

# The Farm Bill: Implications for the Food System & Nutrition Practice

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IAND Annual Meeting  
April 11, 2024

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## Conflict of Interest

- Author of *The Farm Bill: A Citizen's Guide*

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## Learning Objectives

- Identify influences behind the creation and evolution of the farm bill throughout US history.
- Explain the impacts of the current state of the US agricultural system on societal, economic, environmental, and health factors.
- Implement strategies in daily practice that advocate for and support food and farming systems that promote better health.

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## Outline

- Overview of the farm bill
  - Structure
  - History and updates
  - Far-reaching effects
- Recent issues affecting the 2024 farm bill
- Recommendations for positive change

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## How Farm Bills Are Passed and Funded

Graphics used with permission, What is the Farm Bill? National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. <https://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/campaigns/foacampaign/what-is-the-farm-bill/>, Island Press 2019.

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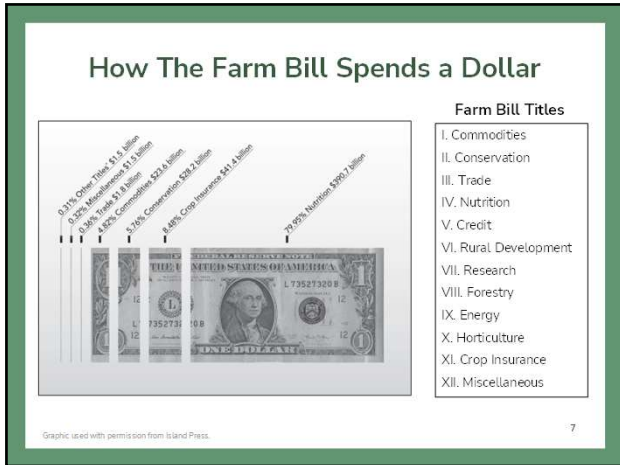
## Adding Programs to New Farm Bills

**Marker Bill**

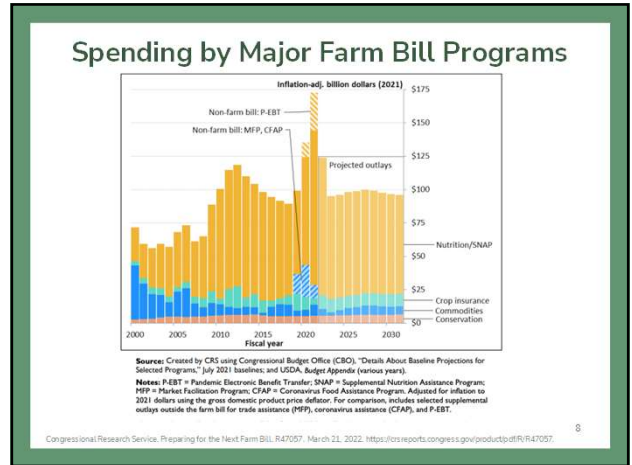
- Smaller bill that is introduced leading up to farm bill reauthorization
- Introduced to raise awareness, show interest, and build momentum around an issue and its solution
- Intended to be incorporated into omnibus legislation, not to be passed as standalone bill

Appropriation Bill	Authorization

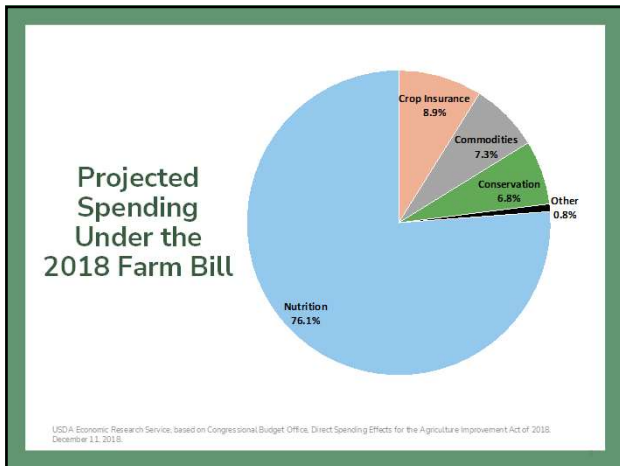
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### Top Four Titles

**IV. Nutrition** assistance for low-income households

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)
- Etc.

