistent, long-term, market-oriented farm policy that is transparent and efficient prioritizing projects with the greatest economic potential for rural communities.
- Programs should focus on the following:
  - Efforts to encourage processing and marketing opportunities for direct-to-market producers. Infrastructure, workforce development and local

processing capacity need to be expanded as this market demand has increased exponentially;

- Broadband programs prioritizing resources for rural communities most in need of connectivity; and
- Increased access and incentives to provide safe and adequate childcare in rural communities.

### ***Specialty Crops***

We support:

- Incorporating all types of domestic fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program providing an affordable option for increasing the variety available year-round for all and more market opportunities for producers. Priority must be given to fresh and locally grown product when available not withstanding price;
- Ensuring adequate funding for the specialty crop industry with emphasis on fundamental research, marketing and promotions, and pest management programs;
- The USDA giving more consideration to specialty crop growers when considering planting history for various programs;
- Defining "specialty crops" as any fruit, vegetable, nut or non-program crop grown for consumption and sales;
- Dedicated funding for specialty crop growers in working lands programs;
- USDA commodity purchases; and
- The fruit and vegetable industry developing a termed stopgap profit/loss assistance program to mitigate the impact of producer losses due to foreign imports, resulting in an upside-down market.

### ***Research***

We support:

- Funding for agricultural research and education;
- Funding a producer-directed, research-oriented specialty crop block grant program and the IR4 bio-pesticide research program for minor crops; and
- Funding for research into the health risks and strategies for mitigating risks associated with chemical contaminants in water and food such as PFAS.

### ***Energy***

We support:

- Adequate funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and an increase to the percentage of USDA cost share;
- Increased resources for biofuels; and

- Increased resources for methane digesters.

### ***Nutrition***

We support:

- The inclusion of a block grant program that would allow food banks and food access networks to directly purchase specialty crops from farmers;
- Technical and monetary assistance being given to farmers to help facilitate online SNAP sales and streamline the requirement to be able to collect SNAP benefits; and
- The use of SNAP for U.S.-produced agricultural products when available