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The Farm Bill After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation: Frequently Asked Questions

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SUMMARY

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For nearly a century, Congress has passed farm bills, which are omnibus, multiyear laws that govern an array of agricultural and food programs. Farm bills have grown in size and scope in recent decades. Enactment of omnibus farm bills has provided opportunities for policymakers to periodically address a broad range of agricultural and food issues about every five years. The most recent farm bill, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334), expired in 2023. It was extended three times for a year at a time: in November 2023 to cover FY2024 and crop year 2024 (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102), in December 2024 to cover FY2025 and crop year 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101), and in November 2025 to cover FY2026 and crop year 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002).

Farm bill program authorizations and funding sources come in various combinations. Some farm bill programs are authorized for specific time periods and have expiration dates, such as the end of a fiscal year or a crop year (year in which a crop is harvested). Other farm bill programs are authorized without an expiration date, and their implementation depends on funding availability. Some programs are funded with mandatory funding provided by the farm bill, whereas implementation of other programs is dependent on Congress providing mandatory or discretionary appropriations after the farm bill's enactment. Considerations of these differences affect the debate for program reauthorization and the consequences of expiration.

In July 2025, Title I of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21, sometimes referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) amended select provisions of the 2018 farm bill. It did not reauthorize all expired or expiring programs or authorizations of the 2018 farm bill. The reconciliation law included some changes to mandatory spending programs. Budget reconciliation rules did not allow many of the policy changes for some mandatory spending programs, and particularly for discretionary spending programs, that are usually in a farm bill.

P.L. 119-21 included increases to and extensions of the farm commodity programs, reductions to but not necessarily reauthorization of nutrition assistance programs (particularly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP), and changes to funding for conservation programs using funding from the act known as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA, P.L. 117-169). The reconciliation law also increased funding for some relatively smaller programs related to agricultural trade promotion, research, energy, and horticulture and rescinded IRA funding for forestry. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the agriculture title (Title I) of P.L. 119-21 will reduce federal outlays by $121 billion over 10 years (FY2025-FY2034), comprised primarily of changes in the nutrition subtitle that will reduce outlays by $187 billion and changes to other subtitles for agriculture provisions that will provide a net increase in spending by $66 billion.

The reconciliation law's effects on some farm bill programs pose questions regarding future legislative action on a farm bill. Congress may choose whether or not to undertake additional reauthorizations and amendments of farm bill provisions during the 119th Congress. Some have referred to such potential legislation as a "skinny farm bill" or a "farm bill 2.0," given that the FY2025 budget reconciliation law already enacted some changes that Congress might normally address as part of a farm bill.

A stand-alone farm bill during the 119th Congress may include the parts of a typical farm bill that could not be considered under the budget reconciliation process. Such legislation may include provisions that authorize the framework for discretionary funded programs. Examples include programs in what are usually the farm bill titles for credit, rural development, research, forestry, bioenergy, horticulture, and miscellaneous titles. In addition, several mandatory spending programs have authorities that were not extended by P.L. 119-21. Without reauthorization or an extension, these programs either may not have authority to operate beyond FY2026 or may not continue to receive new budget authority. A new farm bill may also consider policy amendments, particularly for mandatory spending programs, whether or not they were addressed in budget reconciliation. And finally, a new farm bill may consider a longer-term suspension of "permanent law," a set of nonexpiring, outdated provisions from the 1930s and 1940s that could result in costly and market-distorting effects for certain commodities if Congress does not act to keep them suspended.

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A *farm bill* is a collection of laws, changes to laws, and provisions that authorize, reauthorize, or amend various food, agriculture, and rural policies. Congress has passed farm bills about every five years for nearly the past century.[1] The most recent farm bill, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334), expired in 2023. It was extended three times for a year at a time: in November 2023 to cover FY2024 and crop year 2024 (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102), in December 2024 to cover FY2025 and crop year 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101), and in November 2025 to cover FY2026 and crop year 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002).[2]

In July 2025, Title I of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21, sometimes referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) amended select provisions of the most recent farm bill. It amended and reauthorized most of the farm commodity programs for the next five years. For conservation, trade, and nutrition, the reconciliation law made changes to funding, eligibility, or benefit calculations but did not completely reauthorize some policies. For other policy areas, it did not reauthorize all expired or expiring programs or authorizations. Because budget reconciliation rules only permit actions that have a budgetary effect on mandatory spending, many other policy changes and reauthorizations that Congress may typically include as part of a farm bill faced barriers to inclusion, such as actions related to farm loan and rural development programs that are funded with discretionary appropriations.[3]

This report is intended to address frequently asked questions related to reauthorization of farm bill programs following the FY2025 budget reconciliation law. The questions are posed to cover key concepts about the farm bill—such as its contents, timing, and budget—before moving to more specific questions about budget reconciliation and farm bill programs after enactment of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law.

