

Farm Bill Issue	House Chairman Peterson's Mark	House Subcommittee Markup	Full Committee Markup	SAC Position
<b>Beginning Farmer and Rancher Initiative</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-BeginningFarmerInitiative.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-BeginningFarmerInitiative.pdf</a>				
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program	reauthorized, but no mandatory funding	not amended	Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment with SAC position to be considered at full committee	reauthorize with a minimum of \$25 million in annual mandatory funding
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account				fund IDA pilot program at \$5 million per year for five years and establish in at least 15 states
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Down Payment Loan		Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment with SAC position offered but withdrawn until full committee	Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment to be considered at full committee	improve by reducing loan rates and down payment requirements, deferring first year payments, and increasing the maximum allowable portion of farm sales price eligible for the down payment loan from \$250,000 to \$500,000
Beginning Farmer Land Contract Pilot Program		Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment with SAC position offered but withdrawn until full committee	Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment to be considered at full committee	make the existing Land Contract guaranteed loan pilot program permanent, strengthened, and applied nationwide to encourage private land sales that transfer farms from retiring farmers to new farmers
Direct Credit Loan Limits	SAC position included in the mark	not amended		increase the per farm loan limits for direct operating and direct ownership loans from \$200,000 to \$300,000
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Loan Fund Reservations	SAC position included in the mark but with direct operating increase to 40%	not amended		increase direct ownership loan reservation to 75% of the total, direct operating loan reservation to 50% of the total, and guaranteed ownership loan reservation to 40% of total

Loan Authorization Levels			possible Rep. Herseth-Sandlin (D-SD) amendment with SAC position to be considered at full committee	increase authorization for appropriation for direct operating loans from \$565 million to \$850 million and for direct ownership loans from \$205 million to \$350 million
Conservation Loans	included in the mark	not amended		retain conservation loan authorization and strengthen by adding a priority for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as well as a priority for using the loan to help convert to sustainable or organic production systems. The current \$50,000 cap on the size of conservation loans is eliminated.
Conservation Reserve Program Farm Transition Option	beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer transition option (including organic) included but not funded	Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment to fund the transitio option offered but withdrawn until full committee	Rep. Walz (D-MN) amendment to be considered at full committee	offer special incentives for owners of CRP land returning to production to rent or sell to beginning farmers and ranchers who use sustainable grazing practices or fully comliant conservation cropping systems, or who transition to organic
Conservation Funding Set-Asides for Beginning and Socially Disadvantated Farmers		Rep. Herseth-Sandlin (D-SD) amendment with SAC position offered but withdrawn until full committee	Rep. Herseth-Sandlin (D-SD) amendment to be considered at full committee	reserve 10 percent of total funds for each farm bill conservation program for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers for the first four months of the program year
Conservation Cost-Share Bonus for Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers	15% bonus up to 90% cost share included for EQIP			provide 15% bonus up to 90% cost share for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Risk Management Education Emphasis	included in the mark			include a special emphasis on making grants for risk management for beginning, immigrant, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers
<b>New Markets, Local Food, and Value Added</b>				

Background Information:

<http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farbill/PolicyBackgnd-NewMarkets.pdf>

Value-Added Producer Grants	authorizes \$40 million in annual appropriations instead of the program's current mandatory funding of \$40 million; also proposes reserving 10% of funds for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, the latter is consistent with SAC priorities	not amended	Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE) amendment to be considered in full committee that gives priority projects helping small to mid-sized family farms access to new markets	provide \$60 million in annual mandatory funding with a priority for projects that improve the viability of small and mid-sized farms and improve land stewardship; set-aside 10% of total funding for projects that benefit socially disadvantaged farmers; set-aside 10% for outreach and technical assistance; create new grant fund categories for local food systems and for the development of food value chains that help mid-sized farms; create a family farm viability fund to support innovative cooperative projects
Farmers' Market Promotion Program	provides \$5 million in mandatory annual funding FY2008 to 2010 and \$10 million annual mandatory funding FY2011 and 2012	not amended	Rep. Gillibrand (D-NY) amendment expected in full committee to increase funding amounts and track SAC proposed language	provide a minimum of \$25 million in annual mandatory funding, including funding for electronic benefits technology
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	retains the \$15 million in annual mandatory funding with a possible \$230 million added over life of Farm Bill is funds are available through appropriations			increase mandatory farm bill allocation
Community Food Project Competitive Grants	provides \$30 million in annual appropriations	not amended		\$60 million in mandatory funding
<b>Conservation Security Program</b>				

