

Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018

Summary of Key Conservation Programs

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, more commonly known as the Farm Bill, reflects the vast majority of our recommendations as well as other opportunities to advance private land conservation across the country.

CONSERVATION TITLE

- **Maintains baseline funding at approximately \$6 billion per year.**
- Retains the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation at \$900,000 while granting the Secretary the authority to waive the limitation for lands of special environmental significance.
- Allows entities participating in any conservation program administered by the Secretary to participate in and receive compensation from an environmental services market if there are additional conservation benefits that are consistent with the purposes of the conservation program.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM/AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENTS (ACEP/ALE)

- **Increases funding from \$250 million annually to \$450 million annually.**
- Repeals 7 percent donor program requirement meaning all ACEP funding will stay with the ACEP program.
- Eliminates ALE plan requirement.
- Allows landowner donations and expenses to satisfy ALE match requirements.
- Retains the Adjusted Gross Income limitation at \$900,000 and grants the Secretary the authority to waive the limitation for lands of special environmental significance.

[Click here for a detailed breakdown of ACEP/ALE policies](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

- **Increases funding to \$300 million annually.**
- Creates new opportunity for funding a maximum of 15 projects per year through Alternative Funding Arrangements or Grant Agreements to achieve conservation benefits on a regional or watershed scale.
- Directs the Secretary to allocate 50 percent of the funds based on a State or multistate competitive process to be administered by the Secretary at the local level.
- Directs the Secretary to allocate 50 percent of the funds to projects for critical conservation areas.

[Click here for detailed information about RCPP policies](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)

- **Funded at the following levels: \$1.75 billion in fiscal year 2019, \$1.75 billion in fiscal year 2020, \$1.8 billion in fiscal year 2021, \$1.85 billion in fiscal year 2022 and \$2.025 billion in fiscal year 2023.**
- Authorizes soil testing and soil remediation as EQIP practices.

- Authorizes new conservation activity plans including conservation planning assessment, soil health planning, resource conserving crop rotation planning and precision conservation management planning.

[Click here for a detailed breakdown of EQIP policies](#)

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

- **Funded at the following levels: \$700 million in fiscal year 2019, \$725 million in fiscal year 2020, \$750 million in fiscal year 2021, \$800 million in fiscal year 2022, \$1 billion in fiscal year 2023.**
- Monetizes CSP and creates a separate pot of money.
- Eliminates the \$18 per acre payment rate and automatic renewals.
- Expands the definition of conservation activities by adding: a comprehensive conservation plan; soil health planning, including planning to increase soil organic matter; and activities that will assist a producer to adapt to, or mitigate against, increasing weather volatility.

[Click here for a detailed breakdown of CSP policies](#)

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- **Raises CRP cap from 24 million acres to 27 million acres while reforming program to be more cost effective.**
- Mandates that at least 2 million grassland acres must be enrolled by fiscal year 21.
- Mandates that at least 8.6 million acres of continuous practices must be enrolled by fiscal year 2023.
- Authorizes a Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers Initiative (CLEAR) and reserves 40 percent of continuous acres for CLEAR practices.

[Click here for a detailed breakdown of CRP policies](#)

FORESTRY TITLE

HEALTHY FORESTS RESERVE PROGRAM (HFRP)

- **Maintains annual funding authorization at \$12 million.**
- Expands eligibility for enrollment to include private forests and private lands that are being restored to forest and lands that will improve the well-being of species that are not listed as endangered or threatened, but are candidate for listing and deemed species of greatest conservation need by a state wildlife action plan.
- Removes the cap on the portion of HFRP that may be used for easements or cost-share agreements.

NUTRITION TITLE

- Combines the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program to establish the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) which will be funded at \$50 million per year.
 - Supports the development, coordination and expansion of direct producer-to-consumer marketing; local and regional food markets; and value-added agricultural products.
- Funds the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program at the following levels: \$45 million for fiscal year 19, \$48 million for fiscal years 20 and 21; \$53 million for fiscal year 22 and \$56 million for fiscal year 23 and each fiscal year thereafter.

OTHER

RELENDING PROGRAM TO RESOLVE OWNERSHIP AND SUCCESSION ON FARMLAND

- Allows the Secretary to make loans to eligible entities, who among other criteria have experience with assistance to socially disadvantaged, limited resource or new and beginning farmers and ranchers; rural businesses; cooperatives; or credit unions as well as experience in making and servicing agricultural and commercial loans.
- Allows these eligible entities to re-lend the loans for projects that assist heirs with undivided ownership interests to resolve ownership and succession on farmland with multiple owners.

ELIGIBILITY FOR OPERATORS ON HEIRS PROPERTY LAND TO OBTAIN A FARM NUMBER

- Outlines a list of acceptable documentation for residents seeking to secure a farm number.