

House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Hal Rogers

Website address: <http://appropriations.house.gov/>

FY 2015 Omnibus Summary – Agriculture Appropriations ***Targets funding for programs that support American farmers and ranchers, sustains food and drug safety efforts***

The Agriculture Appropriations bill included in the Omnibus prioritizes funding to support American farmers and ranchers – including agriculture production, promotion, research, and marketing programs. The investments will help build upon the record level of U.S. agricultural exports last year which support more than one million American jobs, and which are essential to the nation's continued economic growth. The bill also funds important programs such as rural development, food and drug safety, and nutrition.

In total, the bill provides \$20.6 billion in discretionary funding – \$305 million below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level – while cutting back lower-priority programs and rescinding unused funds.

Agricultural Research – The bill provides \$2.7 billion for agriculture research programs, including the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Funding is targeted to help stop and mitigate devastating crop diseases, improve food safety and water quality, and help address issues related to drought, invasive species, and herbicide resistance.

Within this amount, the bill includes \$325 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative for competitive agricultural research grants, \$45 million to begin to rehabilitate the high-priority ARS facilities, and funding to maintain important investments in the nation's land-grant colleges and universities

Animal and Plant Health – The legislation includes \$871.3 million – a \$49.5 million increase above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level – for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This funding will support programs to control or eradicate plant and animal pests and diseases that can cripple U.S. producers and entire agricultural industries. This also includes increases to fight citrus greening and an epidemic porcine virus.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – The legislation provides \$1.5 billion for FSA, which is \$22 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level and \$66 million above the President's request. This funding will support more than \$6 billion in loan authorizations for farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs for American farmers and ranchers.

Rural Development – The bill provides a total of \$2.4 billion for rural development programs, which is \$173 million above the President’s request. These development programs help create an environment for economic growth by investing in basic infrastructure, providing loans for rural businesses and industries, and helping to balance the playing field for buyers in rural housing markets.

Food Safety and Inspection – The legislation includes more than \$1 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, \$5.8 million above the fiscal year 2014 enacted level. These mandatory inspection activities help ensure the safety and productivity of the country’s \$186 billion meat and poultry industry, and keep safe food on American tables. The funding provided will maintain more than 7,800 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities across the country.

The legislation also restricts the **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)** from implementing certain regulations that would allow harmful government interference in the private market for the livestock and poultry industry.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – The FDA receives a total of almost \$2.6 billion in discretionary funding in the bill, an increase of \$37 million over the fiscal year 2014 enacted level. Total funding for the FDA, including revenue from user fees, is \$4.5 billion. Within this total, food safety activities are increased by \$27.5 million, and various drug safety activities – including additional funds for foreign drug inspections, pharmacy compounding, and counterfeit drugs – are increased by over \$20 million.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) – CFTC is funded at \$250 million, which is \$30 million below the President’s budget request. The legislation also promotes transparency, with a directive requiring a vote by the full Commission – instead of just staff – on financial regulations that greatly increase regulatory burdens for ranchers, farmers, and job creators.

Conservation Programs – The bill provides \$859 million for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners conserve and protect their land. This includes \$12 million for dam rehabilitation to help rural communities ensure their small watershed projects meet current safety standards.

Food and Nutrition Programs – The legislation contains discretionary funding, as well as mandatory funding required by law, for food and nutrition programs within the Department of Agriculture. This includes the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Child Nutrition programs.

- **WIC** – This program provides supplemental nutritional foods needed by pregnant and nursing mothers, babies and young children. The bill provides full funding for WIC at \$6.6 billion – \$93 million below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level – which will ensure all eligible participants will be served. The bill also includes \$25 million for states to transfer from paper vouchers to a more efficient electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system that will help identify waste and abuse within the program.

In addition, a provision is included to ensure that all varieties of fresh vegetables, including **white potatoes**, are eligible for purchase through the WIC program. The provision also ensures that science-based requirements are used to determine which vegetables will be allowed for purchase in the WIC program.

- **Child nutrition programs** – The bill allows \$21.3 billion in required mandatory funding – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for child nutrition programs. Of this amount, \$25 million is directed to help schools purchase needed equipment to operate the program. This funding will provide for an estimated 7.7 billion school breakfasts, lunches and snacks for 31 million children who qualify for the program.

The bill also includes a provision that provides flexibility to local schools to implement whole grain nutrition standards if the school can demonstrate a hardship when procuring whole grain products, and that ensures further reductions in new sodium standards will not take effect until supported by additional scientific studies.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – The bill allows \$81.8 billion in required mandatory spending – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for SNAP. This is \$332 million below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level and \$2.4 billion below the President’s request. This program provides food assistance to a monthly average of more than 46 million Americans.

International Food Programs – The legislation contains \$1.5 billion for the Food for Peace program, which provides emergency food aid to those in need, and bolsters U.S security interests abroad – including in Iraq and Ebola-affected West-Africa. This is \$66 million above the President’s request. In addition, the bill provides \$192 million, \$7 million above the President’s request, for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program to support food security overseas.

Ebola Emergency Preparedness and Response – The bill provides \$25 million in emergency funding to the Food and Drug Administration for activities related to the ongoing response to the Ebola epidemic, including potential expedited approval of human drugs and vaccines.

#####