Background Information: <http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farbill/PolicyBackgnd-CSP.pdf>

Conservation Security Program	cuts \$1.1 billion from CSP by freezing new sign-ups until 2012; eliminates the 3-tier structure; lowers eligibility standards; moves away from total resource management; reduces program to two types of payments (a base payment for maintaining existing practices and a traditional 75% cost share payment for new practices, with a payment limit of \$30,000 a year for contracts of 5 years)	Rep. Gillibrand (D-NY) offered but withdrew until full committee an amendment to increase CSP funding by \$3 billion	Rep. Gillibrand (D-NY) amendment to add additional \$1 billion to CSP to be considered in full committee; likely to also be a policy language amendment more supportive of SAC position offered by someone else	remove funding caps from CSP that have been used to cut the program by over \$4 billion; move to nationwide, continuous enrollment process; improve the stewardship eligibility criteria; restore a comprehensive conservation planning component; streamline payment structure to focus on environmental outcomes
<b>Conservation Title</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmland/PolicyBackgnd-ConservationTitle.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmland/PolicyBackgnd-ConservationTitle.pdf</a>				
Cooperative Conservation Partnerships	contains a CCPI, 90 % allocated at the state level through competitive grants, but lacks any references to community development needs and opportunities	Rep. Walz (D-MN) successfully amended to allow CCPI to promote simultaneously community development and environmental innovation		reauthorize the current Partnership and Cooperation Initiative as the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, 90% at state level, programmatic flexibility, and include special support for projects in which multiple producers address specific local natural resource concerns and community development opportunities in partnership with other entities

Environmental Quality Incentives Program	increases funding for EQIP annually reaching \$2 billion by 2012; leaves \$450,000 payment limitation in place; continues payments for CAFO expansion and for irrigation without net water savings back to the source; restores cost-effectiveness criteria	not amended	Rep. Salazar (D-CO) amendment to give farmers complying with environmental regulations first claim on funding and Rep. Cardoza (D-CA) amendments to carve out funding for air quality and other purposes to be considered in full committee; SAC opposed to these amendments	restore provisions that ensure overall environmental effects are positive, including progressive planning and a \$150,000 payment limitation; restore prohibition of funding for animal waste storage and handling facilities for large-scale CAFO's; restore cost effectiveness criteria; restore the educational assistance component of the program
Conservation Compliance	no improvements	not amended		re-link existing conservation compliance regime to crop insurance program and expand to cover all cropland eroding at unsustainable rates and strengthen waiver guidelines; remove graduated penalties for swampbuster violations that are not mitigated
Sodsaver		not amended	Reps. Walz (D-MN) and Herseth Sandlin (D-SD) expected to raise issue at full committee if not included in Chairman Peterson's amendments	enact a sodsaver provision prohibiting program benefits on all native prairie and permanent grasslands converted to cropping
Wetlands Reserve Program	reauthorizes subject to availability of reserve fund offsets	not amended		replenish funding with enrollment directive of at least 250,000 acres per year nationwide with a priority for permanent easements; additionally, incentives for landowners to allow public access to the land as part of community development plans for public recreational amenities