Farm Bill Authorization

An authorization refers to the legal authority for a program to exist and operate. Some authorizations also provide funding to operate a program. Reauthorization refers to the legislative process of enacting a bill to renew an expired or expiring authorization for a program. Programs may be authorized differently: some programs are authorized for specific amounts; some are authorized for such sums as necessary (not a specific amount); some are for specific time periods; some are permanent or nonexpiring; some operate with mandatory funding that is made available in the authorizing act; and some have authorizations for the use of mandatory or discretionary funding that may be provided in subsequent appropriations acts.[4]

[1] CRS Report R45210, *Farm Bills: Major Legislative Actions, 1965-2024*; and Jonathan Coppess and Chris Adamo, *Could Climate Change Produce a Revolutionary 2023 Farm Bill?*, Farm Foundation Issue Report, September 2022, https://www.farmfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Farm-Foundation-September-2022-Issue-Report-on-2023-Farm-Bill.pdf.

[2] Some programs operate on a calendar year, fiscal year, crop year, or marketing year basis. A *crop year* is the calendar year in which a commodity is harvested. A *marketing year* is the 12-month period that begins when a commodity is harvested. Government supports for crops harvested in the 2025 crop year may be payable until the end of the crops' marketing year, which for corn and soybeans would end in September 2026. CRS Report R47659, *Expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill and Extension for 2025*.

[3] CRS Report R48444, *The Reconciliation Process: Frequently Asked Questions*.

[4] CRS Report R46497, *Authorizations and the Appropriations Process*.

Why does Congress reauthorize farm bill programs?

The reauthorization process via a farm bill allows policymakers an opportunity to periodically address a broad range of agricultural and food issues without starting from scratch or separately addressing many issues in stand-alone bills. Congress may also choose to use a farm bill to authorize new programs, amend existing programs, repeal programs, leave programs unchanged, or allow them to expire.

What makes a farm bill omnibus?

The farm bill, as it is referred to in the current era, refers to a single legislative vehicle—an omnibus act—that is a compilation of new laws or amendments to existing laws. Some of these existing laws were enacted as stand-alone acts years or decades prior and have their own names, such as the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. §§2011 et seq.; P.L. 88-525, §§2 et seq. as amended),[5] the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1961 (7 U.S.C. §§1921 et seq.; P.L. 87-128, §§301 eq seq. as amended), the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. §§8301 et seq.; P.L. 107-171, §§10401 et seq. as amended), and the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. §§3801 et seq.; P.L. 99-198, §§1201 et seq. as amended), which was itself a farm bill. A farm bill's primary function may be to amend these existing acts. In addition, a farm bill may include new provisions that may not be specifically related to an existing law. Sometimes Congress titles these provisions as "acts," even though they are part of a larger bill.

What is typically included in a farm bill?

The contents of a farm bill can vary and are determined by congressional action. The content is usually areas of overlapping jurisdiction of the agricultural authorizing committees—the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. However, issues outside the jurisdiction of these committees may be included in a farm bill with the approval of other committees of jurisdiction or by certain procedural actions taken on the floors of each chamber.[6]

Additionally, farm bills have grown in breadth over time to reflect changing priorities and a broader coalition to support passage. Traditionally, farm bills were focused on support for a handful of staple field crops and a limited number of other commodities—corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, rice, dairy, and sugar. These programs are still present in farm bills; however, the legislation has expanded in scope to include other prominent topics such as nutrition, conservation, horticulture, farm loans, research, rural development, forestry, and energy. Much of the breadth of recent farm bills includes policies and programs that were originally enacted in stand-alone acts prior to their inclusion in farm bills.[7]

What was included in the most recent farm bill in 2018?

The most recent farm bill was the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334), an act with 12 titles amending and reauthorizing various agriculture, rural development,

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[5] P.L. 88-525 was initially enacted as The Food Stamp Act of 1964. P.L. 110-246 amended and renamed it the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

[6] CRS Report R42843, *Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress*.

[7] CRS In Focus IF12047, *Farm Bill Primer: Background and Status*; and CRS Report R45210, *Farm Bills: Major Legislative Actions, 1965-2024*.

and nutrition-related laws, generally for five years through FY2023 and the 2023 crop year.[8] Specific titles (title number) include commodities (I), conservation (II), trade (III), nutrition (IV), credit (V), rural development (VI), research, extension, and related matters (VII), forestry (VIII), energy (IX), horticulture (X), crop insurance (XI), and miscellaneous (XII).[9]

When do farm bills occur?

