



Farm Bill Primer: Conservation Title

The conservation title of a farm bill generally contains reauthorizations, amendments, and new programs that encourage farmers and ranchers to voluntarily implement resource-conserving practices on private land. Starting in 1985, farm bills broadened the conservation agenda to include addressing multiple natural resource concerns. Although the number of conservation programs has increased and techniques to address resource problems continue to emerge, the basic approach has remained unchanged: provide financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to implement conservation systems supported by education and research programs.

As Congress considers authorizing the next farm bill, areas of possible interest in the conservation title may include funding, status of program authorization, and policy changes for conservation programs.

Conservation Program Portfolio

Farm bill-authorized conservation programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and can be grouped into the following categories: working lands programs, land retirement programs, easement programs, partnership and grant programs, and conservation compliance (see the **text box** below and CRS Report R47478, *Agricultural Conservation and the Next Farm Bill*).

Selected Farm Bill Conservation Programs

Working lands programs allow private land to remain in production while agriculture producers implement various conservation practices to address natural resource concerns specific to the area.

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

Land retirement programs provide payments to private agricultural landowners for temporary changes in land use and management to achieve environmental benefits.

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)—includes Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); Farmable Wetland Program; Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR30) Pilot; Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP); and Transition Incentives Program (TIP)

Easement programs voluntarily impose a permanent or long-term restriction on land use in exchange for a payment.

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

Partnership and grant programs use partnership agreements and grants to leverage program funding with nonfederal funding.

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials, Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (Feral Swine), and Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPAHIP)

Conservation compliance prohibits or limits a producer from receiving selected federal farm program benefits (including crop insurance premium subsidies) when conservation program requirements for highly erodible lands, wetlands, and production on native sod are not met.

- Highly erodible lands conservation (“Sodbuster”), wetland conservation (“Swampbuster”), and “Sodsaver”

Other types of agricultural conservation programs—such as watershed programs, emergency land rehabilitation programs, and technical assistance—have been authorized outside the farm bill. Most of these programs have permanent authorities and receive appropriations annually through the discretionary appropriations process. These programs generally are not addressed in farm bill legislation unless amendments to the program are proposed.

Title II (Conservation) of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334) reauthorized and amended portions of most farm bill-authorized conservation programs, although there was a focus on the large-cost programs, namely the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Most farm bill conservation programs are authorized to receive mandatory funding (i.e., do not require an appropriation).

Status and Recent Changes

In August 2022, Congress passed a budget reconciliation law (P.L. 117-169, 2022 law). As part of this 2022 law, Congress provided additional funding to EQIP, CSP, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and extended the authority for those programs through FY2031. Conservation programs not included in the 2022 law had authorities that expired with other farm bill programs at the end of FY2023. Congress enacted three one-year extensions through FY2026 and crop year 2026 (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102; P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101; and P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002). In July 2025, Congress passed another budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21, 2025 law), which repealed unobligated funds from the 2022 law for EQIP, CSP, ACEP, and RCPP and redistributed the funds provided to the four programs. The 2025 law gave a greater percentage to EQIP, CSP, and ACEP and a lower percentage to RCPP than those provided under the 2022 law. P.L. 119-21 also repurposed some of the rescinded conservation funding to other conservation programs that did not receive funding in the 2022 law, such

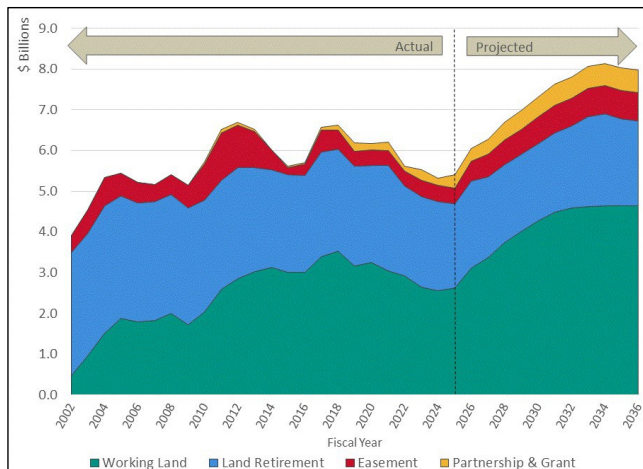
as the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations program. For additional information, see CRS In Focus IF13114, *Agricultural Conservation After Enactment of the FY2025 Budget Reconciliation Law (P.L. 119-21)*.

In the 119th Congress, the House Committee on Agriculture ordered reported a farm bill—the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567). The bill would reauthorize many of the expiring conservation programs, authorize new programs and initiatives, and alter funding for some programs, namely EQIP.

Funding for Conservation

The conservation title is one of the larger non-nutrition titles of the farm bill, accounting for over \$73.0 billion in projected 11-year mandatory funding (FY2026-FY2036), according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Spending for agricultural conservation programs generally has increased from \$2.3 billion in FY2002 (\$3.9 billion when adjusted for inflation) to an estimated \$5.2 billion in total outlays in FY2025 (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Farm Bill Conservation Program Actual and Projected Mandatory Spending, FY2002-FY2036
Outlays in billions of dollars (actuals adjusted for inflation)



Sources: CRS, using Congressional Budget Office (CBO) baseline data, FY2003-FY2026, and Office of Management and Budget, Table 10.1: “Gross Domestic Product [GDP] and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2031,” April 2026.