Conservation Reserve Program	beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher transition option (including organic) included but not funded	Rep. Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced but withdrew amendment to allow enrolled acres to produce and market cellulosic biomass with an appropriate reduction in rental payments	Rep. Jerry Moran (R-KS) expected to re-introduce his amendment in full committee	retain as the major land retirement program with improvements to the environmental benefits index including greater weight for below cost bids; at least 7 million acres, or 20% of total CRP acreage should be reserved for enrollments through CCRP or CREP; voluntary long-term and permanent conservation easements on particularly environmentally sensitive land should be introduced as a new option; and landowners leaving CRP should have access to transition options including CCRP, CSP, organic transition, and transfers to beginning farmers and ranchers
Sustainable Agriculture Energy Innovation Grants Program				establish a nationwide program to determine the ecological and economic feasibility of producing energy from a new array of feedstock crops; the program would encourage the development of agricultural energy that responds to regional needs and capabilities with an emphasis placed on converting existing cropland to biomass production
<b>Organic Provisions</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-OrganicProvisions.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-OrganicProvisions.pdf</a>				

Organic Certification Cost Share	provide \$25 million mandatory funding over the span of the Farm Bill, while raising the limitation of individual farmers to \$750	amended to shift \$3 million of the program's funds to Organic Production and Market Data Collection	Rep. Cardoza (D-CA) expected to offer amendment to add \$3 million to cost share program to get it back to \$25 million	establish on a nationwide basis with mandatory funding of at least \$25 million, while increasing the maximum amount to \$750 per farm per year
Organic Conversion Program		not amended	Rep. Gillibrand (D-NY) expected to offer an amendment reflecting the SAC position	create an Organic Conversion Program (through the NRCS) to provide technical and financial assistance for adoption of organic farming based conservation systems with annual funding of \$50 million, at least half of which would be used for technical assistance, and capping financial assistance payments at \$10,000
Crop Insurance	require the Risk Management Agency to commission a study of the risk factors of organic farming as compared to conventional farming, if the study concludes variations are not significant and systemic the USDA would be directed to reduce/eliminate the current 5% surcharge paid by organic growers	not amended		eliminate the 5% surcharge on premiums for organic producers and establish a deadline for providing payments to organic producers that reflect organic market prices rather than conventional prices
<b>Competition Title</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-CompetitionTitle.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-CompetitionTitle.pdf</a>				

The Packers and Stockyards Act				amend to prohibit packer ownership of livestock used to manipulate prices to the detriment of producers; require USDA to write regulations defining "unreasonable preference or advantage" and to establish that producers do not need to prove an anti-competitive injury to an entire market in cases involving trade practices which have harmed them individually
The Agricultural Fair Practices Act		Rep. Boswell (D-IA) amendment approved to prohibit mandatory arbitration measures in livestock and poultry contracts	Amendment to strike the Boswell amendment on mandatory arbitration expected; SAC will oppose the amendment to strike the Boswell provision	amend to make it unlawful for any firm to refuse to deal with a producer for belonging to a producer association or cooperative; prohibit the use of binding mandatory arbitration clauses and restrictions on other legal rights available to producers involved in contract disputes; expand the prohibition on confidentiality clauses; and prohibit premature cancellation of contracts without a showing of good cause
Country of Origin Labeling	provision to allow mandatory animal identification program to be implemented as part of mandatory country of origin (COOL) labeling	not amended		allow mandatory country of origin labeling to go into effect
Interstate Shipment of Meat		Rep. Kagen (D-WI) offered and withdrew amendment to allow interstate shipment of state-inspected meat if USDA certifies as meeting federal standards	Rep. Kagen expected to re-introduce amendment	allow interstate shipment of state inspected meat in return for strengthened federal food safety regulations including plant closure authority
<b>Rural Development</b>				

Background Information: <http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-RuralDevelopment.pdf>

Rural Entrepreneurs and Micro-Enterprise Program	authorizes the program with authorization for up to \$20 million in annual discretionary funding	not amended		authorize and fund program at \$50 million per year in mandatory funding to assist rural entrepreneurs in establishing new small businesses in rural sectors
Community-based Entrepreneurial Development Program				create \$75 million per year program with mandatory funding to offer grants to establish regional initiatives for entrepreneurial development
Rural Entrepreneurship Education and Enterprise Facilitation Program				create new program with mandatory annual funding of \$20 million to provide resources and services to rural areas
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)		Rep. John Barrow (D-GA) amendment approved creating permanent authorization for ATTRA within the RD title		create permanent authorization for ATTRA in rural development
<b>Sustainable and Organic Research</b>				

