

**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
FY 2020 Appropriations**

April 5, 2019

Presented by: Zippy Duvall, President

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) commends the subcommittee for its work in support of agriculture, our nation's food supply and the well-being of rural America.

Disaster Relief: Farms and ranches across the country endured an incredibly difficult year in 2018 and the trend continues in 2019 with historic hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and wildfires. Losses total more than \$8 billion, and the full impact of recent flooding in the Midwest is still being assessed. Many of the farmers impacted are facing near-complete losses of their crops, livestock and farm infrastructure. At the same time, Puerto Rico's humanitarian crisis continues and reauthorizing the Nutrition Assistance for Puerto Rico program at \$600 million is critical.

Farm Bureau urges the committee to support farmers and ranchers and the rural communities impacted by these catastrophic weather events by moving past the political impasse that has caused the supplemental disaster relief bill to stall. Farm Bureau asks all members of Congress to set aside political concerns and prioritize the concern for our nation's food producers.

Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Requests

AFBF supports increasing spending levels above FY19 enacted levels for the following programs.

Farm Programs: AFBF supports protecting the programs that will ensure U.S. farmers and ranchers can continue to farm and ranch until market conditions improve. Increase funding for risk management tools, which include federal crop insurance and commodity programs, and federal conservation programs, which preserve environmental benefits.

AFBF supports prioritizing working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs.

Increase funding for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan guarantee programs to ensure availability to farmers eligible under current authorities and the FSA Ag Mediation Programs.

International Programs: Increase funding for the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program to increase demand for U.S. agriculture and food products in foreign markets.

Agricultural Research Priorities: Increase funding for agricultural research and education, specifically USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, the National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Economic Research Service.

Food Safety: Increase funding for food protection at the Food and Drug Administration and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) directed to the following priorities:

- Implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- Increased education and training of inspectors.
- Additional science-based inspection, targeted according to risk.
- Effective inspection of imported food and feed products.
- Research and development of scientifically based rapid testing procedures and tools.
- Accurate and timely response to outbreaks that identify contaminated products, remove them from the market and minimize disruption to producers.
- Indemnification for producers who suffer marketing losses due to inaccurate government-advised recalls or warnings.

AFBF supports funding the following programs at the authorized spending levels.

Farmer Stress and Mental Health: The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network to provide stress assistance programs that address the increasing financial and mental stress impacting farmers and ranchers.

Biotechnology Promotion: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Biotechnology Regulatory Services if there are appropriate levels of congressional oversight to ensure APHIS' new regulatory considerations are science- and risk-based, transparent and predictable, while promoting innovation in plant breeding and facilitating trade.

Expanding International Markets and Safeguarding U.S. Agriculture:

- The Foreign Agricultural Service, Emerging Markets Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, all of which increase demand for U.S. agriculture and food products abroad.
- Opening and staffing a USDA office in Cuba to help U.S agriculture expand access, understand opportunities and increase sales into the Cuban marketplace.
- P.L. 480 programs, which provide foreign food aid by purchasing U.S. commodities.
- APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine personnel and facilities.
- APHIS trade issues resolution and management activities that are essential for an effective response when other countries raise sanitary and phytosanitary measures related to American products.
- The U.S. Codex Office, which is essential to improving the harmonization of international science-based standards for the safety of food and agriculture products.
- The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which effectively delivers both food aid and educational assistance.

Animal Health

- APHIS' Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan.
- The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program and the Veterinary Services Grant Program, which allow veterinarians to ensure animal health and welfare while protecting the nation's food supply.
- The National Animal Health Laboratory Network, which provides an early warning system for emerging animal diseases.
- Section 1433 Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education and Extension Programs to address critical priorities in food security, zoonotic disease and stewardship.
- The FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, which oversees the safety of animal drugs, feeds and biotechnology-derived products.
- The availability of foot-and-mouth disease vaccines to meet emergency response requirements.

Food Safety and Protection

- The National Antimicrobial Residue Monitoring System to detect trends in antibiotic resistance among foodborne bacteria.
- The Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank, through which veterinarians establish science-based recommendations for drug withdrawal intervals.

Crop Protection Tools

- Minor Crop Pest Management Program (IR-4) because developing pest control tools has high regulatory costs. This funding ensures safe and effective agrichemicals and biopesticides are available for small, specialty crop markets.
- Office of Pesticide Management Policy, which promotes the development of new pest management approaches and is critical for crop protection.
- APHIS Plant Pest and Disease programs that eradicate, suppress and contain plant pests.

Rural Development

- Rural Utilities Service broadband and telecommunications programs, the ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program, and the Rural Gigabit Network pilot programs.
- Value-Added Agricultural Producer Grants, the Rural Innovation Initiative, the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program, Business and Industry Direct and Guaranteed Loans, the Resource Conservation and Development Program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Cooperative and Extension Services.
- Community Facility Direct and Guaranteed Loans and the Revolving Fund Program, which fund the construction or improvement of essential community facilities.

Agriculture in the Classroom

- The Agriculture in the Classroom Program, which helps students gain greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society.

Wildlife Services

- Wildlife Services programs that prevent and minimize wildlife damage, while protecting human health and safety from conflicts with wildlife.

Renewable Energy

- Renewable Energy for America Program, which offers a combination of grants and guaranteed loans for farmers to purchase renewable energy systems.

AFBF wants to highlight additional policy topics for the committee.

Horse Processing

- AFBF opposes any provision that would prohibit FSIS from inspecting equine processing facilities under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Prohibiting the harvest of livestock for reasons unrelated to food safety or animal welfare sets an extremely dangerous precedent.

Agricultural Marketing Service Packers and Stockyards Program

- AFBF opposes the creation of a user fee to fund the cost of this program.

Food Safety User Fees

- Farm Bureau opposes the administration's request for new user fees for inspection activities. Food safety is for the public good, and as such, it is a justified use of public funds.

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