Notes: FY2002-FY2023 are actual spending levels; FY2024 and FY2025 are estimates. FY2002-FY2024 are adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars using the GDP price deflator. FY2026-FY2036 are projected spending levels in current-year dollars. Figure does not include sequestration or supplemental funding.

The majority of the funding increase has occurred in the working lands programs, specifically EQIP and CSP. Changes made to these programs in P.L. 119-21 result in a projected increase over the next 11 years (through FY2036). Funding for land retirement programs, namely CRP, has remained relatively constant over time when adjusted for inflation and is projected to continue at similar levels. Funding for easement programs and partnership and grant programs has historically fluctuated; however, P.L. 119-21 provided additional and increasing funding authority for both program types through FY2036. As

Congress considers the next farm bill, there could be continued discussion around how conservation funding is allocated between different program types.

Expiring Programs and Provisions

Authorities for conservation programs not included in the 2022 or 2025 reconciliation laws expired with other farm bill programs at the end of FY2023 and subsequently were extended through FY2026. The largest conservation program set to expire at the end of FY2026 is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP provides financial compensation for landowners to voluntarily remove land from agricultural production for multiple years, for the benefit of soil and water quality and wildlife habitats. CRP enrolls land based on a total, nationwide acreage cap (27 million acres in FY2026, as extended). CRP outlays are approximately \$2.0 billion annually, according to CBO. If authority expires, CRP cannot enroll new acres or reenroll expiring acres.

Other provisions contained within the conservation title of the 2018 farm bill have expired or will expire in FY2026, which could affect the function of agricultural conservation programs, regardless of their funding. For example, the 2018 farm bill limited the total amount of funding a producer may receive under both EQIP and CSP for the duration of the farm bill authorization (FY2019-FY2023). When the 2018 farm bill first expired and was extended through FY2024, the extension applied to the payment limits for both programs. This created a longer window of time that total payments would be calculated, thus possibly excluding producers at or near the limit. With each subsequent farm bill extension, the EQIP and CSP payment limit has been excluded, resulting in both programs having no payment limit for FY2025 and FY2026. Some advocacy groups have expressed concern that without payment limits, EQIP and CSP contracts may shift toward larger farming operations. Others counter that all farms, regardless of size, should be allowed access to conservation programs.

Policy Changes for Conservation

While P.L. 119-21 amended many conservation programs authorized to receive mandatory spending, the reconciliation process was limited to changes to mandatory spending that resulted in a budgetary effect and excluded policy changes to discretionary spending programs. As such, Congress may consider a number of policy amendments for conservation programs that previously could not be addressed as part of reconciliation. These could include issues related to eligibility requirements for programs, payment levels received by participants, and program limitations. Additional prioritization could be placed on specific resource concerns (e.g., greenhouse gas emission, wildlife habitat, water availability), practices (e.g., precision technology, organic certification), or applicants (e.g., beginning or limited-resource farmers or ranchers). As all conservation programs are funding- or enrollment-limited, any change in prioritization, eligibility, or payment level can effectively shift who may or may not receive a contract, easement, or grant under these programs.

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Farm Bill Primer: Energy Title

Omnibus farm bills have been enacted periodically to address agricultural and food programs. The most recent farm bill—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334)—contains 12 titles, including Title IX, Energy. It has been extended three times, most recently through FY2026 by P.L. 119-37, §5002. The 2018 farm bill is the fourth farm bill to contain an energy title. In preparation for another farm bill, Congress may examine funding and oversight of the energy title programs as well as (1) the effects of related requirements provided under non-agriculture legislation (e.g., the Renewable Fuel Standard [RFS]), (2) market activity for conventional energy (e.g., the price of oil), and (3) the opportunity to use biofuels in aircraft (e.g., sustainable aviation fuel) and in ships (e.g., sustainable maritime fuel).

This In Focus summarizes the 2018 farm bill energy title, energy title funding for the last four farm bills, legislative support for agriculture-related energy, and legislative issues as background and context for upcoming discussions about authorizing another farm bill. This In Focus reviews all sections of 7 U.S.C. Ch. 107, Renewable Energy Research and Development, as well as sections enacted under other titles of the 2018 farm bill.

2018 Farm Bill Energy Title

The 2018 farm bill energy title primarily focused on support for renewable energy—particularly agriculture-related energy—as well as energy efficiency and bioproducts (e.g., bio-based cleaning supplies). The 2018 farm bill authorized 12 energy programs and initiatives. This total included reauthorization of 11 activities and establishment of one new program—the Carbon Utilization and Biogas Education Program. The law repealed one program and one initiative—the Repowering Assistance Program and the Rural Energy Self-Sufficiency Initiative, respectively. The 12 authorized programs and initiatives are

- 7 U.S.C. §8102: Biobased Markets Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8103: Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance (Program);
- 7 U.S.C. §8105: Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels;
- 7 U.S.C. §8106: Biodiesel Fuel Education Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8107: Rural Energy for America Program (REAP);
- 7 U.S.C. §8107a: Rural Energy Savings Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8108: Biomass Research and Development (Initiative);
- 7 U.S.C. §8110: Feedstock Flexibility Program for Bioenergy Producers;
- 7 U.S.C. §8111: Biomass Crop Assistance Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8113: Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8114: Sun Grant Program; and
- 7 U.S.C. §8115: Carbon Utilization and Biogas Education Program.

