

United States Senate Committee on
**AGRICULTURE
NUTRITION
& FORESTRY**

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

**Recommendations to the Joint Select
Committee on Deficit Reduction**

Titles I & XI – Production Agriculture

Eliminates Direct Payments

Direct Payments, Counter-Cyclical Payments (CCPs), Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program, and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program expire, creating \$15 in savings for deficit reduction.

Strengthens Crop Insurance

Expands crop insurance coverage for underserved crops, including fruit and vegetable producers. Addresses the declining Actual Production History (APH) yield problem by increasing the county transitional yield. Creates a stand-alone revenue protection program for cotton growers and allows for expanded supplemental area-wide revenue coverage for all other producers.

Simplified Risk Management

Farmers will have access to a risk-based coverage program, the Ag Risk Coverage (ARC) program, to protect against both price and yield losses. The Marketing Loan Program will be maintained except for changes to cotton to comply with the Brazil WTO lawsuit. The ARC revenue program provides coverage, supplemental to crop insurance, starting at 87 percent of an individual producer's 5-year Olympic average revenue, with a maximum payment of 12 percent to prevent overlap with crop insurance. If a producer has a yield or price loss beyond 13 percent, producers will receive payments on 60 percent of planted acres including acres that were prevented from being planted. As an alternative to the ARC revenue coverage, a producer can elect a price-only coverage option which provides support on 85 percent of planted acres whenever prices in the first 5 months of the marketing year fall below the reference price.

Ends Farm Payments to Millionaires

Any person or entity with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of more than \$950,000 will be ineligible for payments from Title I Farm Bill programs.

Maintains Existing Payment Limits of \$105,000 per Producer

Individual producers cannot receive any payments in excess of \$105,000 from the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) programs.

Stronger Dairy Safety Net

Two new programs replace existing dairy programs. The Dairy Producer Market Protection Program (DPMPP) is a voluntary program that provides margin-based assistance for producers equal to the difference between the all-milk price and a national feed cost, and the Dairy Market Stabilization Program (DMSP) promotes growth while encouraging producers who participate in DPMPP to scale down production when the market is oversupplied. These programs replace the Dairy Product Price Support Program (DPPSP) and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC). The Dairy Export Incentive Program is repealed.

Title II – Conservation

Working Lands

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP remains largely the same as in the 2008 farm bill but with a greater focus on wildlife habitat. The program continues to provide cost-share for certain conservation activities on working lands that help farmers avoid and comply with regulation. Many parts of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) have been consolidated into EQIP, focusing the program on farmers and ranchers looking to create or improve areas for wildlife habitat on their agricultural lands.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

This program continues to encourage higher levels of conservation and the adoption of new and emerging conservation technologies. Changes to the program include some definitional modifications and the promotion of science-based conservation outcomes. These are intended to ease use and implementation of the program.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Conservation Innovation Grants are provided on a competitive basis to encourage the development of new or improved conservation practices. CIG is geared towards projects that offer new approaches to providing producers environmental and production benefits.

Regional Partnerships

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

This is a new program for projects that improve soil quality, water quality, or wildlife habitat in a specific area or region. Projects are selected through a competitive, merit-based process. Producers are encouraged to leverage partner resources to achieve common goals. Within the program is a Critical Conservation Area component that funds projects in areas with particularly significant water quality and quantity issues facing natural resource regulatory pressures, including the Great Lakes Basin, Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Red River of the North Watershed, Ogallala Aquifer, Puget Sound, and the Everglades.

Easements

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

This is a new, consolidated easement program with two legs: Agricultural Land Easements and Wetlands Easements. Agricultural Land Easements are meant to protect lands from development and keep them devoted to agricultural use as well as keep land for grazing rather than crop production. Wetland Easements restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, which are important for water quality, quantity and wildlife habitat issues in many areas.

Conservation Reserve Program

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program removes highly erodible land out from production to benefit soil and water quality as well as wildlife habitats. The program currently has an acreage cap of 32 million acres. Over the next two years, over 10 million acres will expire. The recommendations lower the acreage cap through a multi-year step-down to 25 million acres, allowing for the re-enrollment and prioritization of the most highly erodible, sensitive acres. This program also continues the Transition Incentives Program which allows retiring farmers and ranchers to transfer their land to a beginning farmer or rancher to begin production while still receiving CRP payments in the final two years of their contracts.

