

CAW 211/13

14 de Mayo de 2013

Ley Agrícola de los Estados Unidos: **Comité de Agricultura del Senado aprueba su versión**

El 14 de mayo de 2013 el Comité de Agricultura del Senado aprobó una nueva versión de la Ley Agrícola ("Ley de Reforma Agrícola, Alimentos y Trabajo de 2013") en una votación 15-5, aprobando un gasto de \$955.000 millones de dólares para los próximos 10 años. A pesar que la ley autoriza los programas solamente para los próximos 5 años, el cálculo presupuestario que realiza el congreso se basa en 10 años y por lo tanto, todos los informes utilizan esta cifra para informar el gasto, así como las reducciones de \$18.000 millones que se lograrían si se aprueba esta versión de la ley.

Como se informó anteriormente (CAW 152/12, 157/12 y 177/12), la ley agrícola de 2008 venció el 30 de septiembre de 2012 y el congreso extendió su vigencia hasta el 30 de septiembre del 2013. A pesar que el Senado y la Comisión de Agricultura de Diputados habían aprobado en 2012 sus versiones para reemplazar la ley de 2008, las diferencias en la cantidad y forma de reducir el gasto evitaron alcanzar el consenso necesario para aprobar una nueva ley.

El principal obstáculo para aprobar la nueva ley en 2012 fue la diferencia entre demócratas y republicanos sobre el monto de reducción en los programas sociales de asistencia alimentaria, que representan el 80% del gasto total de la ley y que benefician a 47 millones de estadounidenses. Los demócratas, que controlan el senado, habían aprobado una reducción de \$4.000 millones de dólares durante 10 años en 2012, monto idéntico al aprobado hoy por la Comisión de Agricultura. Por otra parte, la Comisión de Agricultura de Diputados, controlada por los republicanos, había aprobado una reducción de \$16.000 millones de dólares en 2012, 4 veces más, en estos programas y la propuesta a ser debatida mañana 15 de mayo en Diputados incluye una reducción de \$20.000 millones de dólares.

Los 5 votos en contra de la versión aprobada hoy por la Comisión de Agricultura del Senado fueron de cuatro republicanos: Mike Johanns (Nebraska), Pat Roberts (Kansas), John Thune (Dakota del Sur) y Mitch McConnell (Kentucky) y uno de la demócrata Kirsten Gillibrand (Nueva York). La oposición de Gillibrand fue debido a la reducción en los programas de nutrición, mientras que Roberts, Johanns y Thune se opusieron al proyecto de ley debido a que no reforma la estructura de los subsidios a los productores y mantiene los pagos basados en los precios. Durante sus intervenciones indicaron que la ley elimina los pagos directos, considerados de caja verde por la OMC y los reemplaza con programas más distorsivos considerados de caja ámbar, que podrían resultar en un pedido de solución de controversias tal como ocurrió en el caso de Brasil con el algodón.

Comunicado de Prensa de la Comisión de Agricultura del Senado

Senate Agriculture Committee Approves Farm Bill with Broad Bipartisan Support

Thursday, April 26, 2012

The U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry today voted to approve the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, a bipartisan Farm Bill authored by Committee Chairwoman Senator Debbie Stabenow and Ranking Member Senator Pat Roberts.

The bill reforms food and agricultural policy by eliminating direct payments and emphasizing the need to strengthen risk management tools for farmers, saving billions of dollars. Overall, the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 will reduce the deficit by \$23 billion dollars by eliminating unnecessary subsidies, consolidating programs to end duplication, and cracking down on food assistance abuse. These reforms allow for the strengthening of key initiatives that help farmers and small businesses reach new markets and create American jobs. The measure will now go to the full Senate for consideration.

“The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 will save taxpayers billions of dollars while promising a safe and healthy national food supply. By eliminating duplication, and streamlining and consolidating programs, we were able to continue investing in initiatives that help farmers and small businesses create jobs. This bill proves that by working across party lines, we can save taxpayer money and create smart, cost-effective policies that lay the foundation for a stronger, more prosperous economy. I am proud that once again the Agriculture Committee was able to work together in a bipartisan way to complete major reforms that save money and grow our economy.”

Stabenow continued, “We now look forward to continuing to work with our colleagues in a bipartisan way to ensure we enact a Farm Bill this year before the current one expires. Agriculture supports 16 million jobs in our country, and it is absolutely critical to provide farmers the certainty they need to plan and grow by passing a Farm Bill this year.”

To view a copy of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, including the amendments that were accepted by the Committee, please visit the Senate Agriculture Committee website at <http://www.ag.senate.gov/issues/farm-bill>. A section-by-section summary of the bill is also available as well as an archived webcast of the markup procedures. A short summary of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act is below.

The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 *reforms farm policy, consolidates and streamlines programs, and will reduce the deficit by \$23 billion. This bill saves taxpayers money while strengthening initiatives that help farmers, ranchers and small business owners create American jobs. The bill:*

Eliminates Direct Payments while Strengthening Risk Management

Farmers face unique risks unlike other businesses. Weather and market conditions outside a producer’s control can have devastating effects. A risk management system that helps

producers stay in business through a few bad seasons ensures that Americans always have access to a safe and plentiful food supply. The proposal:

- Eliminates direct payments. Farmers will no longer be paid for crops they are not growing, will not be paid for acres that are not actually planted, and will not receive support absent a drop in price or yields.
- Consolidates two remaining farm programs into one, and will give farmers the ability to tailor risk management coverage—meaning better protection against real risks beyond a farmer’s control.
- Strengthens crop insurance and expands access so farmers are not wiped out by a few days of bad weather.

Consolidates and Streamlines Programs

By eliminating duplicative programs, funds are concentrated in the areas in which they will have the greatest impact, making them work better for producers.

- By ending duplication and consolidating programs, the bill eliminates dozens of programs under the Agriculture Committee’s jurisdiction.
 - For example, the bill consolidates 23 existing conservation programs into 13 programs, while maintaining the existing tools farmers and landowners need to protect and conserve land, water and wildlife.

Improves Program Integrity and Accountability

At a time when many out-of-work Americans are in need for the first time in their lives, it is critical that every taxpayer dollar be spent responsibly and serves those truly struggling. By closing loopholes, tightening standards, and requiring greater transparency, the proposal increases efficiency and improves effectiveness.

- Increases accountability in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by:
 - Stopping lottery winners from continuing to receive assistance.
 - Ending misuse by college students.
 - Cracking down on retailers and recipients engaged in benefit trafficking.
 - Increasing requirements to prevent liquor and tobacco stores from becoming retailers.
 - Eliminating gaps in standards that result in overpayment of benefits.
 - The proposal maintains benefits for families in need.

Grows America’s Agricultural Economy

The proposal increases efficiency and accountability, saving tens of billions of dollars overall, while strengthening agricultural jobs initiatives by:

- Expanding export opportunities and helping farmers develop new markets for their

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- goods.
- Investing in research to help commercialize new agricultural innovations.
 - Growing bio-based manufacturing (businesses producing goods in America from raw agricultural products grown in America) by allowing bio-manufacturers to participate in existing U.S. Department of Agriculture loan programs, expanding the BioPreferred labeling initiative, and strengthening a procurement preference so the U.S. government will select bio-based products when purchasing needed goods.
 - Spurring advancements in bio-energy production, supporting advanced biomass energy production such as cellulosic ethanol and pellets from woody biomass for power.
 - Helping family farmers sell locally by increasing support for farmers' markets and spurring the creation of food hubs to connect farmers to schools and other community-based consumers.

Extending rural development initiatives to help rural communities upgrade infrastructure and create an environment for small businesses to grow.