



Senator Herb Kohl

United States Senator for Wisconsin



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Every five years, Congress produces a Farm Bill. This legislation offers many programs that provide American agriculture with support and market opportunities. This spring, the Senate is working on yet another Farm Bill that will affect operations across the nation, including those in Wisconsin.

Worldwide, Wisconsin is known as an agricultural leader. Agriculture provides more than 350,000 jobs and generates roughly \$60 billion worth of economic activity in our state. Our dairy producers are known far and wide for their quality operations which produce wholesome milk and award-winning cheese, while our corn growers help not only to feed the world but to power it with ethanol. Specialty crops such as potatoes, cranberries and apples play a crucial role in providing nutritious options as a part of school breakfast and lunch programs, which give our children a better chance to succeed in school and life. Furthermore, many of these same farmers have implemented various land conservation and sustainability practices that will allow the land to remain healthy and viable for future generations of Wisconsin farmers.

Now all this is not to say that agriculture is without its challenges. Despite record high crop prices and new export markets opening around the world, difficulties remain. As farmers do annually for their own operations, the federal government is responsible for reducing our budget deficit, eliminating wasteful spending, and maximizing our investments. This requires Congress to closely examine the entire federal budget to determine which spending practices are the most effective and essential. However, as farmers understand, when you are faced with difficult decisions there is also an opportunity to refocus on what's most important. One of the most important goals of this Farm Bill is to create a quality safety net for both dairy and crop producers. Because farming is capital intensive and its product a necessity worldwide, we first and foremost must provide producers with an adequate safety net that accurately responds to their needs and market signals. While a safety net is the lynchpin of this Farm Bill, we must also continue to invest in nutrition assistance, research, conservation, and alternative energy. Delivering on these other items will help to extend the

positive impact of an adequate safety net.

Over my years in the Senate, I have had the privilege of meeting with farmers, producers, and processors of all different kinds. One thing that I found to be universal is their ability to invest in the future during the good times, and to buckle down and do what they do best during the hard times. As we begin the 2012 Farm Bill, Congress finds itself at a crossroads of good times and bad. There are challenges, yes, but also extraordinary opportunities to continue to build on our state's proud agricultural tradition with an eye towards the future. I look forward to this challenge.

This month, my regional representatives will be holding office hours throughout Wisconsin at Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and other community locations. I invite you to stop by when they are in your area to share your thoughts about the Farm Bill. If you can't make it to one of these office hours, but still have suggestions or comments, please call my office at 1-800-247-5645 or visit my website at kohl.senate.gov. As Congress debates these policies, I will rely, as I always have, on feedback from people across our state. I hope you will attend one of these sessions:

Thursday, April 12th – Dodgeville (Iowa County) – 9:00 to 10:00 – Iowa County FSA

Thursday, April 12th – Manitowoc (Manitowoc County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Manitowoc County FSA

Thursday, April 12th – Darlington (Lafayette County) – 11:00 to 12:00 – Lafayette County FSA

Thursday, April 12th – Loyal (Clark County) – 12:30 to 2:00 – Loyal City Hall

Thursday, April 12th – Monroe (Green County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Monroe Public Library

Thursday, April 12th – Sheboygan (Sheboygan County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Sheboygan County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Black River Falls (Jackson County) – 9:00 to 10:30 – Jackson County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Ashland (Ashland County) – 10:00 to 11:00 – Ashland County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Westfield (Marquette County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Marquette County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Mauston (Juneau County) – 12:00 to 1:30 – Juneau County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Spooner (Washburn County) – 1:30 to 2:30 – Washburn County FSA

Friday, April 13th – Wisconsin Rapids (Wood County) – 3:00 to 4:30 – McMillan Memorial Library

Monday, April 16th – Janesville (Rock County) – 9:00 to 10:30 – Rock County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Richland Center (Richland County) – 10:30 to 11:30 – Richland County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Appleton (Outagamie County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Outagamie County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Baldwin (St. Croix County) – 10:30 to 11:30 – St. Croix County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Elkhorn (Walworth County) – 11:30 to 12:30 – Walworth County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Ellsworth (Pierce County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Pierce County Courthouse

Monday, April 16th – Chilton (Calumet County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Calumet County Courthouse

Monday, April 16th – Viroqua (Vernon County) – 1:30 to 2:30 – Vernon County FSA

Monday, April 16th – Jefferson (Jefferson County) – 2:00 to 3:30 – Jefferson County FSA

Tuesday, April 17th – Sun Prairie (Dane County) – 8:30 to 9:30 – Sun Prairie City Hall

Tuesday, April 17th – Chippewa Falls (Chippewa County) – 8:00 to 9:30 – Chippewa County FSA

Tuesday, April 17th – Stevens Point (Portage County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Portage County Courthouse Annex

Tuesday, April 17th – Portage (Columbia County) – 10:30 to 12:00 – Portage Public Library

Tuesday, April 17th – Shawano (Shawano County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Shawano County FSA

Tuesday, April 17th – Ladysmith (Rusk County) – 11:00 to 12:30 – Ladysmith Public Library

Tuesday, April 17th – Waupaca (Waupaca County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Waupaca County FSA

Tuesday, April 17th – Prairie du Sac (Sauk County) – 1:30 to 2:30 – Prairie du Sac Village Hall

Tuesday, April 17th – Barron (Barron County) – 1:30 to 3:00 – Barron County Courthouse

Tuesday, April 17th – Wausau (Marathon County) – 2:30 to 4:00 – Marathon County Courthouse

Wednesday, April 18th – Antigo (Langlade County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Langlade County Resource Center

Wednesday, April 18th – Green Bay (Brown County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Brown County UW-Extension

Wednesday, April 18th – Sturgeon Bay (Door County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Door County FSA

Wednesday, April 18th – Rhinelander (Oneida County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Oneida County FSA

Friday, April 20th – Oshkosh (Winnebago County) – 10:00 to 11:30 – Winnebago County FSA

Friday, April 20th – Fond du Lac (Fond du Lac County) – 1:00 to 2:30 – Fond du Lac County FSA

Monday, April 23rd – Whitehall (Trempealeau County) – 10:30 to 11:30 – Trempealeau County FSA

Tuesday, April 24th – Menomonie (Dunn County) – 9:00 to 10:30 – Dunn County FSA

Tuesday, April 24th – Durand (Pepin County) – 11:00 to 12:30 – Pepin County Government Center

Tuesday, April 24th – Gays Mills (Crawford) – 12:00 to 1:00 – Gays Mills Village Hall

Tuesday, April 24th – Alma (Buffalo County) – 2:00 to 3:30 – Buffalo County Courthouse

Wednesday, April 25th – Altoona (Eau Claire County) – 9:30 to 11:00 – Eau Claire County FSA

Sincerely,

