

Farm Bill Highlights

TFI Priorities

Research

High Priority Research and Extension Initiatives

Summary - Section 7208 amends section 1672 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to change the name of the Alfalfa and Forage Research Program to Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program and making corresponding changes throughout the program authority; authorize the Macadamia Tree Health Initiative, the National Turfgrass Research Initiative, the Fertilizer Management Initiative, the Cattle Fever Tick Program, and the Laying Hen and Turkey Research Program; and reauthorize appropriations for the Pulse Crop Health Initiative, training coordination for food and agriculture protection, pollinator protection, and listed high-priority research and extension initiatives through fiscal year 2023.

Bill Text

SEC. 7208. HIGH-PRIORITY RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVES.

“(13) FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Research and extension grants may be made under this section for the purpose of carrying out research to improve fertilizer use efficiency in crops—“(i) to maximize crop yield; and “(ii) to minimize nutrient losses to surface and groundwater and the atmosphere.

(B) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall give priority to research examining the impact of the source, rate, timing, and placement of plant nutrients.

Conservation

Technical Service Providers (TSP)

Summary - Sec. 2502. Delivery of technical assistance.

Subsection (a) of section 2502 amends section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to include new definitions for “eligible participant” and “third-party provider.”

Subsection (b) amends section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to include a new subsection providing alternative certification methods for third-party providers.

Bill Text

SEC. 2502. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1242(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842(a)) is amended to read as follows: “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section: “(1) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT.—The term ‘eligible participant’ means a producer, landowner, or entity that is participating in, or seeking to participate in, programs in which the producer, landowner, or entity is otherwise eligible to participate under this title.

“(2) THIRD-PARTY PROVIDER.—The term ‘third-party provider’ means a commercial entity (including a farmer cooperative, agriculture retailer, or other commercial entity (as defined by the Secretary)), a nonprofit entity, a State or local government (including a conservation district), or a Federal agency, that has expertise in the technical aspect of conservation planning, including nutrient management planning, watershed planning, or environmental engineering.”.

(b) CERTIFICATION OF THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS.— Section 1242(e) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION.— “(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall approve any qualified certification that the Secretary determines meets or exceeds the national criteria provided under paragraph (3)(B). “(B) QUALIFIED CERTIFICATION.—In this paragraph, the term ‘qualified certification’ means a professional certification that is established by the Secretary, an agriculture retailer, a farmer cooperative, the American Society of Agronomy, or the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, including certification—“(i) as a Certified Crop Advisor by the American Society of Agronomy; “(ii) as a Certified Professional Agronomist by the American Society of Agronomy; and “(iii) as a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Specialist by the Secretary.”.

Other Relevant Items

Definition of “Retail Facility” with regard to **Process Safety Management (PSM)**

SEC. 9131. Not later than 180 days of the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall revise the process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals standard under section 1910.119 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, promulgated pursuant to section 6 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 655), to provide that the definition of the term “retail facility”, when used with respect to a facility that provides direct sales of highly hazardous chemicals to end users or consumers (including farmers or ranchers), means a facility that is exempt from such standard because such facility has obtained more than half of its income during the most recent 12-month period from such direct sales.

EQIP Program

Section 2301 amends EQIP eligible practices to include two new conservation activities; precision conservation management planning, and cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations as eligible for the purposes of the program.

Provides additional definitions of “priority resource concern” and “stewardship practices” for the purposes of the program to support the addition of stewardship contracts made by 2302(d). The term ‘stewardship practice’ means a practice or set of practices approved by the Secretary that, when implemented and maintained on eligible land, address 1 or more priority resource concerns.

Sec. 2302 Subsection (d) creates authority for new stewardship contracts of 5 to 10 year term within EQIP for the purposes of payments for stewardship practices that address locally established priority resource concerns. The subsection further establishes considerations for determining practice payment amounts and a payment limitation for a person or entity of \$50,000/year. The subsection provides for use of no more than 50 percent of the EQIP appropriations for these 13 contracts.

Sec. 2304 CIG Competitive Grants

Defines “New or Innovative Conservation Approaches” as“(I) precision agriculture technologies; “(II) enhanced nutrient management plans and fertilization systems; “(III) soil health management systems;

Subsection (c) of section 2304 amends section 1240H of the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the Secretary to use up to \$25 million of EQIP funds for each fiscal year 2019 through 2023 to enter into agreements for on-farm conservation innovation trials. This subsection encourages the Secretary to provide payments for 3 or more years to producers, including forgone income, when adopting new and innovative conservation technology, and requires the Secretary to make the results available on a public database while protecting individual producer’s information. Subsection (c) further instructs the Secretary regarding provision of technical assistance, eligible entities, and examples of new or innovative technologies to be included in on-farm trials. The Secretary is to provide compilation and analysis of the trials to encourage broader adoption of the innovative technologies.

EQIP Funding— (Eliminates CSP but provides funding for CSP contracts entered into prior to enactment of bill)

\$2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;
\$2,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;
\$2,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;
\$2,935,000,000 for fiscal year 2022;
\$3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.

- Eliminates requirement 60% for livestock allocation
- Provides 5% for wildlife habitat
- 10% of conservation program funding (except CRP) for drinking water source protection

Sec. 2504. adds land-grant university extension programs to the list of representatives to serve on the state technical committees.

Drinking Water Source Protection

Section 2503 amends section 1244 of the Food Security Act of 1985 to include a new subsection that requires the Secretary to promote water quality and water quantity practices that protect drinking water. The new subsection requires collaboration with community water systems and offers increased incentives and higher payment rates for practices that result in environmental benefits. The new subsection further reserves not less than 10 percent of Title II funds—except CRP—to carry out the subsection.

CRP

Expands CRP from 24 million to 29 million acres by 2023 (1 million per year)

Biostimulants

SEC. 9201. REPORT ON REGULATION OF PLANT BIOSTIMULANTS. (a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit a report to the President and Congress that identifies potential regulatory and legislative reforms to ensure the expeditious and appropriate review, approval, uniform national labeling, and availability of plant

biostimulant products to agricultural producers. (b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall prepare the report required by subsection (a) in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the several States, industry stakeholders, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary determines necessary. (c) PLANT BIOSIMULANT DEFINED.—In this section, the term “plant biostimulant” means a substance or micro-organism that, when applied to seeds, plants, or the rhizosphere, stimulates natural processes to enhance or benefit nutrient uptake, nutrient efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, or crop quality and yield.