Most farm bills establish a cycle of authorities that generally expire five years from enactment. However, not all farm bill programs operate on the same cycle of fiscal years or crop years. Some have permanent authorities that allow them to continue past other programs' expirations. Congress has also changed the expiration of some programs before they expire, which has resulted in staggered expiration and extending some programs beyond a typical duration for farm bill authorities.[10]

The exact timing in a farm bill, therefore, may be difficult to describe and not apply equally to all programs. Congressional action may be motivated by a number of factors, such as focusing on programs for which expired authorities would cease program operation, preventing reversion to an undesirable permanently authorized law (see "What is "Permanent Law," and why does it remain an issue?"), or engaging in political debate to address issues legislatively.

Funding

Farm bills authorize programs that receive funding from mandatory appropriations and/or discretionary appropriations.

Programs with *mandatory spending authority* are authorized for a period of years and have multiyear estimates of projected spending under current law (i.e., *baseline* projections). If legislation proposes policy changes for programs, the proposed changes' effects are evaluated as the additional costs or savings from the proposed provisions (i.e., budgetary *scores* of a bill) relative to the baseline projections.

Some mandatory spending programs rely on *appropriated mandatory* funding for implementation. An example is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The federal crop insurance program and the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) also receive mandatory appropriations in the annual Agriculture appropriations act; the appropriation for CCC is to replenish its borrowing authority.[11] For appropriated mandatory accounts, congressional decisions about how much funding to allocate and the budget enforcement effects of increasing or decreasing federal spending are primarily debated during the farm bill authorization process and less so during the appropriations process.[12]

Programs authorized for *discretionary funding* are not funded by an authorizing act (e.g., the farm bill) and depend on future enactment of *appropriations* under separate budget enforcement.[13]

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[8] CRS In Focus IF12047, *Farm Bill Primer: Background and Status*.

[9] CRS Report R45525, *The 2018 Farm Bill (P.L. 115-334): Summary and Side-by-Side Comparison*.

[10] For example, the FY2022 budget reconciliation law, referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA, P.L. 117-169), extended authority for several agricultural conservation programs through FY2031, beyond the 2018 farm bill cycle. CRS In Focus IF12024, *Farm Bill Primer: Conservation Title*.

[11] CRS Report R44606, *The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)*.

[12] CRS Report RS20129, *Entitlements and Appropriated Entitlements in the Federal Budget Process*.

[13] CRS In Focus IF13124, *Distinguishing Between Discretionary and Mandatory Spending*.

What are the terms used for budget enforcement in the farm bill?

A farm bill authorizes mandatory spending and pays for policy changes through budget enforcement procedures at the time the farm bill is enacted. Budget enforcement is through congressional budget rules, such as PAYGO, that require spending reductions in some part of the budget to offset projected spending increases in another part of the budget.[14]

Enforcement of PAYGO and other budget rules by the House and Senate Budget Committees relies on estimates of baseline projections and scores of the effects of proposed bills by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the nonpartisan budgetary office assigned that responsibility by the House and Senate Budget Committees. The *baseline* is a projection of future federal spending on mandatory programs under current law. It is a benchmark against which proposed changes in law are measured (i.e., the *score* of a bill that is making changes to existing law).[15]

How is mandatory funding affected by program expiration?

The budgetary consequences of farm bill expiration and program reauthorization vary with the type of funding. Mandatory spending programs fall into two categories regarding expiration—programs with a budget baseline and programs without a budget baseline.[16] Both categories may face similar disruptions to operations as a result of an expired program authority, but the budgetary consequences are different.

Programs with a continuing baseline have built-in future funding if Congress decides to extend or reauthorize the existing program. For instance, a program set to expire in FY2026 may have a baseline that assumes it continues from a budgetary perspective, which is a projection of what it would cost in the future under current law. A reauthorization without policy changes would not face any budgetary enforcement costs because reauthorization would be paid for by the availability of the baseline. A reauthorization that changes the program to increase benefits, for example, would face budget enforcement costs for the additional cost of the program above the baseline.

Examples of farm bill programs that have budget baseline for mandatory funding include conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, and trade promotion programs, such as the Market Access Program. These programs operate using the borrowing authority of the CCC, which receives an annual mandatory appropriation to replenish its borrowing authority.[17] While each of these programs' authority to operate is set to expire, each has a permanent baseline of funding for reauthorization.[18]

SNAP is a program with mandatory funding and a permanent baseline. It is also an example of a program needing an annual appropriation in a separate act (e.g., an Agriculture appropriations act) for its mandatory budget authority (baseline) to be available. If the SNAP authorization of appropriations expires, SNAP can be funded in appropriations acts like discretionary funded programs with expired authorizations of appropriation.[19]

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[14] CRS Insight IN12564, *Statutory PAYGO and Budget Reconciliation Legislation*; and CRS Report RL31943, *Budget Enforcement Procedures: The Senate Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) Rule*.

[15] CRS In Focus IF12233, *Farm Bill Primer: Budget Dynamics*.

[16] CRS In Focus IF12115, *Farm Bill Primer: Programs Without a Budget Baseline*.

[17] CRS Report R44606, *The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)*.

[18] CRS In Focus IF12233, *Farm Bill Primer: Budget Dynamics*.

[19] CRS Report R47659, *Expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill and Extension for 2025*.

Mandatory programs that expire without a budget baseline incur a relatively larger budgetary cost under budget enforcement rules if reauthorized or extended. For instance, a program that expires in FY2026 without a baseline has no built-in resources to pay for its reauthorization. To reauthorize such a program, Congress would face budget enforcement costs of raising mandatory spending for the full cost of the program. The Biobased Markets Program is an example of a program that received mandatory funding but does not have a baseline beyond its expiration.[20]

How are discretionary spending programs authorized and funded?

Congress distinguishes between the processes of authorizing and appropriating, and has organized itself with authorizing committees and appropriating committees. Discretionary spending programs are authorized for their policy parameters (e.g., eligibility requirements and program purposes) and may have an *authorization of appropriations*, typically a recommended amount for a finite number of fiscal years. Congress may decide later whether to fund the program during the appropriations process. Authorizations of appropriations are essentially recommendations from authorizing committees to the appropriations committees for the size of a program. Authorizations of appropriations are not scored during the authorization process for budget enforcement purposes. Appropriators may choose to not fund a program, provide less than the authorization of appropriation, or provide or exceed the authorized amount.[21]

Examples of programs relying on discretionary appropriations include most community facilities, rural business development and broadband programs in the rural development title, the farm loan programs in the credit title, certain food distribution nutrition programs, and agricultural research programs in the research title, among others.[22]

Can discretionary spending programs continue to operate with expired authority?

For discretionary spending programs, expired authorizations of appropriations may be officially noted and face additional debate during floor consideration. This usually does not affect discretionary program operations or eventual appropriations. Appropriators may choose to continue to provide discretionary appropriations to programs with expired authorizations of appropriations. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has stated that "a statute imposing substantive functions upon an agency ... is itself sufficient legal authorization for the necessary appropriations," and that "appropriation of funds for a program whose funding authorization has expired ... provides sufficient legal basis to continue the program."[23]

CBO identifies the scale of expiring authorizations of appropriations in an annual report. At the end of FY2025 and before the latest one-year farm bill extension, 121 authorizations of appropriations in the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Agriculture authorizing committees expired.[24] Examples include programs in what are usually the farm bill titles for credit, rural development, research, forestry, bioenergy, horticulture, and miscellaneous. CBO indicated that

[20] CRS In Focus IF12115, *Farm Bill Primer: Programs Without a Budget Baseline*.

[21] CRS Report R42098, *Authorization of Appropriations: Procedural and Legal Issues*.

[22] CRS Report R48564, *Agriculture and Related Agencies: FY2026 Appropriations*.

[23] Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Principles of Federal Appropriations Law*, Chapter 2, "The Legal Framework" (4th ed., 2016 rev.), p. 2-55, at https://www.gao.gov/legal/appropriations-law-decisions/red-book.

[24] Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "Table 4: Summary of Authorizations of Appropriations Expiring on or Before September 30, 2025, by House and Senate Authorizing Committee and Appropriations Subcommittee," *Expired and Expiring Authorizations of Appropriations: 2025 Final Report,* July 10, 2025.

these programs received about $4 billion of discretionary appropriations in FY2025. Most of these authorizations are from the 2018 farm bill, as extended.

GAO has separately compiled an extensive list of authorizations of appropriations for programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It shows the array of separate stand-alone acts that generally were last updated in the 2018 farm bill for their authorizations of appropriations.[25]

Budget Reconciliation

Budget reconciliation is a process that allows Congress to use an expedited procedure when considering legislation that would bring existing spending, revenue, and debt limit laws into compliance with current fiscal priorities established in an annual budget resolution. The debate time for reconciliation bills is limited in the Senate, which means that the usual 60-vote requirement for cloture is not necessary to end debate and reach a vote on final passage. In practice, the process allows a reconciliation bill to pass in the Senate with a simple majority.[26]

In 2025, the budget reconciliation instructions in H.Con.Res. 14 directed the committees of jurisdiction for farm bill programs—the House and Senate Agriculture Committees—to reduce the budget. Title I of the subsequent reconciliation law, P.L. 119-21, amended certain provisions of the 2018 farm bill, changed the authority of some mandatory spending programs, and authorized some programs through 2031.

