

House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Hal Rogers

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

FY 2016 Omnibus Summary – Agriculture Appropriations

Bill targets funding to programs that support American farmers and ranchers – promotes U.S. agriculture, free and fair markets, and safe food and medicines

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

In total, the bill provides \$21.75 billion in discretionary funding – \$925 million above the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$34 million below the President’s budget request – for these programs. This level reflects the increased domestic discretionary funding provided by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which was enacted on November 2.

Agricultural Research – The bill provides \$2.94 billion for agricultural research programs, including the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Increased funding is provided to help stop and mitigate devastating crop diseases, improve food safety and water quality, and address issues related to drought, invasive species, and animal health.

Within this amount, the bill includes \$350 million for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative for competitive agricultural research grants, \$212 million to rehabilitate 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 \$898 million – a \$23 million increase above the fiscal year 2015 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 for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, and to fight citrus greening and highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – The legislation provides \$1.51 billion for FSA, which is equal to the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$12 million above the President’s request. This funding

will support more than \$6.4 billion in loan authorizations for farm, conservation, and emergency loan programs for American farmers and ranchers.

Rural Development – The bill provides a total of \$2.8 billion for rural development programs, which is \$368 million above the fiscal year 2015 level and \$167 million above the President’s request. The legislation also provides \$36.7 billion in loan authorizations for rural communities to address housing, electrification and telecommunication needs. 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, \$1.6 million below the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$3.3 million above the President’s request. 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. This funding will maintain more than 8,000 frontline inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products at more than 6,400 facilities across the country.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – The FDA receives a total of \$2.72 billion in discretionary funding in the bill, an increase of \$132 million over the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$14 million below the President’s budget request. Total funding for the FDA, including revenue from user fees, is \$4.68 billion. Within this total, food safety activities are increased by \$104.5 million, and various medical product safety activities – including additional funds for the Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria initiative, orphan product development grants, foreign high-risk inspections, and precision medicine – are increased by over \$24.3 million.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) – CFTC is funded at \$250 million, which is equal to the fiscal year 2015 level and \$72 million below the President’s budget request. This agreement directs the agency to rein in its wasteful leasing costs totaling over \$60M as reported by the Inspector General and under review by the Government Accountability Office, and directs the CFTC to provide end-user relief by revising regulations for the Swap Dealer de Minimis exemption.

Conservation Programs – The bill provides \$864 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

\$6.35 billion – \$273 million below the fiscal year 2015 enacted level due to lower participation in the program. This funding will allow all eligible participants to receive their full allowed benefits. The bill also includes \$220 million for states to transition from paper vouchers to a more efficient electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system that will help identify waste and abuse within the program.

- **Child nutrition programs** – The bill allows \$22.1 billion in required mandatory funding – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for child nutrition programs. Of this amount, \$30 million is directed to help schools purchase needed equipment to operate the program. This funding will provide for an estimated 7.8 billion school breakfasts, lunches and snacks for 31 million children who qualify for the program.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – The bill allows \$80.8 billion in required mandatory spending – which is outside the discretionary funding jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee – for SNAP. This is \$988 million below the fiscal year 2015 enacted level and \$2.8 billion below the President’s request due to lower participation in the program. This funding will allow all eligible participants to receive their full allowed benefits.

International Food Programs – The legislation contains \$1.7 billion for the Food for Peace program, which provides emergency food aid to those in need and bolsters U.S. security interests abroad. This includes a one-time appropriation of \$250 million, designed to address the refugee crisis in the Middle East and other crises around the world. This is \$316 million above the President’s request. In addition, the bill provides \$202 million, \$10 million above the President’s request, for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program to support food security overseas.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program – The legislation provides \$130 million in disaster funding to address damage caused by recent floods and other natural disasters. The program is intended to conserve public and private resources by mitigating imminent hazards to life and property.

Policy Items:

The legislation includes several policy provisions, including:

- A provision repealing mandatory **Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)** requirements for certain meat products. The current, flawed requirement is in violation of World Trade Organization trade standards, and would have resulted in trade retaliation by other nations if continued – negatively impacting the U.S. economy by more than \$1 billion.
- A provision that provides grocery stores and food retailers regulatory relief by providing them a year delay or more in complying with the **menu labeling regulations**.

- A provision to amend FDA policy relating to the regulatory treatment of **partially hydrogenated oils** so that the baking industries and small businesses are not subject to frivolous lawsuits.
- A provision that ensures the final 2015 **Dietary Guidelines** for Americans are based on significant scientific agreement and are focused on nutritional and dietary information, and a provision requiring a review of the Dietary Guidelines process to ensure a balanced and scientific process in the future.
- 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.
- A provision that prevents FDA from reviewing applications related to **genome-editing** tools to modify the DNA of human embryos – the human germline – until serious and unquantifiable safety and ethical issues can be resolved.
- A provision that ensures further reductions in new school nutrition **sodium standards** will not take effect until supported by scientific studies.
- A provision that provides **relief to farmers**, placing them in control of their own crops instead of having to forfeit them to USDA during tough times.

For the full Committee Report on the Agriculture portion of the Omnibus, including a detailed funding table, please visit: <http://1.usa.gov/1RRMtGo>.

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