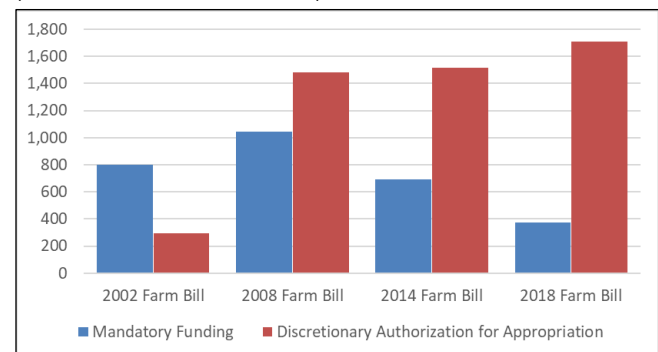
- 7 U.S.C. §8102: Biobased Markets Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8103: Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance (Program);
- 7 U.S.C. §8105: Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels;
- 7 U.S.C. §8106: Biodiesel Fuel Education Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8107: Rural Energy for America Program (REAP);
- 7 U.S.C. §8107a: Rural Energy Savings Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8108: Biomass Research and Development (Initiative);
- 7 U.S.C. §8110: Feedstock Flexibility Program for Bioenergy Producers;
- 7 U.S.C. §8111: Biomass Crop Assistance Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8113: Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program;
- 7 U.S.C. §8114: Sun Grant Program; and
- 7 U.S.C. §8115: Carbon Utilization and Biogas Education Program.

Of the 11 reauthorized activities, seven programs and one initiative were amended under the 2018 farm bill (§8102, §8103, §8105, §8107, §8107a, §8108, §8111, and §8113), and three programs generally were unchanged (§8106, §8110, and §8114). For more discussion of the energy title programs, see CRS In Focus IF10288, *Overview of the 2018 Farm Bill Energy Title Programs*, by Kelsi Bracmort.

Energy Title Funding

Like previous bills, the 2018 farm bill addresses funding for Title IX programs. The five-year FY2019-FY2023 total mandatory funding and the total discretionary funding authorized to be appropriated are \$375 million and \$1.7 billion, respectively (see **Figure 1**). The mandatory funding for the energy title comprises approximately 0.1% of the Congressional Budget Office's 2018 farm bill total mandatory program estimate of \$428 billion over the same five-year period.

Figure 1. Energy Title Funding in 2002-2018 Farm Bills
(in millions of dollars, nominal)



Sources: P.L. 107-171, P.L. 110-246, P.L. 113-79, P.L. 115-334.

Note: Mandatory funding for the 2002 farm bill covered a six-year period, whereas the other farm bills covered a five-year period.

Mandatory funding for the energy title has varied in each bill—with the largest amount, approximately \$1 billion (nominal) over five years, provided in the 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-246). Nominal mandatory funding has declined in each farm bill since. Under the 2018 farm bill, five programs received mandatory funding, fewer than before. The §8103 and §8107 programs combined constitute close to 87% of the total mandatory funding in Title IX.

Nominal discretionary authorizations for appropriations increased over the last three farm bills. Under the 2018 farm bill, discretionary funding is authorized for all but one

of the energy title programs—the §8110 program. For most of the programs receiving both mandatory and discretionary funding, the discretionary authorization is almost equivalent to or exceeds the mandatory funding amount. However, total discretionary appropriations after the 2018 farm bill have been lower than the amounts authorized to be appropriated. Four programs have received discretionary funding under the 2018 farm bill: §8107, §8107a, §8113, and §8114.

Agriculture-Related Energy

Agriculture-related energy is defined, for the purposes herein, as energy derived from agricultural or forestry feedstocks (e.g., crops, woody biomass, food waste, manure). Agriculture-related energy, or *bioenergy*, may be in the form of liquid transportation fuels, electric power, or heat. The most prevalent form is ethanol—a liquid fuel commonly blended with gasoline for use in motor vehicles.

There are opportunities and challenges associated with bioenergy production. Bioenergy often is viewed as renewable and as having fewer detrimental environmental effects than many conventional energy sources. However, disagreement exists about the environmental effects of certain types of bioenergy (e.g., greenhouse gas emission impacts of cornstarch ethanol, land-use changes, water quality impacts). Some view bioenergy as having the potential to stimulate economic development in rural areas. However, there can be limitations—primarily infrastructure and economic—to the production, distribution, and consumption of bioenergy.

Legislative Support for Agriculture-Related Energy

Congress has supported agriculture-related energy for more than 40 years through energy, agriculture, and tax laws. One of Congress's initial measures to support agriculture-related energy was the Energy Security Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-294). This act established a biomass energy program, including an Office of Alcohol Fuels within the Department of Energy, a municipal waste biomass energy program, and several initiatives for forestry energy. Congress created an energy title in the 2002 farm bill (P.L. 107-171), which assisted farmers with purchasing renewable energy systems and increasing energy efficiency. This agricultural legislation was followed by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58), which established the RFS that mandates U.S. transportation fuel contain a minimum volume of biofuel, and by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140), which expanded the mandate. Congress subsequently passed the 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-246), which renewed authorization for and expanded renewable energy programs established in the 2002 farm bill, and the 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79), which extended most of the renewable energy provisions of the 2008 farm bill. Congress then passed the 2018 farm bill, which extended most of the 2014 renewable energy provisions.