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### Top Four Titles, cont.

**XI. Crop insurance** as a shared risk management tool

- Federal Crop Insurance Program
- Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX)
- Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO)
- Whole Farm Revenue Protection

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION  
PA-41, issued January 1948.

UNT Digital Library, "Federal crop insurance on corn (dollar coverage insurance)," <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/m2tds0485/>

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### Top Four Titles, cont.

**I. Commodity** programs that cover low prices or revenues for commodities

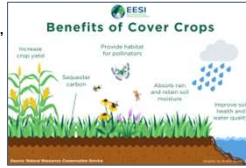
- Price Loss Coverage (PLC)
- Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC)
- Marketing Assistance Loan Program
- Dairy Margin Coverage
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

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### Top Four Titles, cont.

II. Conservation programs for working lands, land retirement, easements, partnerships and grants, and conservation compliance

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Etc.



Graphic used with permission, Environmental and Energy Study Institute, Benefits of Cover Crops, by Emille Austin.

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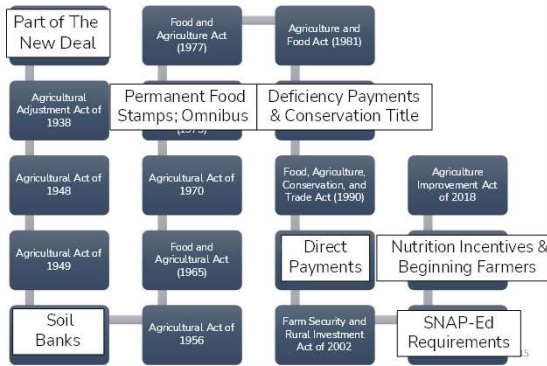
### Remaining Titles (<1%)

- III. Trade — support export programs and international food aid
- V. Credit — loans for farmers and ranchers
- VI. Rural Development — supports rural business/community development
- VII. Research — supports research and extension
- VIII. Forestry — supports forestry management
- IX. Energy — supports on-farm sustainable energy production
- X. Horticulture — grants for specialty crops and organic agriculture
- XII. Miscellaneous — livestock, poultry, disadvantaged farmers, etc.

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### History of Farm Bills



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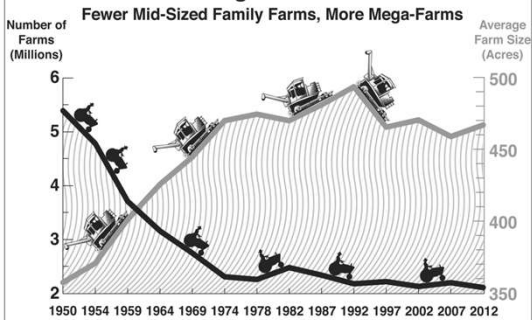
### What Changed in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018?

- Estimated cost of \$867 billion over 10 years
- Legalization of hemp production
- Permanent Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) and Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP)
- Small improvements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection Program
- Increased funding for SNAP employment and training
- Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program permanently funded (with new nutrition prescriptions) and renamed GusNIP
- Increased funding for organic research and cost-sharing but reduced chemical restrictions
- Redesigned Dairy Margin Coverage Program
- Expanded definition of family members eligible to receive commodity payments

While some positive changes were made, the 2018 farm bill was largely considered a "status quo bill."

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### "Get Big or Get Out"



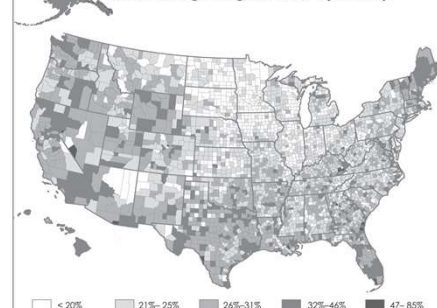
Graphic used with permission from Island Press.

