

Farm Bill Backgrounder



The Farm Bill is a multi-year package of legislation that authorizes a variety of domestic and international food and agricultural programs. CRS focuses its advocacy on Title III, which addresses foreign trade and international food aid programs. Programs authorized in this title include **Food for Peace, Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Farmer-to-Farmer**.

Food for Peace Title II

For 70 years, the Food for Peace program has provided food assistance around the world. During an emergency, Food for Peace delivers U.S.-sourced agricultural commodities—like corn, soybeans, oil, etc.—as well as cash, vouchers and locally procured food to people facing crises. In-kind food commodities help people access food to survive and prevent the need for people to sell critical assets like seeds or livestock or to migrate to other regions and countries in search of food and better opportunities for their families.

In addition, Food for Peace supports communities that are susceptible to economic, social or climate-related shocks and stresses to improve and sustain their food and nutrition security through non-emergency programs. These programs, called Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs), are unique,

multi-year programs. They build on emergency food security interventions: enhancing individual, community and national resilience; reducing chronic vulnerability; and facilitating inclusive growth. RFSAs support communities to recover, rebuild and strengthen their resiliency to provide for themselves and thrive. Investing in long-term solutions builds self-sufficiency so that communities are no longer dependent on aid, reducing the need for future humanitarian assistance.

American Farmers Feed the World Act (AFFWA)

The American Farmers Feed the World Act (S. 2862, H.R. 4293), introduced in the House and Senate for inclusion in the Farm Bill, puts Food for Peace Title II programs, especially RFSAs, at risk. If the AFFWA is enacted or parts are included in the Farm Bill, Food for Peace long-term development programs could become inoperable due to funding limitations requiring too much money be spent only on purchasing food aid and paying for ocean freight. At a time of rising global hunger and malnutrition, the loss of Food for Peace non-emergency programs could result in 2.3 million fewer people receiving critical assistance to build self-sufficiency.

One of the main concerns with the AFFWA is that it establishes that 50% of Food for Peace funds go to purchasing U.S. in-kind food and ocean freight costs. This is an increase from 40% that is currently used for procuring and shipping U.S. commodities. Implementing organizations like CRS proudly support the use of U.S. commodities in Food for Peace as long as it is appropriate for the specific needs of the community being served. Programs are most effective when CRS and other organizations can provide the right response based on community and market needs. This may include U.S. commodities but can also include other approaches that improve market access and help generate income. The AFFWA could undermine the flexibility necessary to effectively implement food assistance programs tailored to the diverse needs of communities worldwide.



The Legislative Process

The Farm Bill must be extended or reauthorized every five years or many of its provisions will lapse and it will revert to the original 1938 version. The House and Senate draft a bill, hold committee hearings and finalize text before going to the Floor of each chamber for consideration and passage. Once the two versions of the Farm Bill are passed in the House and Senate, the bill will go to a joint or “conference” committee that includes members of the House and Senate. The conference committee will reconcile the differences in the bills and return a single bill to the full House and Senate for final passage. Finally, it is sent to the president to be signed into law.

Once programs have been authorized in the Farm Bill, it allows the ability for U.S. funding to be appropriated to these programs, which is a separate step that happens during the annual federal appropriations process.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING

For more information on global hunger and the Farm Bill, view:

- [What Is the Farm Bill, and How Does it Help Farmers Around the World?](#)
- [CRS Campaign Issues Background—Hunger and Climate Change](#)

For examples of the importance and impact of CRS’ Farm Bill Food for Peace programs, read these stories:

- [What the Farm Bill Makes Possible: Raúl’s Story](#)
- [Improving Child health and Survival in Guatemala](#)
- [Livestock Fairs Build Resilience in South Sudan](#)
- [How Climate Change is Pushing Herders in Northern Kenya to the Brink](#)

Congressional Talking Points: Farm Bill

Important: Prior to your meeting, please ensure you have the most up to date ask and talking points by checking the CRS congressional visits webpage at crs.org/visit-congress.

Framing

Begin with gratitude

- Thank you for taking time to talk about global hunger and poverty, issues that are very important to me/us. I/We look forward to discussing the Food for Peace program in the Farm Bill.

Express gratitude for something your member has done recently related to hunger or poverty.

Introduction: Who you are and why you're there

- As people of faith seeking justice and care for all in our world, we believe there is a moral obligation to provide assistance for our human family and address the root causes of hunger and poverty. Food insecurity is a pressing issue of our time and impacts our district/state as well as around the world.

Share about yourself/the group, your work in the district/state and your connection to CRS. Share your personal story of why you support CRS' international humanitarian and development work, including your concern about our human family and why global issues like hunger and poverty matter to you.

Moving to the issues: Set the stage for the conversation

- The United States government has the capacity to address the needs of people around the world experiencing poverty and vulnerability and to prevent hunger. U.S. leadership is critical in our collective effort to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.
- The international food assistance programs in the Farm Bill, including Food for Peace, provide people with the resources they need during emergency and non-emergency situations to feed their families and support long-term solutions to poverty by strengthening resilience and self-sufficiency.
- However, if the American Farmers Feed the World Act is enacted, or if parts are included in the text of the Farm Bill, it would compromise critical Food for Peace programs and undercut the ability to tailor food assistance to the diverse needs of communities around the world. Despite its title, this bill will not increase the reach or improve the efficiency of U.S. international food assistance programs. The American Farmers Feed the World Act risks millions of people being cut off from assistance they are currently receiving, which is concerning during this time of rising global hunger and malnutrition.
 - USAID has estimated that 2.3 million people currently receiving assistance under Food for Peace Resilience Food Security Activities could lose access to critical aid that builds capacity and self-sufficiency.

- Programs are most effective when implementing organizations can provide the right response based on community needs—including U.S. commodities, locally supplied seeds for farmers and improved market access, among other approaches.
- Investing in long-term development programs such as Food for Peace decreases the need for future emergency assistance.

Share a story about the importance and impact of Food for Peace programs that help people feed their families, build sustainable livelihoods and strengthen their resilience against future economic challenges. Consider using one of these CRS program stories:

- [What the Farm Bill Makes Possible: Raúl's Story](#)
- [Improving Child health and Survival in Guatemala](#)
- [Livestock Fairs Build Resilience in South Sudan](#)
- [How Climate Change is Pushing Herders in Northern Kenya to the Brink](#)

The Ask

During this time of dire global food insecurity, I urge you to protect Food for Peace Title II programs in the Farm Bill and oppose the inclusion of the American Farmers Feed the World Act (H.R. 4293/S. 2862).

Discussion

Questions to Ask

- How does [senator/representative name] plan to approach the international food assistance programs in the Farm Bill that fight hunger and malnutrition, like Food for Peace Title II?
- Will your office oppose the American Farmers Feed the World Act and the inclusion of its policies in the Farm Bill?
- What can I do, as a constituent, to continue to advance these important issues with you/your office?

Comments to Raise

- If the senator/representative travels abroad, ask if he/she would like to visit CRS programming in the future. CRS works in more than 120 countries around the world and would welcome an opportunity to show the senator/representative the impact U.S. investments in food security have on the lives of families and communities worldwide.
- Let your senator/representative know that you—along with CRS—can serve as a resource both in Washington, DC and back home in the district/state. Express an interest in continuing to dialogue with them, or their staff, on these and other issues of mutual interest.