Congress established tax incentives for biofuels, including the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit (which expired in 2011) and the Biodiesel Tax Credit (which expired in 2024) in the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-357). P.L. 117-169, commonly known as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), extended certain tax

incentives for biofuels, including biodiesel and renewable diesel, through the end of 2024. The law also established a sustainable aviation fuel tax credit that would, after 2024, have been absorbed into a new clean fuel production credit (CFPC), available through 2027. The 2025 reconciliation act (P.L. 119-21) modified the CFPC in significant ways and extended it through 2029. The act also reinstated the small agri-biodiesel producer credit through the end of 2026, doubled its value from 10 cents to 20 cents per gallon, and allowed fuel producers to claim both that credit and the CFPC for the same fuel.

Legislative Issues

As Congress prepares for another farm bill, it may assess agriculture-related energy in at least three domains—agriculture, the environment, and economic development. Potential issues for Congress include (1) the amount of discretionary and mandatory funding provided for 2018 farm bill energy title programs, (2) the impact of the IRA's financial support on energy title programs, and (3) the impact of energy title programs on other legislative efforts (e.g., the RFS, fuel tax incentives).

Congress may consider a few points specific to the energy title programs when addressing the aforementioned issues. First, with the exception of REAP, many of the energy title programs lack a budget baseline—a projection at a particular point in time of what future federal spending on mandatory programs would be under current law. Thus, a reauthorization of some of the energy title programs in the 2018 farm bill could be scored as new mandatory spending and may require budgetary offsets to pay for it.

Second, in the past, authorizations have exceeded discretionary appropriations for the energy title programs. Going forward, some may assert that Congress does not need to provide discretionary funding because some of the energy title programs receive mandatory funding. Others may contend that the programs cannot be fully effective if Congress does not appropriate the discretionary funding.

Third, the relationship between other policy mechanisms (e.g., consumption mandates, tax incentives) and the energy title programs remains an issue. To date, the discussion about agriculture-related energy has mostly focused on liquid transportation fuels (e.g., ethanol) for vehicles. Tax policy and energy policy have maintained this focus with the RFS and certain credits. In addition, some in Congress advocate to expand the use of higher blends of ethanol, such as E15. Congress may debate whether to direct support to other types of agriculture-related energy.

Lastly, supplies of oil and natural gas, along with both energy and agricultural commodity prices, are a consideration when discussing the energy title programs. The energy title programs were established and expanded partly in response to high energy prices and concerns about energy independence. Given current economic conditions and the priorities of the Trump Administration, it is not clear what the interplay will be between agriculture-related energy prices and oil and natural gas prices.

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Farm Bill Primer: SNAP and Nutrition Title Programs

The Nutrition title of the farm bill typically reauthorizes a number of nutrition or domestic food assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp program). These programs were last reauthorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334) through September 30, 2023, and then were subsequently extended to September 30, 2026, via three one-year extensions (P.L. 118-22, P.L. 118-158, P.L. 119-37). The 2025 budget reconciliation bill (H.R. 1, P.L. 119-21) made changes to SNAP’s financing as well as eligibility (work and citizenship specifically) and benefit calculation rules. The 119th Congress has begun work on a 2026 farm bill that would reauthorize farm bill nutrition programs through September 30, 2031 (see H.R. 7567).

The child nutrition programs (e.g., the National School Lunch Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]) are typically reauthorized in a child nutrition reauthorization bill—not a farm bill.

Nutrition Programs Typically Reauthorized in a Farm Bill

The major programs, included in several different permanent statutes, reauthorized in the 2018 farm bill were

- SNAP and related grant programs (e.g., SNAP Employment & Training);
- Programs in lieu of SNAP: **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Nutrition Assistance Program** grants for several territories;
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP);**
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP);**
- **Community Food Projects;**
- **Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP);** and
- **Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)** grants.

These programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), (except for GusNIP, administered by USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture [NIFA]). SNAP is the largest of USDA’s domestic food assistance programs, in both participation and spending. (See **Table 1** for statistics and program summaries.)

Funding

According to the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO’s) February 2026 estimate of projected costs for farm bill programs for FY2027-FY2036, the Nutrition title makes up approximately 72% of farm bill mandatory spending.