Other

Conservation of Private Grazing Land

The program is reauthorized to improve private grazing land by offering technical assistance and educational activities to landowners looking to better manage their land.

Grassroots Source Water Protection Program

State rural water associations are encouraged to use technical assistance in order to promote conservation activities that protect the quality of our nation's drinking water through this program.

Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Many of the flood control structures (mainly dams) in our country are reaching their maximum life expectancy. This program provides for projects to improve their longevity.

Voluntary Public Access

This program encourages private landowners to allow the public to access their land for recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, and birdwatching.

Title III – Trade

Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102)

This program provides export credit guarantees to help ensure the availability of credit to finance the exports of U.S. agricultural products to countries where financing might not be available. Current levels of export credit guarantees are extended through 2017.

Market Access Program

This program provides matching funds to promote U.S. agricultural products in overseas markets. The program is funded at \$200 million annually through 2017.

Foreign Market Development Program

This program provides matching funds to nonprofit commodity or trade associations to aid in the long-term expansion of export markets for U.S. agricultural products. The program is funded at \$34.5 million annually through 2017.

Emerging Markets and Facility Guarantee Loan Program

This program provides funding for technical assistance to promote U.S. agricultural products to emerging markets and supports loan guarantees to establish or improve agriculture-related facilities in emerging markets. Technical assistance is funded at \$10 million annually through 2017, while the loan guarantees of at least \$1 billion are funded through 2017.

Consultative Group on Food Imports Produced with Use of Child and Forced Labor

The proposal allows the Consultative Group's authority to expire at the end of 2012. The Consultative Group was created in the 2008 Farm Bill to develop and make recommendations on voluntary guidelines to reduce the likelihood that imported food is produced with the use of child and forced labor. The Consultative Group has released preliminary guidelines and will conclude its work by the end of 2012.

Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops

This program provides financial assistance to producers and exporters of specialty crops in addressing barriers to trade in their products in overseas markets. Funding for this program is kept at current level of \$9 million annually for the next five years. The proposal revised the "Purpose" section of the program slightly to ensure that technical barriers to trade (e.g. burdensome regulatory requirements) can be addressed under the program.

Global Crop Diversity Trust

The Trust provides for storage and maintenance of seed from food crops from all over the world in a facility in the Arctic Circle in northern Norway. The bill authorizes \$60 million over the through 2017 to fund the Global Crop Diversity Trust. U.S. contributions may not exceed one fourth of the total of funds contributed to the Trust from all sources.

Food for Peace

This is the largest food aid program under the Committee's jurisdiction. It is comprised of three titles; however, Title II, which provides for emergency aid and development projects, contains the title's primary food aid budget authority. Taken as a whole, the program enables the U.S. to donate food overseas to promote food security.

Farmer to Farmer

This program, which is within Title II, sends American citizens with valuable agricultural skills to areas in developing countries that need technical assistance.

McGovern-Dole

This program facilitates distribution of food commodities through schools in developing countries through partner organizations.

Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust

The Trust holds extra commodities and cash so that the U.S. can respond quickly to food crises when domestic supplies are short.

Title IV- Nutrition

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Reauthorization of SNAP

Reauthorizes the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for 5 years.

Calculation of Benefits- Standard Utility Allowance/LIHEAP

Benefits allocations are determined using both income and expenses. Standard Utility Allowance is used by many states to estimate average utility costs used in benefits determinations. This provision will stop states from issuing extremely low LIHEAP benefits to qualify households to receive Standard Utility Allowances for the sole purpose of increasing their SNAP benefits. Beginning on October 1, 2012, only LIHEAP benefits of \$15 or more may qualify a household to receive a Standard Utility Allowance. This provision will not affect any households receiving traditional LIHEAP assistance or any household that can demonstrate a utility cost.

Access to Benefits for College Students

Limits SNAP eligibility for college students based on Perkins program criteria. This focuses eligibility on those participating technical and vocational education programs, primarily 2 year colleges, trade studies, remedial course work, basic adult literacy, or English as a second language.

Retail Requirements

Requires participating retailers to stock more staple foods like fruits and vegetables and bans stores from participating if their sales of prohibited items like liquor and tobacco is higher than 45 percent of the stores total sales.

