

AMERICA'S FARM BILL 2012



What is the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill goes far beyond America's farms. Every five years, the Farm Bill sets policies that govern a broad array of programs, from crop support to conservation and from food assistance to forestry.

The Farm Bill makes up only about 2% of federal funding, but every American benefits from its provisions. The largest portion of funds are spent on nutrition programs, which make up nearly 80% of Farm Bill spending. The rest of the bill supports America's farmers, ranchers, and consumers through initiatives including commodity programs, agricultural research, trade, and rural development.

The 2008 Farm Bill was divided into 15 titles, and the 12 most relevant are explained below.



Title I—Commodities

Title I provides a safety net for farmers that grow commodity crops, including wheat, corn, soybeans, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar and dairy. These programs help farmers manage the risks inherent to farming, including volatile weather, natural disasters, and fluctuating prices.

Title II—Conservation

Farmers and ranchers are the stewards of our most valuable natural resources. The Conservation title encourages sustainable practices through voluntary incentive programs that preserve water, land, and soil health.

Title III—Agricultural Trade and Food Aid

Agricultural exports create opportunities both on and off the farm, supporting about 1 million jobs throughout the economy. Additionally, the U.S. plays a leading role in helping countries facing humanitarian and agricultural crises. Title III covers agricultural export programs as well as international food assistance.

Title IV—Nutrition

The Nutrition title provides nutrition assistance for needy families who, as a result, are not left behind in a difficult economy. Programs include school lunches, the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly known as food stamps).

Title V—Farm Credit

Title V provides direct and guaranteed loans to farmers. This is particularly important for beginning farmers and ranchers, who often have difficulty obtaining the credit necessary to begin a career in production agriculture.



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Title VI—Rural Development

Rural development programs help communities keep pace with technological, business, and infrastructure improvements. This title funds loan and grant programs to promote vibrant rural communities.

Title VII—Research

Agricultural research helps farmers and ranchers become more efficient, innovative, and productive. Title VII funds research and educational programs that help us produce more while using fewer resources.

Title VIII—Forestry

Forests provide valuable resources, clean drinking water, wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities for our families. This title includes forestry management programs run by the U.S. Forest Service.

Title IX—Energy

The Energy title supports the development of renewable fuels and helps create jobs and markets in rural America. Title IX contains programs, grants and procurement assistance.

Title X—Horticulture

Title X supports the production of specialty crops including fruits and vegetables through initiatives including market promotion programs and research.

Title XII—Crop Insurance and Disaster Assistance

Crop insurance is one of the most important tools for producers use to hedge against risk. Title XII covers the policies for crop insurance coverage and risk management.