Was the farm bill reauthorized in the FY2025 budget reconciliation law?

No, P.L. 119-21 did not contain all of the policies and authorities present in a typical farm bill. It included some changes to some mandatory spending programs, but the reconciliation law did not include some farm bill mandatory spending programs with split jurisdiction (such as in trade or energy) or changes to mandatory spending programs that did not have a budget effect (such as suspending permanent law; see "What is "Permanent Law," and why does it remain an issue?") The reconciliation law could not include any of the policy changes for discretionary spending programs that are usually in a farm bill because budget reconciliation rules do not allow such changes.

What farm bill programs were included in the FY2025 budget reconciliation law?

P.L. 119-21 included changes to the farm commodity programs (Title I in a typical farm bill), particularly to raise support levels known as *reference prices*. Government payments to eligible producers are triggered when market prices are below statutory reference prices set in the farm bill. Raising reference prices increases the likelihood that payments are triggered and increases

[25] GAO, "Additional Data, Workbook files with data definitions: Department of Agriculture," *Federal Budget: Authorization and Appropriation Information for Selected Agencies.*GAO-25-107294, August 25, 2025, https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107294.

[26] CRS Report R48444, *The Reconciliation Process: Frequently Asked Questions*.

the size of such payments.[27] These changes were generally advocated in farm bill proposals during the 118th Congress, but they were not enacted then.[28]

For nutrition assistance programs (particularly SNAP; Title IV in a typical farm bill), the reconciliation law included changes estimated to reduce outlays by changing eligibility requirements or benefit calculations and increasing cost-sharing requirements for state agencies administering SNAP.[29] The SNAP-related provisions in P.L. 119-21 did not necessarily address all SNAP policy areas of interest to Congress and, for procedural reasons, did not include policies that affect discretionary funded farm bill nutrition programs such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

For conservation programs (Title II in a typical farm bill), P.L. 119-21 repealed supplemental funding for agricultural conservation programs in the FY2022 budget reconciliation law commonly known as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA, P.L. 117-169) and repurposed most of that funding to existing farm bill conservation programs.[30] Neither the IRA nor the FY2025 budget reconciliation law reauthorized all of the regular farm bill conservation programs.

P.L. 119-21 also increased mandatory funding for some of the relatively smaller programs, such as those usually included in the agricultural trade promotion, nutrition, research, energy, horticulture, and miscellaneous titles of the farm bill (Titles III, IV, VII, IX, X, and XII, respectively, of a typical farm bill). These include programs both with and without baseline.[31] The reconciliation law also rescinded forestry funding that was in the IRA.

CBO estimated that the enacted Agriculture title (Title I) of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law would reduce federal outlays by $121 billion over 10 years (FY2025-FY2034), comprised primarily of changes in the nutrition subtitle that reduce outlays by $187 billion and changes to other subtitles for agriculture (non-nutrition) provisions that increase net spending by $66 billion (**Table 1**).

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[27] CRS Report R48574, *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1): Title I, Farm Safety Net and Miscellaneous Provisions*.

[28] CRS Report R48167, *The 2024 Farm Bill: H.R. 8467 Compared with Current Law*, describes the policy changes and the mandatory spending effects of the 2024 House-ordered-reported farm bill. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry did not formally consider a farm bill in 2024. The then-chairwoman introduced S. 5335 and the then-ranking member issued a "framework." For a description of S. 5335, see Senate Agriculture Committee, "The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act: Summary," https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/dem/press/release/chairwoman-stabenow-introduces-rural-prosperity-and-food-security-act, and Senate Agriculture Committee, "Boozman Unveils Senate Ag Republicans Framework Answering Call to Put More Farm in the Farm Bill," https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/rep/press/release/boozman-unveils-senate-ag-republicans-framework-answering-call-to-put-more-farm-in-the-farm-bill.

[29] CRS Report R48552, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Related Nutrition Programs in P.L. 119-21: An Overview*.

[30] CRS In Focus IF13114, *Agricultural Conservation After Enactment of the FY2025 Budget Reconciliation Law (P.L. 119-21)*.

