



## PASS THE 2013 FARM BILL

The farm bill is once again up for reauthorization after the 112th Congress failed to take action on the bill last year.

The 2008 Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30, 2012. Despite the tremendous bipartisan, multi-sector effort behind the legislation, the \$23 to 35 billion in savings it would have contributed to deficit reduction, as well as near unanimous support from the entire agriculture community, Congress did not see the bill through but instead passed a one-year extension that expires in September 2013. Now farmers, ranchers, and the lender that provide them credit are at Congress's mercy, struggling to make business decisions in this uncertain policy environment.

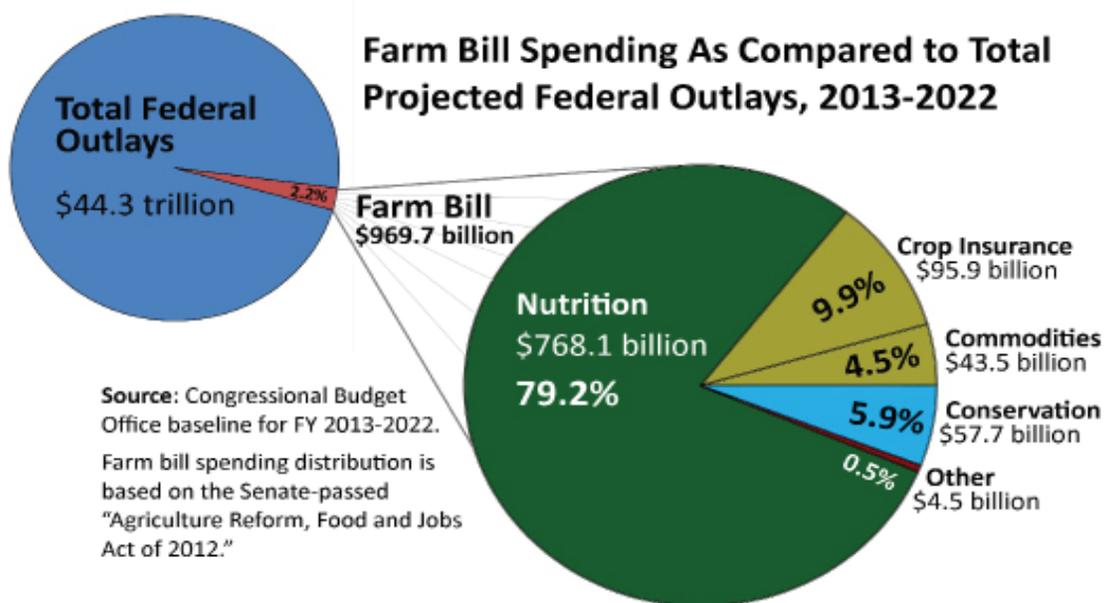
There is no more critical issue for rural America and the consumers we serve, both here in the United States and across the globe, than passage of a new comprehensive, five-year, farm bill in 2013.

Family farms are crucial to our nation's food supply, our rural communities and the overall health of our nation's economy. The number of farmers and ranchers who make their primary living from production agriculture continues to shrink because of commodity price volatility. We need a strong safety net in place for difficult times, such as periods when prices are low or when disastrous weather strikes, in order to ensure certainty for the continuation of family farm and ranch operations.

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## WHY IS THE FARM BILL SUCH A GOOD INVESTMENT?

- Our economy depends on it. Twenty-three million Americans are employed by the agricultural sector – that’s one in 12 American jobs.
- The farm bill supports small, rural, innovative businesses that help stimulate their local economies.
- The farm bill conserves vulnerable lands, keeps our air and water clean and protects the environment for generations to come.
- Weather disasters, like last year’s drought of near-Dust Bowl proportions, will continue to affect farmers’ and ranchers’ livelihoods. Farm bill disaster programs help keep farmers afloat until the next year.
- Farm bill nutrition programs provide critical food assistance for low income families both here and abroad.
- Farm programs ensure that American consumers continue to have access to the safest and most abundant domestically produced food supply in the world.
- About two percent of the federal budget is spent on the entire farm bill, and less than one quarter of one percent is spent on safety net programs for farmers and ranchers.





UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

## NFU SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES IN A NEW COMPREHENSIVE, FIVE-YEAR FARM BILL:

- **Safety net protection** for farmers from both weather disasters and long-term price collapse. Disaster assistance is particularly important for livestock producers and specialty crop growers, who have fewer crop insurance options than commodity crop farmers. Funding should be mandatory and retroactive for FY 2012. A price collapse protection program should be similar to what was included in the House Ag Committee bill;
- A strong crop insurance program that include conservation compliance;
- Streamlining and consolidation of **conservation programs**, as outlined in both the Senate and House versions of the draft 2012 Farm Bill, including a national **sodsaver** provision that protects our native grasslands;
- Mandatory funding for **renewable energy programs**, as included in the Senate version of the draft 2012 Farm Bill, that help boost the rural economy and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels;
- Protecting **nutrition programs that help low-income families** from unreasonable cuts, as well as incentives for nutrition program beneficiaries to use their benefits at local farmers markets and community-supported agriculture outlets. In addition, fifteen cents of every dollar spent on food goes back to the farmer, making the nearly \$72 billion spent by SNAP beneficiaries in 2011 an important \$10.8 billion stimulus for American farmers and ranchers;
- **Protections for family dairy farmers** from low milk prices and high feed costs, as well as inclusion of California in the Federal Milk Marketing Order system; and
- Programs that help some of our **newest and most innovative farmers** succeed and add value to their operations, such as:
  - » Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
  - » Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
  - » Organic agriculture research and extension initiatives
  - » Outreach and technical assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers
  - » Farmers Market Promotion Program
  - » National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program
  - » Value-added Producer Grant Program

These critically important programs and many others were not included in the one-year extension passed at the beginning of this year. Congress must reinstate them and find new funding for them in 2013.