Purposeful Loss of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Cards

Stipulates that, if a household makes excessive requests for replacement of its electronic benefit transfer card, the State agency may decline to issue a replacement card unless the household provides a reasonable explanation for the loss of the card. Maintains administrative protections to prevent unwarranted restrictions on participants.

Restaurant Meals Program for Seniors, Homeless, and the Disabled

Provides USDA with additional oversight over state restaurant meals programs for seniors, the disabled, and the homeless. This will help ensure that only restaurants that are shown to meet a documented need for these populations are allowed operate within this option.

Trafficking Prevention

Provides USDA with \$5 million in additional funds every year to prevent trafficking of food assistance benefits and to strengthen retailer program integrity.

Lottery Winners

Instructs USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to issue guidance to states to prevent lottery winners from receiving SNAP benefits.

SNAP Nutrition Education

Maintains funding at current levels for SNAP Nutrition Education Programs. This program supports projects that improve the likelihood that individuals eligible to receive SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Recommendations add physical activity as an eligible use of SNAP Nutrition Education Funding.

Employment and Training Program

Continues Employment and Training to provide for employment through work-related education and training activities.

Additional Nutrition Programs

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Maintains funding authorization at current levels for CSFP. Transitions CSFP to a program for senior citizen populations while allowing the small percentage of women and children currently enrolled in CSFP to continue to receive services through the program until they have exceeded the age of eligibility. Women, infants and children will all be served by WIC, which is more suited to meet their needs.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Increases funding for commodity purchases for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by \$100 million over 10 years.

Department of Defense Fresh Program

Maintains current funding for the DoD Fresh Program which distributes fresh fruits and vegetables to schools and service institutions. Continues to allow the Agriculture Marketing Service to conduct pilots to allow states to source locally.

Senior Farmers Market Promotion Program

Maintains current funding levels at \$20.6 million annually for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program which to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

Whole Grain Pilot

Provides \$10 million to continue the whole grain pilot that encourages sampling of a variety of whole grains and whole-grain products for use in school meal programs. Requires an evaluation to determine whether whole-grain consumption increased and which products were most acceptable to schoolchildren.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Maintains current funding levels for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program which provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to elementary school children throughout the school day in school districts with a high proportion of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Community Food Projects

Recommendations provide \$10 million annually through 2017 for grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to improve community access to food through the development of innovative projects such as school-to-garden programs and urban greenhouse initiatives.

Hunger Free Communities Incentive Grants

Provides grants to incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants. Eligible entities conducting programs like "Double Up Food Bucks" will be able to access federal matching funds to expand efforts into additional communities. This program is funded at \$100 million/5 years mandatory.

Title V – Credit

Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee Program

This program provides loans to borrowers to build conservation structures or establish conservation practices. This program will be reauthorized until 2017.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts Pilot Program

This program authorizes matching-funds for savings accounts specifically to be used for farming-related expenses for beginning farmers and ranchers. This program is reauthorized until 2017.

Loan Fund Set-Asides

The credit title maintains higher loan funds reserved for direct farm ownership loans and also maintains the strengthened down payment loan program. It continues to reserve a portion of the guaranteed farm ownership loan funds and direct operating loan funds for beginning farmers and ranchers. This program is extended until 2017.

Loan Authorization levels

The credit title recognizes the importance and success of USDA loan programs. All FSA loan authorization levels are reauthorized until 2017.

State-Mediation Program

This program recognizes the importance of state mediation programs in resolving agriculture and USDA-related disputes. This program has been incorporated in the Farm Bill by extending the 2010 reauthorization of the USDA's State Agricultural Mediation Program until 2017.

Title VI – Rural Development

Rural Business Development Programs

Rural Business Opportunity Grants

This program awards competitive grants to public agencies and non-profit community development organizations for business development, planning, coordination, training or technical assistance in rural areas. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$10 million annually through 2017.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants

This program provides competitive grants to non-profit organizations for the establishment and operation of centers for rural cooperative development. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$40 million annually through 2017.

Rural Microenterprise Assistance Program

This program awards grants to microenterprise development organizations to provide training, business planning assistance, market development assistance, and other services to rural microenterprises. This program also awards funding for the establishment of rural microloan programs designed to support microentrepreneurs in rural areas. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$20 million annually through 2017.