[31] CRS Insight IN12573, *Budget Reconciliation: Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline and Trade Promotion, Research, Horticulture, and Animal Health Programs with a Budget Baseline*.

Table 1. Estimated Changes to Mandatory Spending in Title I of P.L. 119-21
(outlays, in billions of dollars, FY2025-FY2034)

Provisions	CBO Score (FY2025-FY2034)
Nutrition provisions (Subtitle A)	-$186.650
Non-nutrition provisions (Subtitles B-F)	
Commodity Programs	+53.060
Crop insurance	+5.980
Disaster assistance	+2.778
Supplemental agricultural trade promotion	+2.191
Agricultural research	+1.608
Conservation (net after rescission of IRA provisions and repurposing to farm bill conservation programs)	-1.795
Forestry (repeal IRA provisions)	-0.150
Other (including animal health programs)	+2.018
Subtotal: Non-nutrition provisions	**+65.690**
Total: Agriculture title (Title I)	**-120.960**

Source: Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "Estimated Budgetary Effects of P.L. 119-21, to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H.Con.Res. 14, Relative to CBO's January 2025 Baseline," July 21, 2025, https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61570.

Note: IRA = Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-169).

Has a farm bill been reauthorized in a budget reconciliation law in the past?

Congress has not used budget reconciliation to enact an entire farm bill. However, Congress has included some farm bill programs with mandatory spending authority in previous reconciliation legislation. Past reconciliation measures have either provided a net increase or decrease in funding for farm bill programs depending on the budget resolution instructions and the priorities of authorizing committees (e.g., Title I of P.L. 109-171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; and Title II of P.L. 117-169, IRA). These measures amended the authorizations of some farm bill programs. Congress may have further addressed and reauthorized those programs in subsequent farm bills.

Prior to 2025, the budget reconciliation proposals that included the broadest scope of farm bill programs occurred in 1995 and 1996. In 1995, Congress incorporated a partial farm bill reauthorization for some mandatory spending programs (e.g., farm commodity support, conservation, export promotion, crop insurance, and animal quarantine inspection) into a proposed FY1995 budget reconciliation bill (Balanced Budget Act of 1995, H.R. 2491). The FY1995 budget reconciliation bill would not have reauthorized all farm bill programs. For instance, it did not address many programs with expiring discretionary spending authorities (e.g., farm loans, research, conservation, and trade). Though Congress passed the FY1995 budget reconciliation bill, President Clinton vetoed it because of provisions unrelated to the farm bill.

Four months later, a complete farm bill reauthorization was enacted (P.L. 104-127, the 1996 farm bill); it was further modified by a subsequent budget reconciliation law.[32]

More recently, the IRA (P.L. 117-169) reauthorized and appropriated additional funding for some but not all agricultural conservation programs typically found in the farm bill.[33] The IRA also appropriated additional funding for other programs typically authorized in the energy and forestry titles of farm bills, but did not necessarily reauthorize the programs.

Farm Bill Programs After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation

Following enactment of the FY2025 budget reconciliation law, Congress may choose whether or not to undertake any additional farm bill reauthorizations and, if so, determine the content of such legislation. Such potential legislation has been informally referred to as a "skinny farm bill" or a "farm bill 2.0," given that some parts of a typical farm bill were already enacted in P.L. 119-21.[34]

Which discretionary spending programs might be addressed following reconciliation?

Because discretionary funded authorizations were not eligible for inclusion in the 2025 budget reconciliation process, a potential freestanding farm bill may include the parts of a typical farm bill that authorize the framework for discretionary funded programs, as described above (see "How are discretionary spending programs authorized and funded?").

Below are examples of farm bill issues that were not addressed in P.L. 119-21 but that were proposed for amendment in the 2024 farm bill as ordered reported by House Agriculture Committee (H.R. 8467, 118th Congress).[35] This list is neither exhaustive in scope nor specific regarding content. Most of the issues involve programs with 2018 farm bill authorizations of appropriations that expired at the end of FY2023 and that have been extended through FY2026. The list is organized by title based on the 2018 farm bill.

- **Credit (Title V).** A farm bill may address access to farm loans through the USDA Farm Service Agency, the independent Farm Credit System, and the private secondary market Farmer Mac.[36] A farm bill may amend the maximum loan amounts that individuals can borrow from USDA or receive through loan guarantees. It may amend the scope of permissible lending activities by the Farm Credit System or Farmer Mac.

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[32] A complete farm bill reauthorization came four months after the FY1995 budget reconciliation bill was vetoed, when the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (1996 farm bill; P.L. 104-127) was enacted. A budget reconciliation law, known as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA, P.L. 104-193), was enacted four months after the 1996 farm bill. Among many changes, PRWORA reduced outlays for the Food Stamps program (currently known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) within the year after it was reauthorized in the 1996 farm bill.