Background Information: <http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgnd-Research.pdf>

Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems	proposes to transfer the IFAFS \$600 million funding to the NRI, while requiring 30% of total funding be used for purposes consistent with the IFAFS statute	not amended		retain the current annual mandatory funding of \$200 million for outcome-based interdisciplinary research, education, and extension
Organic Farming Research and Extension Initiative	current \$3 million in mandatory funding replaced with up to \$25 million in annual discretionary funds	not amended	Possibly a Rep. Cardoza (D-CA) amendment to fund OREI at \$15 million a year in mandatory funding	increase in funding for the Organic Research and Extension Initiative to a minimum of \$15 million in annual mandatory funds

Agricultural Research Service	establishes a new "Agricultural Research Institute" at USDA through which all research activities of CSREES and ARS would be coordinated	not amended	Possibly a Rep. Kagen (D-WI) amendment to require ARS to spend a fair share of its research budget on organic	create within the ARS a National Program for Organic Agriculture with funding of at least \$25 million
Organic Production and Marketing Data Collection	reauthorized in the mark	Rep. Foxx (R-NC) amendment approved to shift \$3 million from Organic Certification Cost Share to Organic Production and Market Data Collection		reauthorize the Organic Production and Marketing Data Initiative with specific requirements to ensure continuation and progress of comprehensive data collection in the organic sector
National Genetic Resource Program				reauthorize and increase funding to improve public plant and animal breeding programs that focus on crops and breeds critical to sustainable and organic systems
National Research Initiative	see IFAFS above			add a national program with an emphasis on classical plant and animal breeding
Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers				authorize \$25 million in annual mandatory emphasizing outreach through community-based organizations
<b>Renewable Energy</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgndRenewableEnergy.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farmbill/PolicyBackgndRenewableEnergy.pdf</a>				

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program	provides funding increase to \$50 million in 2008 up to \$150 million in 2012, totaling \$500 million over the life of the Farm Bill; if reserve funds materialize funding would be mandatory, otherwise it is subject to appropriation	amendment adopted to rename the program the Rural Energy for America Program; allow funding for projects that produce and sell electricity generated by new renewable energy systems, increase the maximum loan amount eligible for a guarantee, provide funding for feasibility studies, and require 15% of funding for grants of \$50,000 or less		reauthorize with priorities for projects focusing on energy efficiency for small and mid-sized producers and projects that enable agricultural producers to implement techniques that provide a net environmental benefit
Biomass Energy Transition Reserve Program	created a placeholder for this new program - more details expected before full committee consideration			see Sustainable Agriculture Energy Innovation Grants above
<b>Commodity Payments Reform</b>				
Background Information: <a href="http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farbill/PolicyBackgnd-CommodityReform.pdf">http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/farbill/PolicyBackgnd-CommodityReform.pdf</a>				
Effective Payment Limitations	mark included direct attribution of payments but not comprehensive reform	mark amended to continue current law, erasing the direct attribution provision	Expect that reform amendments will be offered and discussed in committee, but likely to be withdrawn prior to voting	enact effective payment reform, close loopholes that currently provide incentives to overproduction and land consolidation; total payments, including gains from commodity certificates and forfeitures, should be capped at \$250,000 per farm per year; all payments should be attributed to real persons and available only to those actively engaged in farm labor and management
Sodsaver	see above		see above	see above

Other Commodity Reforms	planting flexibility for fruits and vegetables extended to Indiana only and only for processed tomatoes	following amendment to return to current law, Rep. Ellsworth (D-IN) wins back the Indiana tomato exception; broader flexibility amendment by Rep. Kagen (D-WI) withdrawn		expand planting flexibility and eliminate or reduce harmful impacts of marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments on U.S. agriculture, the environment , and farm and food systems around the world