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### Young Farmer Deficit

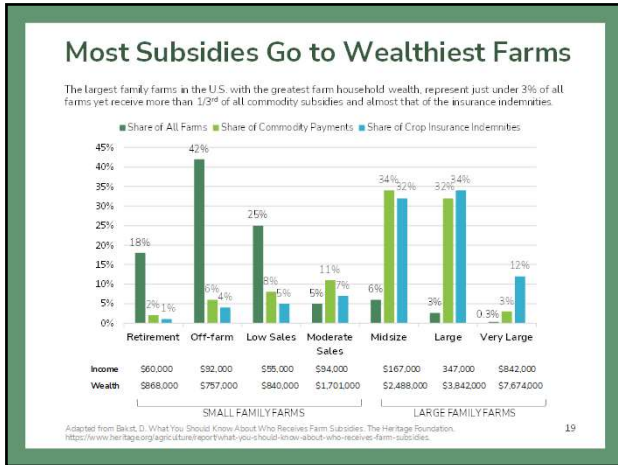
Share of Beginning Farmers\* by County



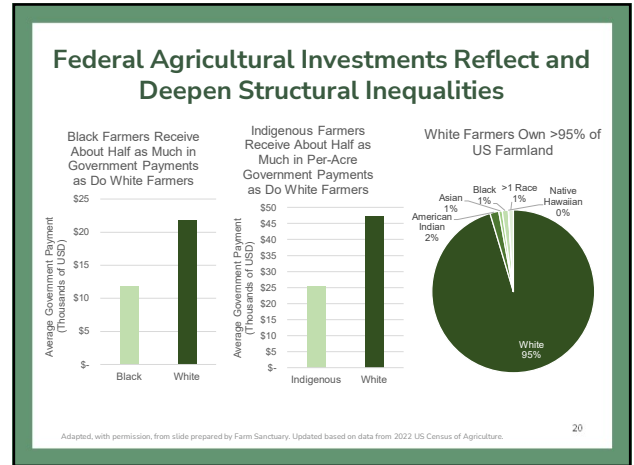
\*Principal operators on their current operations for ten years or less. Graphic used with permission from Island Press.