Value-Added Agricultural Market Development Program Grants

This program is designed to encourage independent producers of agricultural commodities to process their raw products into marketable goods, thereby increasing farm income. Grants may be used for planning activities, for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products, and for farm-based renewable energy. The program will prioritize funding for projects benefiting beginning farmers and ranchers. The recommendations do not include changes to the existing program. A total of \$15 million in mandatory funding is available through the Value-Added Agricultural Market Development Program until it is expended, and the program is also authorized to receive \$40 million annually through 2017.

Business and Industry Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program

The purpose of this program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment in rural communities by bolstering the existing private credit structure through the guarantee of quality loans. As the 2008 Farm Bill did, the recommendations reserve funds made available through the program for projects that include the processing, distribution, storage, and marketing of locally-produced agricultural food products.

Infrastructure Improvement Programs

Access to Broadband Telecommunications Services in Rural Areas

The Broadband Loan Program funds the construction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in rural communities. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is reauthorized to receive \$25 million annually through 2017.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine

This program provides competitive grant and loan funding that supports equipment and infrastructure improvements that enhance telecommunications capabilities at educational and medical facilities. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$75 million annually through 2017.

Water, Waste Disposal and Wastewater Facility Grants

This program provides competitive grants to non-profit entities to capitalize revolving loan funds that finance projects for the development, storage, treatment, purification, or distribution of water or the collection, treatment, or disposal of waste in rural areas. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$15 million annually through 2017.

Rural Water and Wastewater Circuit Rider Program

This program provides competitive grants to non-profit organizations that give technical assistance to rural public water systems. This technical assistance helps the water systems to comply with state and federal environmental regulations. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$20 million annually.

Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grant Program

This program awards grant funding to rural areas and small communities that are, or will soon, experience a shortage of safe, quality water. At least 50 percent of the funding available through this program is reserved for rural communities with populations less than 3,000. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$30 million annually through 2017.

Community Development Programs

Technical Assistance for Community Facilities Projects

The recommendations authorize the Secretary to make up to 3 percent of funds provided through the Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program available to applicants for technical assistance. Many rural communities do not have full-time staff to assist in the preparation of funding applications. This provision will help smaller communities in the development of their applications to the Community Facilities program, which supports projects related to economic development, public safety, and health care delivery.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas

This program awards competitive grant funding to national non-profit organizations that provide agricultural producers information pertaining to the reduction of input costs, conservation of energy resources, and expansion of markets through the use of sustainable farming practices. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$5 million annually through 2017.

Delta Regional Authority

The Delta Regional Authority was created to support economic development initiatives in impoverished communities in an eight-state region that includes parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$30 million annually through 2017.

Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

The proposal extends the authorization of the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, a federal-state partnership that would serve the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and parts of Missouri. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$30 million annually through 2017.

Tribal College and University Essential Community Facilities

This program provides grants to tribal colleges and universities for the development of community facility projects. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$7 million annually through 2017.

Title VII – Research

Please note – Funding for Research programs has been traditionally provided through the annual appropriations process. This would continue to be the case under these recommendations.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

This program provides competitive grants for basic and applied research. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive such sums as necessary for implementation annually through 2017.

University Research

The recommendations reauthorize funding for agricultural research activities at 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and these activities are authorized to receive such funds as necessary for implementation through 2017.

Extension Service

The recommendations reauthorize funds for extension service activities. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive such funds as necessary for implementation through 2017.

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics (NAREEE)

Advisory Board

The recommendations reauthorize the NAREEE advisory board, which provides consultation to USDA, industry and Congress on agricultural research priorities. The recommendations direct the NAREEE advisory board to consult with industry groups on agricultural research, extension, education, and economics, and to make recommendations to the Secretary based on that consultation. This activity is authorized to receive \$500,000 annually through 2017.

Policy Research Centers

This program provides competitive grants for cooperative agreements with policy research centers to conduct research and education programs concerning the effect of policies on the farm and agricultural sectors; the environment; rural families and economies; and consumers, food and nutrition. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it authorized to receive \$5 million annually through 2017.

Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA)

Institutions

This program provides competitive grants to assist NLGCA institutions in maintaining and expanding the capacity to conduct education, research, and outreach activities relating to agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive such funding as necessary for implementation through 2017.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

The recommendations continue the Beginning Farmer program which develops and offers education, training, outreach and mentoring programs to ensure the success of the next generation of farmers.

Addresses Critical Shortages of Veterinarians

The recommendations would help address the shortage of veterinarians in rural agricultural areas by supporting veterinary education and rural recruitment.

