

FARM BILL 101: WHAT THE 2023 FARM BILL MEANS FOR MINNESOTA

Roughly every five years, the United States Congress works on the nation's most important farm, food, nutrition and rural economic policy: The Farm Bill. The bill sets the direction for the country's food system, from farm to fork. The Farm Bill has a tremendous impact on farmers' livelihoods, access to food, and support for sustainable farming and conservation efforts. In Minnesota, where agriculture is the cornerstone of our economy, the Farm Bill impacts the lives of all who live in our state.

What is included in the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill is the most comprehensive package of federal legislation on agricultural policy and directs hundreds of billions of dollars of federal spending. The bill is divided into sections, known as "Titles," that cover different federal programs and allot funding to each.

- The **Nutrition** title covers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as well as other programs to help low-income Americans afford food.
- **Commodities** covers price and support for farmers growing nonperishable crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, rice), dairy and sugar.
- **Conservation** covers programs that help support farmers' natural resource conservation efforts on their farms.
- Other titles include **Rural Development, Trade, Credit, Research, Forestry, Energy, Horticulture** and the catch-all **Miscellaneous** title that covers support for emerging farmers, agricultural labor safety and more.
- The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) has a [more detailed summary of each of the Farm Bill titles](#).

FARM BILL PROJECTED FUNDING, IN BILLIONS 2019-2023

CONSERVATION, 7%

Example: Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

COMMODITIES, 7%

Example: Whole Farm Revenue Protection Program (Whole Farm)

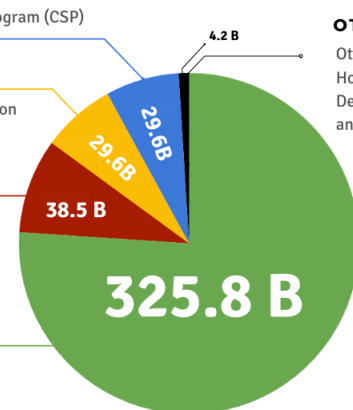
CROP INSURANCE, 9%

Example: Price Loss Coverage Program

NUTRITION, 76%

Example: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

TOTAL: \$428 BILLION



OTHER, 1%

Other includes Miscellaneous, Horticulture, Forestry, Rural Development, Credit, Research, and everything else

Source: USDA Economic Research Service Based on Congressional Budget Office, Direct Spending Effects for the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), December 11, 2018, as referenced [here](#).

Farm Bill Timeline

Members of Congress who are on the [Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry](#) and [House Agriculture Committee](#) are primarily in charge of drafting the 2023 Farm Bill, and they are working on it now. The current Farm Bill (the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018) expires September 30, 2023. Congress must pass a new Farm Bill by this deadline; alternatively, they can pass a continuing resolution to extend the current Farm Bill while they work on the next version.

2022 - Spring 2023: House and Senate Ag Committees hold Farm Bill hearings to hear input from the public about what they want to see in the Farm Bill.

Congress begins the process of drafting the Farm Bill. The House & Senate Ag Committees each draft, amend and vote on their own version of the bill, and they can be very different from each other.

Leaders from the House and Senate, including Committee Chairs, form a "Conference Committee" to combine the two bills. Most of the "Conferees" are members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

"Marker Bills" are introduced by legislative champions, covering what can become components of the final Farm Bill, e.g., Agriculture Resilience Act, American Beef Labeling Act.

The full House of Representatives and Senate Chambers debate, amend and vote on the bill from its respective Committee.

The full chambers vote on the combined final bill.

September 2023 (hopefully): The final bill is sent to the White House for the president's signature (or veto!)

Appropriations Phase

After the Farm Bill is signed into law, it will enter the "Appropriations" phase, where funding sources in the yearly federal budget will be set aside for the bill. Some Farm Bill programs, called entitlements, have guaranteed funding, while others need to be funded through discretionary spending. At the same time as the Appropriations process, the U.S. Department of Agriculture figures out the rules for how the programs will be implemented in a Rulemaking process. When the programs have been funded and rules have been made, the programs are promoted to the public, and public input is sought on whether the programs are working as intended.