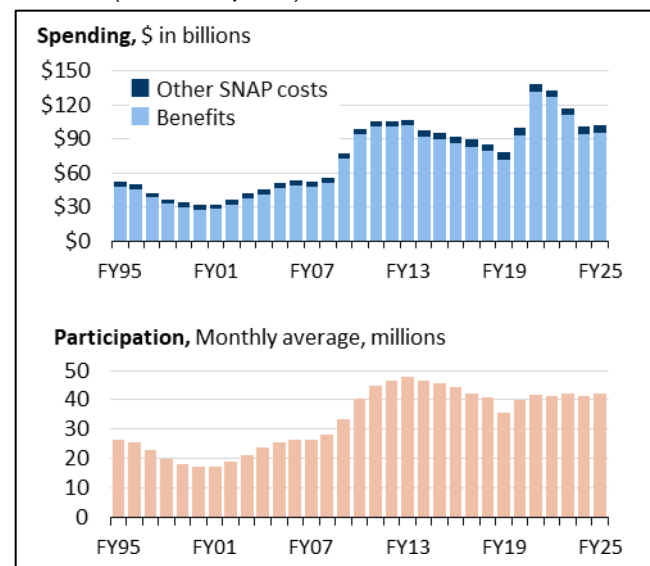
SNAP is authorized as open-ended mandatory spending and is funded through appropriations laws. As such, amending SNAP eligibility, benefits, or other program rules can have

a budgetary impact. At the same time, the availability of appropriated funding also affects SNAP’s operation.

SNAP’s spending is generally driven by program participation, which can fluctuate due to economic conditions and program rules (see **Figure 1**). In recent years, during and after time-limited pandemic-era benefit increases, federal spending declined while participation was steady. In FY2025, 93% of SNAP spending was for the benefits themselves. Administrative costs of eligibility determination and benefit issuance are shared between the state/territory and federal government. Other SNAP spending includes funds for nutrition education and Employment and Training (E&T).

Figure 1. SNAP Participation and Federal Spending, FY1995-FY2025

Constant (inflation-adjusted) FY2025 dollars



Source: CRS, using USDA, FNS administrative data. Spending amounts in FY2025 dollars: “Benefits” adjusted using CPI-U Food at Home index; “Other SNAP costs” adjusted using CPI-U for All Consumers index. Spending includes additional amounts provided in Great Recession and COVID-19 response laws.

The programs in lieu of SNAP (except for a small amount of FDPIR) are also mandatory spending. TEFAP’s “entitlement commodity” funds for food are mandatory spending, while the program’s administrative costs are discretionary. CSFP is discretionary spending. SFMNP and GusNIP receive mandatory funding from sources outside of annual appropriations bills.

Nutrition in Recent Farm Bills

Congressional consideration of the 2018 (Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018; P.L. 115-334) and 2014 farm bills (Agricultural Act of 2014; P.L. 113-79) included debate centered on SNAP’s work requirements and other eligibility rules. The enacted 2018 farm bill reconciled

significant differences between the House- and Senate-passed SNAP provisions, ultimately making few eligibility changes. Among other policies, the 2018 law required periodic re-evaluations of the Thrifty Food Plan (the basis of the maximum SNAP benefit). The Biden Administration's 2021 implementation of this provision (increasing SNAP benefit amounts by approximately 21%) has been a recent point of contention. Aside from SNAP policies, recent farm bills increased federal resources for emergency feeding organizations (through TEFAP) and low-income households' purchase of fruits and vegetables (through GusNIP).

Related CRS Reports:

CRS Report R48552, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Related Nutrition Programs in P.L. 119-21: An Overview*

CRS Report R42505, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): A Primer on Eligibility and Benefits*

CRS Report R45408, *The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): Background and Funding*

Table I. Major Nutrition Programs in the 2018 Farm Bill

Program	Authorizing Statute	Program Summary	FY2026 Funding	FY2025 Participation
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly, Food Stamp program)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§§1 et seq.)	Provides to low-income households electronic benefits redeemable for SNAP-eligible foods at SNAP-eligible retailers. Benefit amounts vary by household size and benefit calculation rules. Non-benefit SNAP funding for matching states' administrative costs, Employment & Training, nutrition education, and other SNAP-related costs. Operates in 50 states, District of Columbia, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.	\$103.955 billion	42.38 million in an average month
Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Block Grants	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§28)	Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) receive capped funding to administer respective nutrition programs under terms negotiated with Memoranda of Understanding with USDA.	\$3.035 billion	1.25 million
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§27); Emergency Food Assistance Act (§204(a))	Provides USDA-purchased food commodities (and cash support for storage and distribution costs) through states to local emergency feeding organizations (e.g., food banks).	\$552 million ^a	Not available
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (§4(a))	Provides supplemental monthly food packages to low-income seniors.	\$460 million	700,700 in an average month
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§4(b)); Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (§4(a))	Provides, in lieu of SNAP benefits, food commodities to low-income households on Indian reservations and to Native American families residing in Oklahoma or in designated areas near Oklahoma.	\$239 million	58,000 in an average month
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)	Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (§4002)	Provides vouchers/coupons to low-income seniors to purchase fresh produce at farmers' markets and other direct-to-consumer venues.	\$21 million ^b	758,000 (FY2022)
Community Food Projects (CFP)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§25)	Competitive grants to nonprofit organizations for programs that improve access to locally produced food for low-income households.	\$5 million	Not available
Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)	Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (§4405)	Competitive grants for projects that increase low-income consumers' purchase of fruits and vegetables by providing incentives at SNAP points of purchase and (added by 2018 farm bill) providing produce prescriptions to SNAP/Medicaid participants.	\$56 million ^c	Not available

Source: Funding for SNAP, FDPIR, TEFAP, CFP, and CSFP are FY2026 appropriations from P.L. 119-37 and the accompanying explanatory statement. SNAP and FDPIR funding amounts are largely based on the demand for the programs' benefits and services, so appropriations figures usually overestimate those programs' annual cost. Funding for GusNIP, FFVP, and SFMNP are based on the mandatory funds authorized by the programs' authorizing laws. Participation data are from USDA, FNS, "September 2025 Keydata Report," December 23, 2025, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/overview/keydata-sept2025>, unless otherwise noted. NAP data are from the FNS FY2027 congressional budget justification and a CRS request to FNS (<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2027-Chapter-34-FNS.pdf>). Data are preliminary for FY2025 and may be revised in future releases as reporting agencies finalize data. SFMNP participation data are from the FNS program website (2022 data are the most recent available).

