

Congress Passes 2018 Farm Bill

This week, Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, the 2018 farm bill. The Senate approved the measure 87-13 and the House followed, easily passing the farm bill compromise by a 369-47 vote.

The farm bill provides an increase of \$630 million in mandatory funding to support American innovation and productivity through research, extension, and education activities conducted by our land-grant colleges of agriculture.

Additional HR 2 Information and Summaries:

[HR 2 Conference Report](#)

[HR 2 Conference Report – Summary](#)

[HR 2 Conference Report – Highlights](#)

[HR 2 Conference Report – Talking Points](#)

The swift legislative approval of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 by both chambers of Congress clears the bill for the President's signature.

Certain specific provisions of interest include the following:

LAND-GRANT DESIGNATION – will prohibit the designation of additional entities as eligible to receive funds under the Smith-Lever Act, the Hatch Act of 1887, sections 1444, 1445, and 1447 of NAREPTA, and McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act, except in specified circumstances. In addition, no State shall receive an increase in funding for these programs as a result of a State's designation.

EXTENSION AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AT 1890 LAND-GRANT COLLEGES, INCLUDING TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY – amends the formula for Evans-Allen and 1890 Extension to provide \$3 million in funding for Central State University for each program.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS AT 1890 INSTITUTIONS – provides \$40 million in mandatory funding to establish a grant program for individuals attending an 1890 institution pursuing a degree in food and agricultural sciences.

NEW BEGINNING FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS – establishes a competitive grant program at land-grant colleges and universities to provide identifiable support specifically targeted for Tribal students.

LIMITATION ON INDIRECT COSTS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS – is a conforming amendment to increase from 22 to 30 percent (generally provided in appropriations acts) the amount of indirect costs that may be charged against any agricultural research, education, or extension grant.

AGRICULTURE ADVANCED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PILOT – establishes a pilot program within USDA that will be known as the Agriculture Advanced Research and Development Authority (AGARDA) to carry out advanced research and development.

AGRICULTURAL GENOME TO PHENOME INITIATIVE – amends the research initiative (known as the “Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative”) to expand knowledge concerning genomes and phenomes of crops and animals of importance to the agriculture sector of the United States.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE, amends section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 and provides mandatory funding of \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2020, \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2021, \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2022, and \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter.

URBAN, INDOOR, AND OTHER EMERGING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE – provides \$10 million in mandatory funding to establish a program that authorizes the Secretary to make competitive grants to support research, education, and extension activities for the purposes of facilitating the development of urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production, harvesting, transportation, aggregation, packaging, distribution, and markets.

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE AT 1890 INSTITUTIONS – authorizes the Secretary to recognize not less than 3 centers of excellence at 1890 Institutions.

RESEARCH FACILITIES ACT – amends the Act to establish a competitive grant program to assist in the construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling of agricultural research facilities.

EXTENSION DESIGN AND DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE – authorizes the Secretary to establish a competitive grant program for the purpose of encouraging the design of adaptive prototype systems for improving extension and education that seek to advance the application, translation, and demonstration of scientific discoveries and other agricultural research for the adoption and understanding of food, agricultural, and natural resources practices, techniques, methods, and technologies using digital or other novel platforms.

FOUNDATION FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH – amends and provides \$185 million in mandatory funding for the Foundation on the date of submission of a report to Congress on how they will become self-sustaining.

SMITH-LEVER COMMUNITY EXTENSION PROGRAM – amends section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act to allow 1994 Institutions to compete for and receive funds directly from the Secretary

of Agriculture for the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk funding program and the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program.

SIMPLIFIED PLAN OF WORK – amends to simplify the requirements for plans of work.

REVIEW OF LAND-GRANT TIME AND EFFORT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – requires the Secretary, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, to review and revise current reporting requirements related to compensation charges, documentation of personnel expenses, and other requirements (commonly referred to as time and effort reporting). Requires the revisions to be developed in collaboration with LGUs, and to reduce the amount of paperwork and time.

The Conference Report also makes numerous amendments to various research and other statutes regarding industrial hemp.

FARMING OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING AND OUTREACH (FOTO) – combines and amends the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and the Outreach Program for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Veterans and provides mandatory funding of \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 and 2020, \$35,000,000 for fiscal year 2021, \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2022, \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter.