

# FARM BILL PROCESS

The Farm Bill is renewed about every five years and includes 12 titles covering income supports for farmers, conservation, nutrition, research, agricultural education, rural development, crop insurance, and many other agricultural topics.

The next Farm Bill is expected to be reauthorized in 2018.

## REAUTHORIZATION STARTS WITH YOU!

To make your voice heard, contact your members of Congress by emailing, writing, or calling. Let them know which Farm Bill programs are working well and which programs need to change. Also check with your members of Congress to see if there are opportunities for you to attend Farm Bill field hearings or town halls in your area.

### FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION PHASE – CONGRESS' ROLE

House and Senate Agriculture Committees debate, draft, and amend separate bills.

Each Committee eventually passes separate bills.

House and Senate each vote on their chamber's respective legislation.

Two bills go to a conference committee, a smaller group of Senators and Representatives who combine two separate bills into one compromise bill.

House and Senate each vote on the conference legislation.

This bill is sent to the President for approval. If signed, the bill becomes law. If vetoed, it is returned to Congress.

### APPROPRIATIONS PHASE – FUNDING THE FARM BILL

In addition to authorizing the programs under the Farm Bill, Congress must also appropriate funding for many of them. The Farm Bill contains both mandatory and discretionary funding. Discretionary programs rely on annual appropriations to be funded, while mandatory programs do not.

The Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittees in the House and the Senate are responsible for designating funding for discretionary programs. Every year, the Subcommittees put together and vote on a proposed agriculture appropriations bill.

If passed, the appropriations bills go to the respective Appropriations Committee for review and final changes. Then the House and Senate vote on the individual bills or the bills are combined into an appropriations package, referred to as an omnibus.

### RULEMAKING PHASE – USDA IMPLEMENTATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) writes the actual rules for how the programs in the Farm Bill will be implemented. The USDA ensures programs are implemented in a way that coincides with the intentions of Congress, farmers, and advocates. You can get involved by writing comments during the public rulemaking process or meeting with USDA staff.

### EVALUATION PHASE – SUCCESS OF PROGRAMS

As you can see, passing the Farm Bill and funding its programs is a long process. After all this effort, it is important to make sure that the goals of the Farm Bill are being met. Grassroots organizations and the USDA inform people of the programs and get feedback from the ground to make sure that the Farm Bill serves everyone as best as possible. You can also get in touch with your members of Congress to tell them about anything that isn't working for you.

# CONGRESSWOMAN CHELLIE PINGREE, THE FARM BILL, AND YOU!



## ABOUT CHELLIE

Chellie Pingree has lived in Maine for over 40 years and has been an organic farmer for much of that time. She is a graduate of the College of the Atlantic, where she studied agriculture under Eliot Coleman, and built a successful small business that employed 10 people in designing knitting kits made with Maine yarn. She lives on North Haven Island, where she has a farm and co-owns an inn and restaurant. She served in the Maine Senate from 1992-2000 and was elected to Congress in 2008.

## 2014 FARM BILL SUCCESSES

From 2008-2014, Congresswoman Pingree was a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, which drafts the Farm Bill. Leading up to the 2014 Farm Bill, Congresswoman Pingree introduced the Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act. This bill included numerous provisions that support local farmers, invest in regional food systems, and give all consumers better access to nutritious food. Many provisions from her bill were adopted in the 2014 Farm Bill, including:

- Increased access to local and regional food through the Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program
- Created Whole-Farm Revenue Protection to offer better crop insurance for producers that grow multiple or diverse crops
- Started a mobile technology pilot for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Expanded the use of SNAP benefits to community-supported agriculture shares
- Established priority preference in the Value Added Program Grant program for small and medium, beginning, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers

## CURRENT WORK TO SUPPORT FARMING

Congresswoman Pingree is now on the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee, which designates money to discretionary programs in the Farm Bill. She continues to champion the interests of sustainable and organic farmers, those engaged in local and regional food systems, and all consumers seeking nutritious food. Before the 2018 Farm Bill, she will introduce bills and work with Committee members to get provisions from those bills into the Farm Bill.

## HOW CAN YOU INFLUENCE THE 2018 FARM BILL?

Congresswoman Pingree wants to hear from you! Please email your thoughts to

[rep.chellie.pingree@mail.house.gov](mailto:rep.chellie.pingree@mail.house.gov).

Sign up for Congresswoman Pingree's agriculture newsletter to hear about outreach events that she's holding in the district.

Get in touch with your other members of Congress to make sure they know your priorities.