Key policy goals for Minnesota farm and food systems advocates & stakeholders

- **Increase financial and capacity investments in infrastructure, small and mid-size processing and market development statewide.**
- **Enable land access and farm viability for emerging farmers.** *"Farmers across the state are experiencing land access challenges but there are some possibilities for substantial land access program development through this Farm Bill."* — Sarah Goldman, Land Stewardship Project (LSP)
- **Reform crop insurance to support smaller and more sustainable farms.** *"We have the opportunity to challenge the narrative that crop insurance is working for everyone and think about new ways to make sure folks have access who have been historically left out."* — Sarah Goldman, LSP
- **Increase SNAP allocations.** *"I'd like to see us bring the SNAP allocations back to the COVID level and make it really meaningful. SNAP does a lot to revitalize local communities, with spending in local communities and supporting farmers."* — Colleen Moriarty, Hunger Solutions
- **Improve conservation programs to create positive climate and ecosystem impact.** The Conservation title covers a variety of programs and helps farmers implement conservation practices, including cover crops, alternative manure management, buffers and crop rotations. In Minnesota, these programs are very competitive. Less than 10% of MN farmer applications for the Conservation Reserve Program (CSP) were funded in 2022. *"I'd like to see durable and consistent adequate funding for conservation programs, including raising the baseline and doubling conservation funding."* — Michael Happ, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
- **Link nutrition and food access needs to Minnesota agricultural producers.** Some critics want to see the nutrition and agriculture components of the bill separated. However, the Nutrition and Agriculture titles support one another, and agriculture and nutrition collaboration is critical. *"To get what we want to see we need to band together... we are all in the business of growing and distributing healthy food."* — Colleen Moriarty, Hunger Solutions.

How can Minnesota farm and food systems communities engage?

This Farm Bill negotiation is anticipated to be contentious and will be under high pressure as the last Farm Bill that can impact climate goals before 2030. Minnesota farm and food systems stakeholders can have an impact on what issues are considered as the bill is drafted:

- **Participate listening sessions to highlight issues with decision makers.** Congress members often hold listening sessions, hearings and meetings with the public to learn about Farm Bill issues important to them. You can subscribe to members' newsletters and check their websites to watch for scheduled listening sessions.
- **Request a listening session** that your group will organize, either in-person during one of their recesses or virtually. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has a good



advocacy tool on organizing a [Community Call](#) with your member of Congress, with information about who to invite, how to schedule, coordinating messaging and following up.

- **Travel to D.C. to participate in a conference like the [FRAC National Anti-Hunger Conference](#) or another “fly in”** where the organizers will support scheduling meetings with members and coordinating messaging.
- **Connect with legislators’ staff.** They are often accessible and can offer more time than members to discuss issues in detail. You can find a list of all lead staff, as well as office phone numbers and locations on your elected official’s webpage at [congress.org](#).
- **Provide draft bill language to congress members.** Members and staff are especially interested in hearing about “shovel ready” ideas of what to include, and it is helpful (but not necessary) to have a draft of bill language they can use to introduce marker bill language that could eventually get pulled into the titles. You can draft language yourself, or look for examples from partner groups, such as [IATP’s Farm Bill Submission](#).
- **Send emails and make calls to your legislators to express support or concern about certain issues.** The National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) has an [example letter to a legislator](#) you can use as a template, personalizing with your own information and issues of concern.
- **Reach out to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to serve on Minnesota’s State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).**

To learn more, watch a recording of our webinar, Farm Bill 101: What the 2023 Farm Bill means for Minnesota, presented by the MinneAg Network, Partners to End Hunger, MN Food Justice Network and the Land Stewardship Project on March 1, 2023. The replay of the webinar and webinar slide presentation are [available on IATP’s website](#).

More resources available at
<https://www.minneag.org/farm-bill>



Minnesota Farm Bill Players

Minnesota has outsized representation on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in 2023, and our legislators will play a key role in crafting the new Farm Bill.

- **Senator Tina Smith**
Senate Ag. Committee, Subcommittee Chair on Commodities, Risk Management, and Trade; Member, Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy; Member, Conservation Subcommittee
- **Sen. Amy Klobuchar**
Senate Ag. Committee Member; Member, Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy; Member, Conservation Subcommittee; Member, Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research
- **Representative Angie Craig (CD2)**
Member of House Ag. Committee; Member, Subcommittee on Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit; Member, Subcommittee on Commodity Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development
- **Rep. Brad Finstad (CD1)**
Member of House Ag. Committee, Chair of Nutrition Subcommittee; Member, General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit; Member, Conservation Subcommittee
- **Rep. Dean Phillips (CD3)**
Close ally of Democratic House leadership, leader of bipartisan “Problem Solvers Caucus”
- **Rep. Betty McCollum (CD4)**
House Appropriations Committee
- **Rep. Ilhan Omar (CD5)**
Progressive Caucus Member