Budget Submission and Funding

The recommendations create a reporting and planning requirement for USDA to provide more detailed information regarding expected research expenditures when submitting its annual budget request to Congress.

Title VIII - Forestry

Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)

This voluntary program enhances forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.

Forest Legacy Program

This program protects water quality, provides habitat, recreational opportunities and other public benefits on our working forests.

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation

The Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program is reauthorized. This program leverages federal dollars to help communities protect forests in threat of conversion to non-forest use.

Title IX – Energy

Rural Energy for America Program

This program provides grants and loan guarantees for farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to make renewable energy system improvements and implement energy efficiency projects. The recommendations exclude blender pumps and feasibility studies from program eligibility. The program will receive \$27 million in mandatory funding and is authorized to receive \$45 million annually.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)

This program provides support for energy crop project areas in which potential biomass crop producers and a biomass user facility have agreed to produce and use biomass crops for conversion to advanced biofuels or bioenergy. Agricultural producers in BCAP project areas may contract with the Department of Agriculture to receive biomass crop establishment payments up to 75 percent of costs, plus annual payments in amounts determined by the Secretary in subsequent years to help to compensate for lost opportunity costs until crops are established. The program also provides for cost-share payments for the harvest, storage, and transport of biomass crops to user facilities at a rate to match the biomass sale price, up to \$20 per dry ton. The program is authorized to receive \$75 million annually.

Biobased Markets Program

The recommendations reauthorize USDA's BioPreferred Program and the Federal Government Procurement Preference Program. The recommendations also direct the Secretary to conduct a study of mature biobased products. The program is authorized at \$2 million annually.

Biorefinery Assistance Program

This program provides loan guarantees for renewable energy projects. Eligibility for the program has been expanded to include biobased manufacturing. The program is authorized at \$75 million annually.

Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels

This program provides production payments for advanced bioenergy sources. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$50 million annually.

Biodiesel Fuel Education Program

The Biodiesel Fuel Education Program provides competitive grants to non-profit entities to provide information about the benefits of biodiesel fuel use to government and private organizations. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$1 million annually.

Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI)

The recommendations reauthorize funding for research on biomass feedstock development for bioenergy and biobased products. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$20 million annually.

Feedstock Flexibility Program for Bioenergy Producers

The recommendations reauthorize the Feedstock Flexibility Program to assure that sugar imports do not result in increased forfeitures of U.S. sugar. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive such sums as necessary for implementation.

Community Wood Energy Program

This program provides competitive, cost-share grants for communities to supply public buildings with energy from sustainably-harvested wood from the local area. The recommendations do not include policy changes to the existing program, and it is authorized to receive \$2 million annually.

Title X- Specialty Crops

Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program

This program continues successful efforts from the Farmers Market Promotion Program by providing competitive grants to improve and expand farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. The program authority is expanded to also provide assistance in developing local food system infrastructure and central regional food development centers like food hubs and terminal markets that help producers with training, aggregating, distributing and other market activities. Recommendations fund the program at \$100 million over 5 years.

Organic Data Initiative

Recommendations continue mandatory funding at \$5 million for basic USDA data collection on the organic sector.

Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention/Clean Plant Network

Consolidates the National Clean Plant Network and the Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program. These programs focus on early detection and surveillance of invasive pests, interventions to prevent crop damage and supplies clean pathogen free plant material for producers. Funding is provided at \$615 million over 10 years.

Specialty Crop Block Grants

Adjust the grant allocation formula from solely the value of specialty crop production in a state, to the average of both value of specialty crop production and acres of specialty crops planted in a state. This change ensures that states receive credit for both high value crops as well as amount of acres in specialty crop production in a state. Funding provided at \$70 million per year and allows funding for multistate projects.

National Organic Program

Funding for the National Organic Program is authorized at \$15 million annually. One time mandatory funding is provided for technology upgrades to improve program performance.

Specialty Crop Research Initiative

Provides \$400 million in mandatory funding over 10 years for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, ensuring funding will be available for key research projects for fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops. This funding also ensures funding will be available for this program in the next farm bill.

National Organic Cost-Share

Modifies program to provide cost-share assistance for organic certification to new and beginning organic farmers. This program will provide up to 75% of the cost of certification, but no more than \$750.

Organic Research Initiative

Funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative is provided at \$80 million over 10 years.