- TEFAP appropriation is for entitlement foods and administrative funds; does not include the value of bonus foods distributed through TEFAP, which has ranged from \$1 billion to \$2 billion since FY2019.
- SFMNP funding is provided by a transfer from the Commodity Credit Corporation; the transfer is authorized by the program's authorizing language. Amount shown is the authorized transfer for FY2026.
- GusNIP's mandatory funding is provided by a transfer from the Commodity Credit Corporation; the transfer is authorized by the program's authorizing language. Amount shown is the authorized transfer for FY2026.

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Farm Bill Primer: Trade and Export Promotion Programs

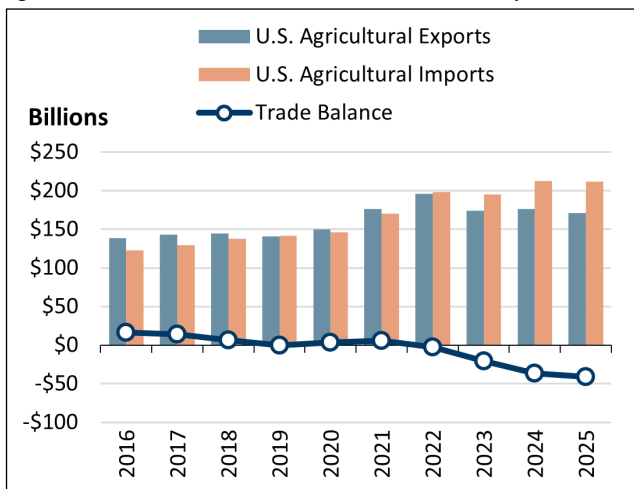
Agricultural exports are significant to farmers and the U.S. economy. With the productivity of U.S. agriculture growing faster than domestic demand, farmers and agriculturally oriented firms rely on export markets to sustain prices and revenue. The trade title of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334) authorized export market development programs and export credit guarantee programs from FY2019 to FY2023 to expand foreign markets for U.S. farmers and food manufacturers. Subsequent legislation extended the authorizations through FY2026 (P.L. 119-37). These market expansion programs derive their statutory authorities from the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-501), as amended. The trade title of the 2018 farm bill also includes international food assistance programs and international technical assistance and exchange programs and provisions, which are not addressed in this In Focus.

Trade Situation Overview

In 2025, U.S. food and agricultural exports totaled \$171 billion, and U.S. imports totaled \$212 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$41 billion (Figure 1), according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data. Bulk commodities, such as corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice, are the leading U.S. farm exports. Leading consumer-oriented exports include tree nuts, dairy, meat and poultry, fruits, and vegetables. In 2025, about 50% of U.S. agricultural exports were destined for the top four U.S. export markets: Mexico, Canada, the European Union, and Japan.

Figure 1. Value of U.S. Agricultural Trade

Figure is interactive in the HTML version of this report.



Source: CRS from USDA's Global Agricultural Trade System data. Data are not adjusted for inflation. Trade balance constructed as imports subtracted from exports.

The U.S. agricultural trade surplus peaked at \$40.1 billion in 2011. It has since fallen and was a trade deficit in 2019 and between 2022 and 2025. Many attribute the rise in U.S. food and agricultural imports to increasing domestic demand for imported, consumer-oriented goods, such as fruits, vegetables, alcoholic beverages, beef, and coffee products.

Trade Provisions in the Farm Bill

The trade title of a farm bill generally contains reauthorizations and amendments for agricultural export programs and other trade-related provisions.

Export Market Development Programs

Export promotion programs are authorized under a single Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation (ATPF) umbrella program administered by USDA. Programs are authorized to receive mandatory funding of \$255 million annually through FY2026, as extended (7 U.S.C. §5623, P.L. 119-37).

- **Market Access Program (MAP)** provides cost-sharing of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial markets for U.S. agricultural exports (no less than \$200 million per year).
- **Foreign Market Development (FMD) Cooperator Program** funds projects that address long-term opportunities to reduce foreign import constraints or expand export growth opportunities (no less than \$34.5 million per year).
- **E. (Kika) de la Garza Emerging Markets Program** provides cost-sharing for technical assistance to support generic U.S. agricultural exports (no more than \$8 million per year).
- **Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops** funds projects addressing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and technical trade barriers to U.S. specialty crop exports (\$9 million per year).
- **Priority Trade Fund** supports activities to access, develop, maintain, and expand markets for U.S. agricultural exports (\$3.5 million per year).