[33] For additional information, see CRS In Focus IF10679, *Farm Bill Primer: The Conservation Title*.

[34] Politico, "Now What?," July 7, 2025, https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-agriculture/2025/07/07/now-what-00441058; and Agri-Pulse, "Daybreak: Lawmakers talk 'skinny' farm bill," August 8, 2025, https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/23325-daybreak-august-8-lawmakers-talk-skinny-farm-bill-on-newsmakers.

[35] CRS Report R48167, *The 2024 Farm Bill: H.R. 8467 Compared with Current Law*.

[36] CRS Report R46768, *Agricultural Credit: Institutions and Issues*.

- **Rural Development (Title VI).** A farm bill may address rural development policies such as broadband deployment, rural health care, rural business development, rural community infrastructure, and rural child care. Amendments may include program eligibility, such as rural area definitions; requirements for grants compared with access to loans; and permissible uses of grants and loans for various programs.[37]
- **Research (Title VII).** A farm bill may address agricultural research support for public universities and intramural research in USDA. It may amend designations of high-priority research areas and indicate funding priorities for various research programs. It may address matching requirements for research grant recipients and capacity-building grants, such as those available to 1890s land-grant colleges (historically Black colleges and universities) and other land-grant colleges and universities.[38]
- **Forestry (Title VIII).** A farm bill may address financial and technical assistance programs for nonfederal forest landowners, as well as land management in federal forests. Programs may include various restoration activities; wildfire, insect, and disease risks; and applicability of environmental assessments.[39]
- **Energy (Title IX).** A farm bill may address renewable energy—particularly agriculture-related energy—as well as energy efficiency and bioproducts (e.g., bio-based cleaning supplies). Examples include energy derived from agricultural or forestry feedstocks (e.g., crops, woody biomass, food waste, or manure). Initiatives may include education, production, installation, promotion, and research and development of energy systems stemming from agriculture.[40]
- **Horticulture (Title X).** A farm bill may address programs that support specialty crop production, certified organic agriculture, local and urban food systems, and regulation of hemp cultivation and its products.[41] Program elements may include block grants to states, support for farmers' markets, and education and market development.
- **Miscellaneous (Title XII).** A farm bill may address programs for livestock and poultry, including for disease prevention, management, and recovery.[42] It may address food safety and inspection standards for meat processors. Congress may address federal standards and the applicability of state standards for livestock involved in interstate commerce. Congress may also choose to address the foreign ownership of agricultural land or its disclosure, animal welfare, and farm labor surveys or safety.[43]

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[37] CRS In Focus IF12038, *Farm Bill Primer: Rural Development Title*.

[38] CRS In Focus IF12023, *Farm Bill Primer: Agricultural Research and Extension*.

[39] CRS In Focus IF12054, *Farm Bill Primer: Forestry Title*.

[40] CRS In Focus IF10639, *Farm Bill Primer: Energy Title*.

[41] CRS In Focus IF12017, *Farm Bill Primer: Horticulture Title and Related Provisions*; and CRS Insight IN12565, *Hemp Restrictions in FY2026 Agriculture Appropriations*.

[42] CRS In Focus IF12934, *Farm Bill Primer: Animal Disease Management and Prevention*.

[43] CRS In Focus IF12312, *Foreign Ownership of U.S. Agriculture: Selected Policy Options*; and CRS In Focus IF13083, *Unauthorized Farmworkers in the United States*.

Which mandatory spending programs might be addressed following reconciliation?

The authorizations for several mandatory spending programs have expired or are scheduled to expire after FY2026 or the 2026 crop year under the latest farm bill extension. Some of these programs have budgetary baselines for reauthorization. Some were addressed in the 2025 budget reconciliation law for policies or funding levels, yet continue to have expired or expiring authorities.

Without reauthorization or an extension of the expiration dates, these programs and provisions either may not have authority to operate or may not continue to receive new budget authority, even if they have baseline available for the spending. Below is a list of several, but not necessarily all, of these near-term expiring or expired mandatory spending programs organized by title in a typical farm bill.

