

Driving Farm Policy that will Enhance Produce Competitiveness



Quick Facts

- Largest investment of federal resources with approximately \$800 million allocated annually to programs that help the competitiveness of the U.S. fruit and vegetable industry in the global marketplace.
- The Farm Bill is the largest single piece of legislation that is focused on how the agriculture industry in the United States operates. The 2018 Farm Bill is set to expire on September 30, 2023.
- Key initiatives include market access programs, nutrition priorities, targeted research, addressing pest and disease challenges, state and local market development grants, and urban agriculture.

Background

Specialty crop production in the U.S. accounts for \$66 billion in farm gate value which translates into about 33% of all farm crop cash receipts. The specialty crop industry has gone through tremendous change to satisfy consumer demand, adapt to new technology, and compete in an increasingly global marketplace. This is why we raise the importance of specialty crops today – not simply as one more sector of the agricultural economy, but as an important source of food for every American.

The specialty crop industry is united to advocate for a common set of priorities as Congress prepares to reauthorize the Farm Bill before it expires in 2023. A broad coalition of more than 120 specialty crop organizations, known as the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, represents the whole of the fruit, vegetable, and tree nut industry in the United States. The Alliance works to form common objectives that transcend different regions, commodities, and other interests, to support this vital source of food for American families.

Farm Policy Reform Today

In preparing for the 2023 Farm Bill debate, our industry supports these guiding principles as new policy is developed.

1. Healthy Americans. Expanding access and availability to safe, wholesome, healthy, and affordable foods, will encourage life-long healthy eating habits and help address national priorities such as obesity, heart disease, and food and nutrition insecurity.

2. Competitiveness and Sustainability. In recognition of its significance to American agriculture, the American food supply, and the communities it supports across the United States, a proportional share of farm bill resources and mandatory spending should be allocated to specialty crop priorities.

3. Trade and Foreign Competition. Preserving the critical supply chain for domestically sourced healthy foods in the

United States should be a national priority.

4. Research and Innovation. Scientific breakthroughs, technological innovation, and data-enabled decision making will continue to drive long-term sustainability and profitability of the specialty crop industry as it adapts to labor, climate, and environmental challenges, pests and diseases, rising global competitiveness, shifting consumer preferences, supply chain disruptions, and other challenges.

5. Natural Resources and Climate. The production methods and structure of certain specialty crop producers has historically inhibited their ability to participate in many USDA conservation programs. Recognizing the diverse nature and unique challenges involved in specialty crop production, enhance the ability of specialty crop producers to participate fully in all USDA conservation programs as well as any initiatives to address global climate change.