The farm bill authorizes USDA to fund MAP and FMD activities in Cuba, which otherwise would be prohibited (7 U.S.C. §5623(f)(4)).

Export Credit Guarantee Programs

The farm bill authorizes \$1 billion in export credit guarantees annually through FY2026, as extended, for

exports to emerging markets (7 U.S.C. §5622 note, P.L. 119-37). Additionally, \$5.5 billion is available annually with no funding expiration date (7 U.S.C. §5641(b)). Export credit guarantees are carried out under two programs.

- **GSM-102 Program** provides credit guarantees to finance commercial U.S. agricultural exports mainly to developing countries.
- **Facility Guarantee Program (FGP)** provides payment guarantees to improve or establish agriculture-related facilities in emerging markets.

Under these programs, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) provides payment guarantees on commercial financing and assumes the risk of default on payments by the foreign purchasers on loans to facilitate U.S. exports.

Other Export-Related Provisions

The farm bill authorizes appropriations for the Biotechnology and Agricultural Trade Program with discretionary funding of \$2 million through FY2026, as extended (7 U.S.C. §5679, P.L. 119-37). The program funds grants for public and private sector projects that address nontariff regulatory barriers (e.g., SPS) to U.S. agricultural exports.

Administrative Actions

For FY2024 and FY2025, USDA allocated \$300 million annually for a new export promotion program called the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP). In November 2025, USDA announced \$285 million in funding availability for the America First Trade Promotion Program (AFTPP), a new export promotion program that runs through FY2028 and operates under RAPP regulations (7 C.F.R. §1489). AFTPP and RAPP are authorized and funded by the CCC Charter Act (15 U.S.C. §714c(f)).

USDA uses the same CCC authority to fund the Quality Samples Program (QSP), which promotes U.S. agricultural products. QSP is annually funded at \$2.5 million.

FY2025 Budget Reconciliation Law

The FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21) is to provide USDA \$285 million annually from mandatory CCC funding for a supplemental agricultural trade promotion program indefinitely starting in FY2027 (7 U.S.C. §5623a).

Issues and Options

As Congress considers a next farm bill and issues related to U.S. agricultural trade promotion, it may evaluate, reauthorize, modify, or end existing programs or establish new programs and initiatives. Congress may also evaluate U.S. agricultural trade policy and objectives.

Export Promotion Programs. Critics of export promotion programs claim the programs provide federal support for activities that private firms could otherwise fund.

Supporters claim the programs keep U.S. agricultural products competitive overseas, diversify market opportunities, help generate additional farm income, and increase farm and food sector jobs. Some U.S. agricultural

trade and producer groups have sought increased funding for export promotion and market development programs.

Trade Policy. Some U.S. government officials and industry stakeholders have expressed interest in addressing certain policies of U.S. trading partners that may be impeding U.S. agricultural exports; others seek to address foreign export and import competition. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR's) annual *National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers* for 2026 highlights a range of tariff and nontariff trade barriers.

Overview of H.R. 7567 Trade Provisions

In the 119th Congress, the trade title of H.R. 7567, the farm bill as ordered reported by the House Committee on Agriculture, addresses some of the issues mentioned above. Several provisions in H.R. 7567 incorporate aspects of stand-alone bills on export promotion and agricultural trade policy (e.g., H.R. 1086, H.R. 2322/S. 1119, and H.R. 5620).

H.R. 7567 would nearly double mandatory CCC funding for ATPF programs beginning in FY2027 for a total of \$500 million and further increase to \$533 million annually for FY2028 through FY2031. Another provision would create an FMD subprogram that would address infrastructure deficiencies in foreign markets that could damage U.S. agricultural exports. The bill would repeal the export program established by P.L. 119-21 and repeal the provision prohibiting MAP from assisting the U.S. mink industry (7 U.S.C. §5623 note).

H.R. 7567 would require USDA and USTR to negotiate with foreign governments to ensure the right to use common names for U.S. agricultural and food products in foreign markets that might otherwise be prohibited due to geographical indication protections. Another provision would establish an interagency agricultural trade enforcement task force to identify agricultural trade barriers that are “vulnerable to dispute settlement” under trade agreements and to enforce trade agreement violations, with a particular focus on India's agricultural subsidies. The bill also would create an interagency working group to monitor and assess trade-related information about seasonal and perishable fruits and vegetables and coordinate on trade actions and investigations.

The trade title in H.R. 7567 also proposes reporting requirements. For example, the Government Accountability Office would be required to submit a report to Congress on policy options for USDA to support the competitiveness of U.S. seafood producers in global and domestic markets. Other provisions would require USDA along with USTR to submit a report to Congress on how potential changes to or termination of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement may affect U.S. agriculture and a report on the effect on U.S. beef and cattle markets due to changes to U.S. tariff-rate quotas on Argentine beef imports.

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Year-Round Sale of E15

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E15—a fuel blend of up to 15% ethanol and 85% gasoline—generally cannot be sold during the summer driving season (June 1–September 15) because it does not meet **gasoline Reid vapor pressure (RVP)** requirements, which limit fuel volatility under the Clean Air Act (CAA). The statute allows the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator to issue a **temporary fuel waiver** of these requirements ([42 U.S.C. §7545\(c\)\(4\)\(C\)\(ii\)](#)) under certain conditions. On March 25, 2026, EPA issued the **first nationwide fuel waiver** for the 2026 summer driving season. The waiver allows E15 to be sold during the summer driving season, in part, to address extreme and unusual fuel circumstances that EPA states are “the result of ongoing issues in the Middle East, among other events.” EPA also states its “intention to issue new waivers effectively extending (renewing) these waivers until such time as the ... circumstances described in this action are no longer present.”

