



The Hand That Feeds U.S.

America Needs a Strong Farm Policy

Virtually every nation throughout history has had a farm policy. That's not surprising given the importance of food security and the inherent risks associated with farming. In America, the modern-day farm bill serves as the buffer to help producers deal with farming's pitfalls and ensures there is an abundant supply of affordable food available for our citizens.

Unfortunately, extremists on both ends of the political spectrum have joined together—with each expecting an opposite result—to gut the farm safety net. If successful, their well-funded attacks would disproportionately harm the farms producing 75% of the country's food and make it more difficult to feed a growing world population.



- 91% of Americans think it is important to produce our food here at home. *Source: Harris Interactive*
- With the world on course to host 9 billion people by 2050, an already thin line of 125,000 American farmers who today produce 75% of U.S. food and fiber will become much thinner without strong farm policy. *Source: USDA*
- Elimination of farm policy would likely do the most harm to full-time and larger part-time family farmers. This would leave on the one end hobby farmers who produce 2% of U.S. food and fiber, and on the other, farms forced into vertical integration to survive, creating the very “factory farms” that farm policy opponents claim to oppose.
- In the 2008 farm bill that underpins America’s agricultural production, only 16% of funding is dedicated to the farm safety net, including crop insurance—more than 70% goes to food and nutrition programs like food stamps. *Source: Congressional Budget Office*
- In fact, farm safety net funding has fallen sharply in the last decade and was slashed again in the 2008 farm bill by \$7.4 billion—today farm policy represents just one-quarter of one percent of the federal budget. *Source: Congressional Budget Office*
- U.S. commodity programs in the 2008 farm bill cost Americans just 2.3 cents per meal. What would be the cost to every consumer if U.S. agriculture were destabilized? *Source: Congressional Budget Office, U.S. Census*
- Compared to other major agricultural producers around the globe, the U.S. ranks near the bottom in terms of both direct assistance and tariff protections that help family farms survive and compete. *Source: Texas Tech University*

“It will not be doubted that with reference either to individual or national welfare agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population and other circumstances of maturity this truth becomes more apparent, and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage. Institutions for promoting it grow up, supported by the public purse; and to what object can it be dedicated with greater propriety?”

— President George Washington