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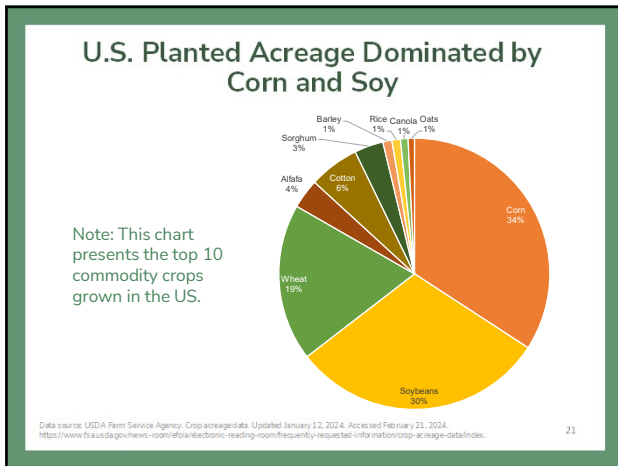
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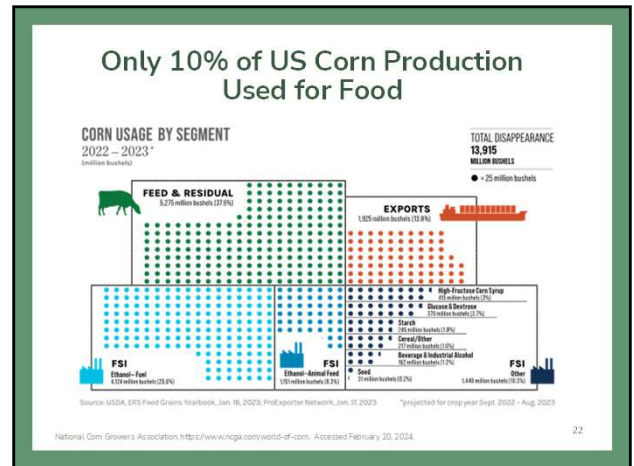
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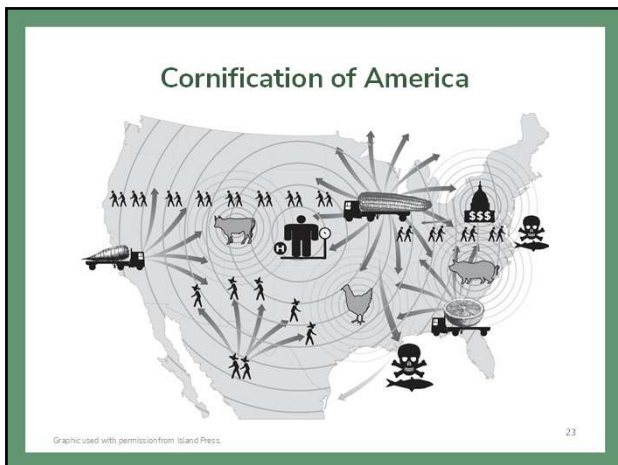
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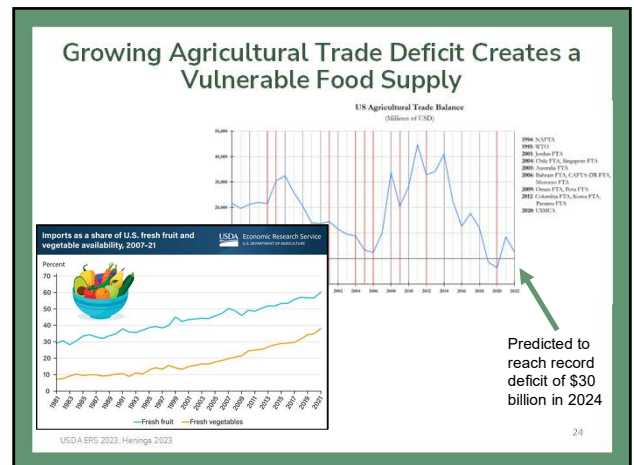
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### Conservation Spending Depriorizes Most Effective Outcomes for Soil & Climate

Conservation programs estimated to yield higher return on investment received less funding after passage of the 2018 farm bill...

And this trend has continued with USDA's expansion of climate-smart agriculture and forestry activities funded by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Program	Net Change in Funding (2018-2019)	Estimated Program Return on Investment
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	~15%	~\$1.50
Conservation Reserve Program	~5%	~\$2.50
Conservation Stewardship Program	~-15%	~\$4.00

Sources: USDA, Union of Concerned Scientists

Adapted, with permission, from slide prepared by Farm Sanctuary.

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### Whom Does the Farm Bill Exclude?

The farm bill has excluded human and non-human beings alike:

- Farm and food chain workers' well-being has been largely excluded through major farm system legislation over the last century.
- The only law that codifies farmed animals' entitlements, the Humane Slaughter Act, excludes more than 95% of farmed animals.

Adapted, with permission, from slide prepared by Farm Sanctuary.

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### US Dietary Guidelines Don't Align with Subsidies

Category	Percentage
Fruits	~15%
Grains	~15%
Vegetables	~15%
Protein	~15%
Dairy	~15%
Livestock and Animal Feed	30%
Biofuels	12%
Exports	21%
Nonfood/Industrial	10%
Food for People	13%
Processed Food	8%
Nuts and Seeds	2%
Fruits and Vegetables	4%

Adapted from: "References: Federal Farm Subsidies." Farm Action. Accessed September 10, 2023. <https://farmaction.us/subsidies-source/>.

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### US Diets Don't Align with Dietary Guidelines

Food Category	Intake Above Recommendation (%)	Intake Below Recommendation (%)
Total population	~10	~90
Whole grains	~10	~90
Added sugars	~60	~40
Added fats	~60	~40
Protein	~10	~90
Total protein	~10	~90
Total fat	~60	~40
Total sodium	~60	~40

NOTE: Recommended daily intake of whole grains is to be at least half of total grain consumption, and the limit for refined grains is to be no more than half of total grain consumption.

