



November 28, 2017

Farm Bill Primer: Programs Without Baseline Beyond FY2018

The 2014 farm bill (the Agricultural Act of 2014, P.L. 113-79) authorized \$489 billion of mandatory spending over FY2014-FY2018. It generally expires at the end of FY2018. From a budgetary perspective, many of these programs are assumed to continue beyond their authorization. That is, they have a "baseline" beyond the end of the farm bill. Having a baseline essentially gives programs built-in future funding if policymakers decide that the programs should continue, or, if not, the baseline can be reallocated to other programs or used as an offset for deficit reduction.

However, a subset of programs that received mandatory funding in the 2014 farm bill does not have a baseline beyond the end of the farm bill. These are referred to as "farm bill programs without a baseline" and do not have assured future funding. Reauthorization in the next farm bill would have a positive score (cost) and likely need to be offset by reductions elsewhere.

Generally, a program with estimated mandatory spending in the last year of its authorization will be assumed to continue in the baseline as if there were no change in policy and it did not expire. Other programs, though, are not assumed to continue in the baseline, because they have mandatory spending less than a minimum \$50 million scoring threshold in the last year of the farm bill or were not given baseline to continue by the authorizing committees.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects future government spending in its budget baselines but has not specifically published a list of expiring farm bill programs without a continuing baseline. To compile this list, CRS analyzed the CBO score of the 2014 farm bill, the statutory text of the law, and current CBO baseline projection, looking for programs that received mandatory funding but do not have baseline beyond FY2018 (**Figure 1, Table 1**).

Millions, FY2014-FY2018 \$0 \$50 \$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 Small Watershed Rehabilitation Conservation Terminal Lakes \$455 million Voluntary Public Access Wetlands Mitigation Banking Grassroots Source Water Protection Biorefinery Assistance Energy Biomass Crop Assistance \$444 million Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels Biobased Markets Repowering Assistance Biomass Research and Development Biodiesel Fuel Education Foundation for Food and Ag Research Research Organic Agriculture Research and Extension \$400 million Beginning Farmer, Rancher Development Pilot Projects to Reduce Dependency Nutrition Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive \$355 million Northern Mariana Islands Pilot Retail Food Store and Recipient Trafficking Canned, Frozen, or Dried Fruits, Vegetables Food Distribution on Indian Reservations Cash Nutrition Assitance in Puerto Rico Wool Apparel Manufacturers Trust Fund Miscellaneous Pima Cotton Trust Fund \$268 million Socially Disadvantaged, Veteran Producers Wool Research and Promotion Sheep Production and Marketing Grant Rural Water and Waste Applications Rural Dev. Value-added Market Development Grants \$228 million Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Farmers' Market Promotion Horticulture National Organic Certification Cost-share \$218 million Organic Production and Market Data National Organic Program Upgrade Foreign Market Development Progam Trade Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops \$218 million Commodities, \$120 m. Commodity Program Implementation Crop Insurance Implementation Crop Insurance Index-based Weather Insurance Pilot \$120 million

Figure 1. 2014 Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline After FY2018

Source: Compiled by CRS using the text of P.L. 113-79; the CBO score of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Table 4, "Detailed Effects on Direct Spending," January 28, 2014; and the CBO Baseline Projection for USDA Mandatory Farm Programs, June 29, 2017.

Table 1. 2014 Farm Bill Programs Without Baseline

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Source: P.L. 113-79 and CRS Report R44758, Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline Beyond FY2018.

Based on this analysis, 39 programs across 10 of the 12 titles of the farm bill do not have a continuing baseline after FY2018. These programs had estimated mandatory spending totaling \$2.824 billion over the five-year window of the farm bill. Any extended authorization of these programs would be scored as new mandatory spending, which may require either offsets from existing baseline for other programs or an increase in net spending.

As a share of the \$489 billion five-year mandatory cost of the farm bill in 2014 when it was enacted, programs without a baseline beyond FY2018 are relatively small: 0.6% of the total projected farm bill spending, or 2.5% of the total excluding the nutrition programs. However, the impact of programs without a baseline varies by title of the farm bill.

Notable programs without continuing baseline include certain conservation programs; most of the bioenergy, rural development, and research title programs that received mandatory spending; various nutrition title pilot programs and studies; organic agriculture and farmers' market programs; trade promotion programs; and outreach to socially disadvantaged and military veteran farmers.

For the rural development title, 100% of the mandatory spending in the 2014 farm bill was by programs that do not have baseline beyond FY2018. For the bioenergy and research titles, the share was at least one-half. At the other extreme, nutrition programs and the farm safety net—including crop insurance and the commodity programs—have less than 1% in programs without a continuing baseline (CRS Report R44758, *Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline Beyond FY2018*).

With \$2.8 billion of programs without baseline, the 2014 farm bill has less dollar exposure to such programs than did the 2008 farm bill, which had 37 programs without baseline totaling an estimated \$9 billion to \$14 billion. The 2014 farm bill provided 29 of those 37 programs with \$6.2 billion of mandatory funding over FY2014-FY2018. Some of those programs reappear on the current list of 2014 farm bill programs without baseline, while others either received a continuing baseline or were not reauthorized.

CRS Products

CRS In Focus IF10783, Farm Bill Primer: Budget Issues.

CRS Report R44758, Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline Beyond FY2018.

CRS In Focus IF10187, The 2014 Farm Bill (Agricultural Act of 2014).

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