



## AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN

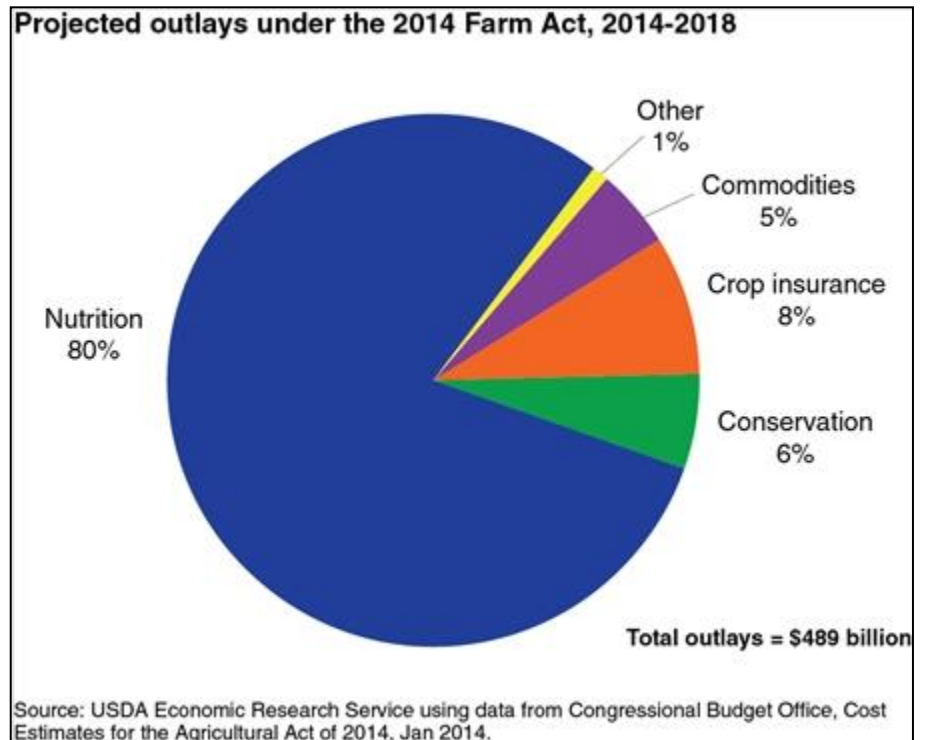
# 2018 FARM BILL RECOMMENDATIONS

*PUBLISHED JULY 2017*

**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.**

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the 2014 Farm Bill was projected to result in \$24 billion in savings. As of 2017, the projection has been revised to approximately \$104 billion in savings. The federal government's role in subsidizing crop insurance, for example, resulted in an estimated \$7 billion savings in indemnities in the 2012 drought.

Given the work of the agricultural sector to compromise on the 2014 Farm Bill that resulted in billions saved, the 2018 Farm Bill should begin at a level funding rate and consider increasing for necessary programs related to animal and plant disease prevention and control.



### AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN REQUESTS:

#### TITLE 2 CONSERVATION:

- 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 conservation 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 and ensure that the rate for easements is less than local cash rental rates so they do not increase the cost of production to farmers.
- Oppose easements or buyouts to nonprofit groups for large-scale wetland restoration that removes agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.



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## **TITLE 3 TRADE:**

- Follow through with establishing a USDA Undersecretary for Trade as stated in the 2014 Farm Bill.
- Support the Market Access Program (MAP).
- Support the U.S. Trade Representative establishing a staff position for specialty crop trade matters in the agricultural office.
- Supplement the efforts of African countries to develop agri-food systems, specifically their own university and extension services while enhancing U.S. research and extension.

## **TITLE 4 NUTRITION:**

- AAW recognizes that on average 70% of the funds in the Farm Bill are allocated to food assistance programs. We support a nutrition program that encourages consumption of healthy foods and a well-balanced diet.
- Continue to allow nutrition program funding training for and usage at farmers markets.
- Link nutrition program benefits to workfare (welfare to work), vocational training and apprenticeship programs.
- Expand pilot programs to allow medical doctors to prescribe foods from farmers' markets or diet changes for patients.
- Support fresh fruits and veggies snack program in schools.
- Support school lunch program including dairy, meats, fruits, grains and vegetables.

## **TITLE 5 CREDIT:**

- 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.
- 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.



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## **TITLE 6 RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- 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:**

- Redirect climate hub funding into research combating pests and diseases in all crops and livestock.
- Support research into food safety from farm to table.
- 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 new research focus on automation of the specialty crop industry.
- 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 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:**

Continue helpful provisions from the 2014 Farm Bill including:

- Good Neighbor Authority,
- Repeal of the Appeals Reform Act,
- Forest Roads language,
- Expanded Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) Categorical Exclusion,
- Reauthorization of Stewardship Contract authority,



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## **TITLE 8 FORESTRY - CONTINUED:**

- Fire Liability in Stewardship Contracts, and
- Designation by Prescription.

## **TITLE 9 ENERGY:**

- 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.
- 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 SPECIALTY CROPS AND HORTICULTURE:**

- 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.
- Providing technical assistance to producers for compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).
- Scale back programs promoting organic production over other types of production.
- 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:**

- 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.



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## TITLE 12 MISCELLANEOUS:

- Support grants to nonprofits and Extension, not just to cooperatives, to provide educational programming for new and socially-disadvantaged farmers.
- Establish a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine bank and policies for disease surveillance. (suggest shifting the \$150 Million/year from USDA Organic program to fund these efforts).
- Establish programming to develop and support next generation farmers and scientists.
- Consider shifting responsibility for H2A Visa application processing to the USDA; expand H2A Visa eligibility to include dairy farms.