
Fact Sheet: 2012 Farm Bill Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012



Timeline

The 2008 Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2012. The Senate approved their version of the 2012 Farm Bill in June 2012 and the House Agriculture Committee plans to begin discussions on the Farm Bill in July. However, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor did not include the Farm Bill on the House's summer agenda.

Factors Influencing School Food

The Senate's version of the Farm Bill ends the practice of paying farmers for crops they do not grow and creates fraud protections and healthy food incentives for SNAP recipients. As it relates to school food, the Farm Bill acts mostly as a funding mechanism through the purchase of farm commodities, support of fresh produce programs, grants aimed at developing local supply chains, and provisions to encourage schools to source locally-grown food. The Farm Bill offers several important opportunities to advocate for healthy food options in schools.

HSC Policy Recommendations

Farm-To-School Initiatives

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) aim to build local networks that provide healthy food options to economically-depressed neighborhoods, providing mutual benefits to residents, the local economy, and farmers in the region. Currently, these programs are focused on supporting the retail food sector outside the school environment.

Funding for both programs is authorized in the 2012 Farm Bill. The Senate's version provides for \$5 million annually for CFPCGP and \$125 million total for HFFI. HSC recommends that school districts that participate in building local food networks be encouraged to apply for CFPCGP and HFFI funds. This proposal is also supported by Food Systems Network NYC and School Food FOCUS.

Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Program

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides fresh snacks during the day to schools that have a large free-and-reduced-lunch population. This program offers an alternative to processed food found in vending machines and introduces children to food they otherwise may not eat (think grapefruits, asparagus, sugar snap peas, and plums). Schools have control over which produce is served and how. The snacks are sometimes served in the classroom where teachers can have a conversation with students about the foods they're eating.

Funding for this program is authorized in the 2012 Farm Bill. The Senate's version provides \$150 million annually. HSC recommends increasing the amount of funds to expand FFVP to more schools. This program is also supported by Food Research and Action Center, California Food Policy Advocates, and School Food FOCUS.

School Breakfast Program

Schools across the country receive USDA Foods (formerly called commodities) at a value of 22.25 cents per meal for the lunches it serves to students. Providing similar funding for breakfasts will help offset the costs of the new meal patterns and ensure schools are providing quality breakfasts to students.

Language for this initiative is currently not in the 2012 Farm Bill. The School Nutrition Association wrote a letter to the Senate Agriculture Committee proposing support of 10 cents per meal, at a cost of \$200 million per year. This initiative is also supported by School Food FOCUS in their 2012 Federal Policy Priorities. HSC supports this recommendation.

Learn More

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