Data Source: Analysis of What We Eat in America, NHANES 2013-2016, ages 1 and older, 3 days dietary intake data, weighted. Recommended Intake Changes: Healthy U.S.-Style Dietary Patterns. <https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. [www.DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://www.DietaryGuidelines.gov).

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### Growing Interest in Addressing Food Waste

## Changing America

Shared Destiny. Shared Responsibility.

Respect Sustainability Resilience Enrichment Well-Being Opinion Video Who We Are

Changing America > Opinion

The views expressed by Opinion contributors are their own and not the views of Changing America or The Hill.

# Food waste has increased dramatically, despite hunger

Here are ways to address both.

By Daniel Inhoff and Christina Badaracco | March 12, 2022, Opinion Contributor

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### Climate Change and Agricultural Resilience

PLANTARE HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Empowering Nutrition Professionals to Promote Agricultural Resilience

An US farmer prepares for spring planting. They must make decisions based on the challenges of increasing systems and unpredictable weather patterns. Report from the Fourth U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA4) shows the earth is warmer, which temperatures has increased by approximately 1 degree Celsius from 1951 to 2016, making this possible the warmest in the history of modern civilization. Scientists say the warming is happening so fast that it's almost impossible to determine if it's natural or man-made.

A multitude of factors, including food production, contribute to greenhouse gas emissions that negatively impact environmental and human health. Agricultural systems undoubtedly impact climate change, and as the planet warms, climate change undoubtedly impacts agriculture.

Author: Dan, co-founder of Plantare Health Collective, MS, CDEA & Christina Badaracco, MPH, RD, LDH

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## Recent Issues Affecting the 2024 Farm Bill

<b>SNAP</b>	Increase in food insecurity/shortages during the pandemic and increase in benefits through Thrifty Food Plan revisions led to increased spending
<b>Food prices &amp; shortages</b>	Drought, war in Ukraine, export restrictions, high energy costs, and other factors increased commodity prices and led to food shortages
<b>Climate change</b>	IRA and other bills have provided billions of dollars to fund programs to address climate change; continued impacts of droughts/floods; various bills promoting resiliency/mitigation (e.g., Farm System Reform Act)
<b>Labor</b>	Shortages throughout food supply chain; poor conditions in meatpacking plants leading to thousands of cases early in pandemic
<b>Consumer trends</b>	Disrupted supply chains and unpredictability during pandemic; increased demand for meat and dairy alternatives; and reliance on technology; more direct-to-consumer outlets for small farmers
<b>Crop insurance spending</b>	Following year of record payouts, GAO recommended reducing insurance subsidies for private insurers and largest farms; increasing insurance options for specialty and organic crops; FCIP incorporates more conservation practices
<b>Stimulus funding</b>	Stimulus funding directed toward agriculture primarily benefited big agribusinesses, rather than small and/or sustainable farmers
<b>2024 elections</b>	Stark partisan divide in Congress and upcoming elections may impede ability to reach agreement and finalize new bill by its expiration date in September 2024

IRA: Inflation Reduction Act; GAO: Government Accountability Office; FCIP: Federal Crop Insurance Program

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## SNAP Participation and Spending

### Percent of residents receiving SNAP benefits, FY 2021

Note: SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Economic Analysis.

### SNAP average participation and inflation-adjusted spending, fiscal years 2004-22

SNAP participation on varied across states from 2019 to 2021. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartid=105123>. Jones, J.W. Emergency allotments continue to SNAP spending growth during pandemic. Updated August 23, 2023. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartid=107184>

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## Ideas for Prioritizing Nutrition Through SNAP

- Align SNAP and Medicaid
- Focus SNAP-Ed on basic cooking skills
- Connect recipients to food hubs/food-sharing networks
- Improve/expand new nutrition prescription program
- Improve collection and sharing of purchase data and analyses
- Impose restrictions? Incentives and/or disincentives?
- Separate SNAP from the farm bill?
- Improve nutrition outside of SNAP to serve these individuals *before and after* they participate

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## Necessary Changes To The Farm Bill

Real Income Limits For Subsidy Recipients

Real Conservation Compliance Requirements For Subsidy Recipients

Increased Whole Farm Revenue Insurance And Support For Diversified Farms

Long-term Vision For Improvements In Agricultural Production

Alignment Between Dietary Guidelines For Americans And Crop Subsidies

Prioritization Of Good Nutrition In SNAP Program

And More...