President Trump’s January 20, 2025, Executive Order (E.O.) 14156, “**Declaring a National Energy Emergency**,” included a provision about the year-round sale of E15. The order (Section 2(b)) states,

Consistent with 42 U.S.C. 7545(c)(4)(C)(ii)(III), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, after consultation with, and concurrence by, the Secretary of Energy, shall consider issuing emergency fuel waivers to allow the year-round sale of E15 gasoline to meet any projected temporary shortfalls in the supply of gasoline across the Nation.

The statutory provision referenced in the E.O. is the third of three factors the EPA Administrator must consider when determining whether to issue a temporary fuel waiver: whether the waiver is “**in the public interest**.” The E.O. directs the EPA Administrator to consider issuing—but does not require the Administrator to issue—temporary fuel waivers that would allow for the year-round sale of E15. In light of the statutory limit that requires waivers to be **effective for a period of 20 calendar days or shorter**, to achieve the year-round sale of E15, the EPA Administrator would have to issue a series of consecutive waivers as was done for prior **summer driving seasons**.

Congress has explored legislative options pertaining to the year-round sale of E15. In January 2026, the House passed **H.Res. 375**, which established an E-15 Rural Domestic Energy Council and directed the council to investigate the sale of E15, to develop legislative solutions, and to submit those solutions to Congress, among other things. Bills in the 119th Congress propose permanent year-round sales of E15 (**S. 593** and **H.R. 1346**). Some Members of Congress **request** that “[a]ny legislative movement on E15 must be conditioned upon meaningful reforms to the **Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS)**.” E15 legislation was included in a short-term FY2025 spending bill introduced in the House in December 2024 (**H.R. 10445**,

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118th Congress) but was not included in the FY2025 continuing resolution package that became law ([P.L. 118-158](#)).

Clean Air Act RVP Requirements

The CAA authorizes the EPA Administrator to [regulate fuels and fuel additives](#). The act regulates (among other pollutants) precursors for [ground-level ozone](#), a primary component of smog, which has been found to negatively impact human health and welfare, among other effects. One of the requirements intended to reduce smog is a limit on gasoline volatility because volatile organic compounds within gasoline evaporate more readily at higher temperatures (e.g., during the summer months) and can contribute to smog formation. RVP is a common metric of volatility—the lower the RVP, the less the substance will evaporate. RVP requirements in [Section 211\(h\) of the CAA](#)—which apply to the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia—generally prohibit the sale of gasoline with an RVP greater than 9.0 pounds per square inch (psi) during the high-ozone season (i.e., the summer months). In 2012, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL; renamed the National Laboratory of the Rockies [NLR] in December 2025) [reported](#) that the addition of 10% ethanol to gasoline increases the RVP of the blend by about 1.0 psi.

The CAA provides some exceptions, including a waiver—the “one-pound waiver”—stipulating that ethanol-gasoline fuel blends containing 10% ethanol (E10) are subject to an RVP limit that is 1.0 psi greater than what would otherwise apply given certain conditions (e.g., the 9.0 psi standard for certain areas would subject E10 to a 10.0 psi limit). The waiver does not apply to [reformulated gasoline](#) (RFG); there is a 7.4 psi RVP standard for RFG. EPA [reports](#) that about 25% of gasoline sold in the United States is RFG. In addition, [according to EPA](#), the waiver “does not apply in areas where EPA has approved a regulation into a state implementation plan (SIP) that limits the applicability of the 1.0 psi allowance.” States may petition EPA to remove the 1-psi waiver for gasoline-ethanol blends containing 10% ethanol (E10) ([42 U.S.C. §7545\(h\)\(5\)](#)). Some states have taken advantage of this [option](#). The regulations for gasoline RVP standards are available at [40 C.F.R. §1090.215](#).

Congressional Issues

NREL [reported](#) in 2012 that “the RVP impact of 15% ethanol is indistinguishable from that of 10% ethanol in gasoline for all volatility seasons and base hydrocarbon vapor pressures,” and “there is no technical reason for treating E10 differently from E15.” In general, it appears that greater substitution of E10 with E15 may not lead to material emissions changes; however, there could be other market impacts associated with E15. Thus, the sale of E15 year-round involves other concerns that Congress may consider, including the following:

- How much consumer demand is there for E15?
- Would the additional use of ethanol for E15 reduce consumer gasoline prices?
- Who pays to install E15 fueling infrastructure (e.g., blender pumps)?
- Would the rural economy benefit from year-round sale of E15?
- What impact might additional sales of E15 have on the RFS program?
- Would the additional use of ethanol for E15 raise environmental concerns?
- What effect, if any, will California’s October 2025 [authorization of the sale of E15](#)—while state entities [review whether E15 can meet California’s clean air requirements](#)—have on national markets for ethanol and other transportation fuels?

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