



Farm Bill 2018

BACKGROUND

Pope Francis shared these words about hunger in the world, “Let us be clear. Food shortage is not something natural, it is not a given, something obvious or self-evident. [...] The earth, abused and exploited, continues in many parts of the world to yield its fruits, offering us the best of itself. The faces of the starving remind us that we have foiled its purposes.” Hunger should never be considered the norm, and the Farm Bill’s international food security programs are essential pieces to preventing and ending global hunger.

Our Catholic faith calls us to honor the dignity of every human being. Unfortunately, 1 in 9 people in our world do not have enough to eat. We must ensure that all people have regular access to sufficient nutritious food. Your voice is needed, and we can make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters experiencing hunger with our advocacy around the Farm Bill.

GENERAL TALKING POINTS

As your constituent and supporter of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), I urge you to support international food security programs authorized in the Farm Bill, including **Food for Peace**, **McGovern-Dole Food for Education** and **Food for Progress**, and to continue to direct \$350M of Food for Peace funding to long-term development projects that combat underlying causes of hunger—poverty.

The international food security programs in the Farm Bill provide lifesaving emergency assistance and an opportunity for our most vulnerable brothers and sisters to lead healthy, productive and dignified lives. The programs are designed to get people emergency food when disasters strike, help communities in poverty grow more of the food they need, and support literacy and education through school lunches. Your support of these programs will help millions of people get the food they need to survive and thrive.

TALKING POINTS BEFORE AND DURING COMMITTEE MARK-UP

LOCAL REGIONAL PROCUREMENT (LRP) IN MCGOVERN-DOLE FOOD FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

- The food utilized for McGovern-Dole school feeding programs comes from the United States. CRS works to ensure the long-term sustainability of school feeding through our McGovern-Dole programs, and one key strategy for achieving sustainability is having local governments take over funding the school feeding programs. Locally sourcing some of the food used in McGovern-Dole programs supports sustainability because:
 - 1) it allows program implementers, like CRS, to work with local farmers to improve their ability to produce high-quality food, suitable for school meals, and connects these farmers as suppliers to local schools.
 - 2) involving local farmers also creates additional political and economic incentive for local governments to ultimately take over the management and funding of school feeding programs.
- In some cases, U.S. government funded projects are already working with small farmers in the same regions there are McGovern-Dole Food for Education programs, so this funding would allow CRS to connect those farmers with school feeding program opportunities.

ASK: Please support an amendment to the Farm Bill during committee mark-up that will allow \$15M in McGovern-Dole resources, which is less than 7% of overall McGovern-Dole funding, to be used for the local purchase of food to support long-term sustainability of school feeding programs.

TIMELINE FOR USING LRP TALKING POINTS:

We expect the Farm Bill to be introduced by the end of this week, and the committee mark-up could begin as soon as the week of April 16. These talking points on LRP are most relevant from now until the end of the of the committee mark-up.

TALKING POINTS BEFORE, DURING COMMITTEE MARK-UP & FLOOR VOTE

CARGO PREFERENCE

- Current law requires that at least 50% of all U.S. food aid be shipped on U.S. flagged cargo vessels. This requirement is applied to USAID's Food for Peace program and USDA's McGovern-Dole and Food for Progress programs. Due to a court order stemming from a lawsuit against USDA by U.S. shipping interests, USDA food aid programs have to meet the 50% requirement by country and by program each year. In contrast, USAID meets its 50% requirement by region.
- Because of these different rules, U.S. ships can charge USDA programs substantially more to transport food than they charge USAID programs. For CRS, U.S. ships charge our USDA programs

almost twice as much per metric ton to transport food aid than they charge our USAID programs (\$338.64 vs. \$177.25).

- USDA programs should not have to pay twice as much to ship food aid given they use the same ships to transport the same kind of food, to the same destinations as USAID programs.

ASK: Please support an amendment to the Farm Bill during floor vote that will change how cargo preference rules apply to USDA food aid programs, so that these programs are no longer charged more than USAID's food aid programs to transport food to people in need.

TIMELINE FOR USING CARGO PREFERENCE TALKING POINTS:

We expect the Farm Bill to be introduced by the end of this week, and the committee mark-up could begin as soon as the week of April 16. These talking points on cargo preference are most relevant from now until the floor vote.