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## Positive Impacts You Can Make As Experts in Local Food Systems & Advocacy

<b>Publish</b>	Publish research to build evidence base for valuable programs and other articles to share important ideas
<b>Learn</b>	Stay up to date on information about the bill and current subsidies by reading CRS reports, NSAC updates, EWG subsidy databases, and Farm Action reports
<b>Testify</b>	Submit written or oral testimony at hearings for mission-aligned bills in your city and/or state
<b>Advocate</b>	Advocate for policies at local, state, and national levels that support small, sustainable farmers and access to healthy food. Contact your legislators and submit federal comments
<b>Spend</b>	Spend your own dollars at markets and farms that invest in local economies and keep small family farms in business
<b>Support</b>	Support young people entering farming by sharing pertinent opportunities, connecting them with mentors, etc.
<b>Partner</b>	Partner with local food hubs, producers, etc., to prioritize institutional procurement that keeps dollars local and supplies the freshest foods

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## Recommendations to Your Audiences

- Pass along information from EWG, NSAC, *The Farm Bill: A Citizen's Guide*, etc., to inform interested audiences
- Offer recommendations about yours and other local farms, CSAs, farmers markets, etc., to colleagues and the public
- Educate about environmental and nutritional benefits of fresh, local, wholesome foods (or collaborate with experts to provide this education!)
- Educate how to cook with wholesome foods—even frozen or canned, if those are all people can access
- Connect with farm bill resources/programs to support your own work (as appropriate)

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## Food Can Advance Shared Priorities

<p><b>Health</b></p> <p><b>#1</b> In the U.S., diet-related disease remains the top cause of death. Diet-related illness remains a top driver of non-cancerous chronic pain.</p>	<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <p><b>33%</b> Of global GHG emissions come from food systems.</p> <p><b>3%</b> Of public climate finance goes to food system interventions.</p>	<p><b>Vibrant Rural &amp; Urban Economies</b></p> <p><b>\$2.1T</b> In U.S. food system costs to people and the environment, nearly doubling food's contribution to GDP.</p>
<p><b>Social Justice</b></p> <p>More likely to live near factory farm pollution if Black, Hispanic, or Indigenous in North Carolina, an example of how food pollution perpetuates inequality.</p> <p><b>54%-118%</b></p>	<p><b>Animal Well-Being</b></p> <p>Land farm animals are raised in the U.S. food system, most in factory farming conditions, requiring 41% of land in the contiguous U.S.</p> <p><b>More than 10B</b></p>	

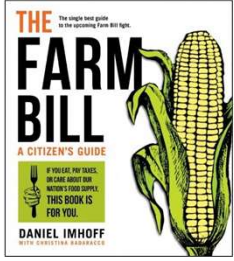
The federal government invests tremendous resources in the food system. Collaborating across movements can strive to shift public investments to advance health, sustainability, social justice, economic resilience, and animal well-being.

Adapted, with permission, from slide prepared by Farm Sanctuary. 37

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## Recommended Reading


- *The Farm Bill: A Citizen's Guide*
- Farm Bill Law Enterprise reports and report cards
- Bipartisan Policy Center reports on improving SNAP
- Congressional Research Service and Government Accountability Office reports
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition overview, webinars, etc.
- Environmental Working Group subsidy database
- Farm Action policy recommendations to support farmers and improve health
- Farm Sanctuary advocacy website



Publisher's website: <https://islandpress.org/books/farm-bill>  
Discount code for 30% off: WEBINAR

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## Questions? Ideas?

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