



A FARM BILL FOR RURAL AMERICA: 2023 FARM BILL PLATFORM SUMMARY



The Center for Rural Affairs (CFRA) has been at work for nearly 50 years with a mission to establish strong rural communities, social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and genuine opportunity for all while engaging people in decisions that affect the quality of their lives and the future of their communities. The farm bill is an important legislative vehicle that can be used to support this work. Below is a summary of our organization's priorities for the next farm bill.

CONSERVATION

- **CFRA supports action to:** Promote annual soil testing for acres enrolled in a Conservation Stewardship Program contract by adding a standalone soil-testing enhancement.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Require the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop and share guidance on soil testing data interpretation for producers who need it.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Increase the number of practices available for Conservation Stewardship Program renewal contracts by adding additional enhancements that allow producers to continue to build off of their previous enhancements.

USDA LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY

- **CFRA supports action to:** Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reduce the barriers for producers with limited English proficiency by releasing non-English versions of program announcements simultaneously with the English version.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture to translate Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency educational materials and program sign-up forms in 12 additional languages.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create a list of reliable interpreters with connections to agriculture in each state.



CROP INSURANCE

- **CFRA supports action to:** Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency to set a separate planting date for certified organic crops, or build in a grace period for certified organic operations so they are not penalized for a certain period after the final planting date.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Make the Pandemic Cover Crop Program an annual program.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Keep later reporting deadlines available for relevant producers within the Pandemic Cover Crop Program.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency to change the cover crop termination date for both Zone 3 and Zone 4 to “required termination of cover crop by 30 days after planting.”



RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **CFRA supports action to:** Raise the maximum loan amount available to microentrepreneurs through the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program from \$50,000 to \$75,000.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Modify the prohibition on new construction found in the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program to allow for renovation of existing buildings.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Stop requiring Microenterprise Development Organizations to use multiple sources of funding to provide loans to underserved rural business owners.

SMALL MEAT PROCESSING

- **CFRA supports action to:** Secure long-term funding for the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program.
- **CFRA supports action to:** Allow intermediary lenders to use up to 5% of a grant award for expenses related to establishment or maintenance of a loan loss reserve for the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program revolving loan fund, lender training, technical assistance to prospective borrowers, and new operational costs related to the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program revolving loan fund.



To view our entire platform, including background information on each section, please visit cfra.org/farm-bill.

