

# Farm Bill FAQ

A guide for understanding 2018's most important food-focused legislation

## What is the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill is a federal law that governs an array of agricultural and food programs. The Farm Bill is renewed about every five years, giving politicians a predictable opportunity to reassess and reallocate funds for food growth and distribution. The most recent Farm Bill was enacted into law in February 2014 and expires in 2018.

## What's in the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill is separated into twelve thematic sections called "Titles." Four of these titles account for the vast majority of farm bill funding. The 2014 Farm Bill cost a total of about \$489 billion dollars, distributed over the course of five years.

### The Nutrition Title (80%)

Provides nutrition assistance for low-income households through food programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly known as food stamps) fruit and vegetable subsidies, and nutrition education.

### Crop Insurance (8%)

Subsidizes farmers and protects them from fluctuations in crop yield and revenue through the permanently authorized federal crop insurance program which cover most major crops.

### Conservation Programs (6%)

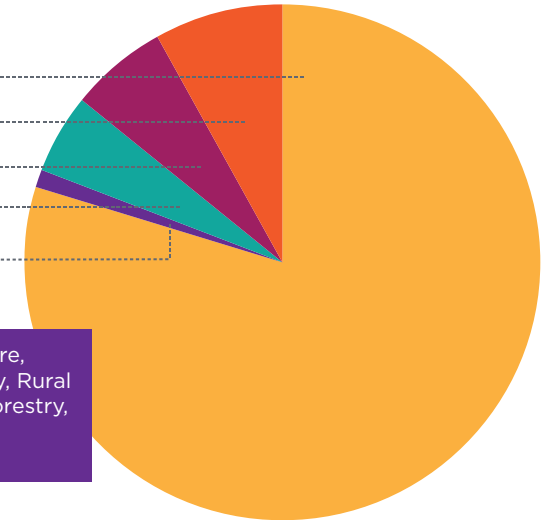
Encourage environmental stewardship of farmlands and improved management through land retirement and/or working lands programs.

### Commodity Programs (5%)

Provides payments and loans triggered by low market prices for major commodities such as wheat, corn, soybeans, sugar and dairy as well as disaster assistance for livestock.

### Other (1%)

Trade, Horticulture, Research, Energy, Rural Development, Forestry, Food Safety.



## What does the Farm Bill have to do with nutrition?

Agricultural policies are important for nutrition science professionals, for at least 3 reasons:



The Farm Bill feeds more than 1 in 7 Americans through federal food programs. The bill is a massive government lever for improving nutrition, improving health, reducing disparities and reducing health care costs.



The bill influences the manner, location, and quantity of production for agricultural commodities, which are the ultimate source of food and nutritional status for consumers.



The bill affects conservation practices with influence over the sustainability and healthfulness of the food system.

## What issues are likely to dominate the 2018 Farm Bill debate?

1

Debate over **SNAP's nutritional integrity**, including fruit and vegetable incentives, retailer requirements, and removing unhealthy foods from eligibility.

2

Debate over **SNAP's fiscal integrity**, including increasing the benefit, introducing bimonthly payments, and modifying work requirements.

3

Debate over **crop insurance programs**, specifically how best to enable farmers to make sound production decisions while also managing operational risk.

4

Debate over **balancing land conservation programs** with farm productivity.