The 2018 Farm Bill

AFBF 2018 Policy

1. Protect current Farm Bill spending; maintaining a unified farm bill; and Risk management tools that include federal crop insurance and commodity programs;

2. Continuation of a counter-cyclical program like the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and a revenue program like the ARC program, including using RMA data as the primary source to determine a more accurate county yield as long as RMA data at the farm level data is protected from FOIA. If ARC-County is continued, we support changes to make the program more effective and fairer to all farmers.

3. If existing programs continue, the opportunity for farmers to re-elect and/or re-enroll;

4. Modifying “Actively Engaged” rules to more broadly define “family” by including non-lineal familial relationships such as first or second cousins. The family farm exemption from the management restriction and record-keeping requirements should remain in place;

5. We oppose payment limitations

The unified 2018 farm bill maintains crop insurance and commodity programs and farm safety nets, makes improvements to these programs and does not reduce spending with a 10-year baseline of $867 billion and is budget neutral.

ARC and PLC are continued with improvements made to each and RMA yield data as the primary source. PLC reference prices and ARC benchmark prices are made higher, program yields in PLC are updated for all. Base acres are updated, but more flexible than both Senate and House proposals.

Farmers will have an opportunity to re-enroll in ARC/PLC, then beginning in 2021 the ARC/PLC election shall be annual on a commodity-by-commodity basis.

The farm bill amends the definition of family members to include non-lineal family members contributing to the farm operation (first cousins, nieces and nephews).

Payment limitations remain unchanged for ARC/PLC at $125,000 per person or entity.
The dairy safety net is greatly enhanced with coverage for small, medium and large dairy farmers available up to $9.50 per hundredweight. Farmers can participate in both Dairy Revenue Protection and the Dairy Margin Coverage on the same milk. Other dairy provisions include a milk donation program and enhanced risk management tools for the beverage sector.

CRP acreage cap of 24 million acres; Calculation of the Conservation Reserve Program rental rates being re-examined annually at enrollment to ensure they mirror, but do not exceed, the rental rates of comparable land in the immediate area;

We support the expansion of the North American Vaccine Bank for foreign animal disease to meet emergency response requirements as defined by the USDA

We support increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP).

Includes significant enhancements to any gross margin program to effectively support dairy farmers

CRP acreage cap is lifted to 27 million acres, but rental rates and incentive payments are reduced to address the issue of CRP competing with farmers for access to production lands.

We support the expansion of the North American Vaccine Bank to respond to the accident or intentional introduction of animal diseases (foot and mouth disease)

The farm bill streamlines trade promotion programs and includes $255 million each fiscal year for agricultural trade and promotion. Improves food aid and food security efforts.

Improves FSA lending capacity by raising guaranteed loans to $1.75 million, direct operating loans to $400,000 and direct farm loans to $600,000.