- **Commodities (Title I)**
  - Suspension of Permanent Law (7 U.S.C. §9092)[44]
- **Conservation (Title II)**[45]
  - Conservation Reserve Program (CRP, 16 U.S.C. §§3831 et seq., §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—Grasslands (16 U.S.C. §3831(d)(2), §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (16 U.S.C. §3831a, §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—Farmable Wetlands (16 U.S.C. §3831b, §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—CLEAR30 (16 U.S.C. §3831c(a), §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—Soil Health and Income Protection Program (16 U.S.C. §3831c(b), §3841(a)(1))
  - CRP—Forest Management Incentive payments (16 U.S.C. §3834(c), §3841(a)(1)(A))
  - CRP—Transition Incentives Program (16 U.S.C. §3835(f), §3841(a)(1)(B))
  - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) livestock allocation (16 U.S.C. §3839aa-2(f)(1))
  - EQIP payment limit (16 U.S.C. §3839aa-7)
  - EQIP organic payment limit (16 U.S.C. §3839aa-2(i)(3))
  - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) payment limit (16 U.S.C. §3839aa-24(f))
  - CSP—Grassland Conservation Incentive (16 U.S.C. §3839aa-25(e))

[44] See "What is "Permanent Law," and why does it remain an issue?"

[45] CRS In Focus IF12024, *Farm Bill Primer: Conservation Title*; and CRS Report R40763, *Agricultural Conservation: A Guide to Programs*.

- **Trade (Title III)**[46]
  - Authority to replenish the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (7 U.S.C. §1736f-1)
  - Food for Progress (7 U.S.C. §1736o)
  - Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation (7 U.S.C. §5623(f)), including the Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program, E (Kika) de la Garza Emerging Markets Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops[47]
- **Nutrition (Title IV)**[48]
  - SNAP and other mandatory Food and Nutrition Act programs' authorization of appropriations (7 U.S.C. §2027(a))[49]
  - Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (7 U.S.C. §3007)
- **Research, Extension and Related Matters (Title VII)**[50]
  - Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (7 U.S.C. §5925b)
- **Energy (Title IX)**[51]
  - Biobased Markets Program (7 U.S.C. §8102)
- **Horticulture (Title X)**[52]
  - Specialty Crop Block Grants (7 U.S.C. §1621 note, §101(a))
  - Local Agriculture Market Program (7 U.S.C. §1627c)
- **Miscellaneous (Title XII)**
  - Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (7 U.S.C. §2279)[53]
  - Animal Disease Prevention and Management (7 U.S.C. §8308a(e))[54]

What further revisions could be considered for mandatory spending programs following reconciliation?

Congress may consider a number of policy amendments for mandatory spending programs. Some may be for programs that P.L. 119-21 addressed funding levels for but for which the law did not include other policy changes. Relatedly, Congress may also consider amending or repealing changes enacted in P.L. 119-21. Mandatory spending programs or provisions that were not included in P.L. 119-21 may also be considered for reauthorization or amendment or remain unchanged. In particular, Congress may consider provisions that were removed from the

[46] CRS In Focus IF12155, *Farm Bill Primer: Trade and Export Promotion Programs*; and CRS Report R45422, *U.S. International Food Assistance: An Overview*.

[47] P.L. 119-21 created a new Supplemental Agricultural Trade Promotion Program but did not address extending the authority of the existing Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation Program.

[48] CRS In Focus IF12255, *Farm Bill Primer: SNAP and Nutrition Title Programs*.

[49] SNAP is an *appropriated mandatory* program that requires an annual appropriation, even though budget enforcement effects are debated during the farm bill authorization process (see "How does funding for farm bill programs work?").

[50] CRS In Focus IF12023, *Farm Bill Primer: Agricultural Research and Extension*.

[51] CRS In Focus IF10639, *Farm Bill Primer: Energy Title*.

[52] CRS In Focus IF12017, *Farm Bill Primer: Horticulture Title and Related Provisions*.

[53] CRS Report R48269, *Beginning Farmers or Ranchers (BFRs): Challenges and Opportunities*.

[54] CRS In Focus IF12934, *Farm Bill Primer: Animal Disease Management and Prevention*.

reconciliation bill because they did not have a budgetary effect, such as extending the suspension of permanent law for the farm commodity programs.

What is "Permanent Law," and why does it remain an issue?

Permanent law refers to a set of nonexpiring provisions from the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 and the Agricultural Act of 1949 that support the price of farm commodities such as corn, wheat, rice, cotton, and dairy.[55] These provisions have remained in statute for decades. Each farm bill since the 1960s has included a temporary suspension of permanent law to deactivate the statutory provisions and make room for the then-current farm commodity policy. With the passage of time, permanent law has not evolved with modern trade policy and market-based agricultural production policies.

Permanent law uses the commodity support provisions in the 1938 and 1949 acts, which are based on *parity prices.* A parity price is a target for the purchasing power of a commodity relative to the cost of inputs based on the 1910-1914 era. Permanent law policies, if implemented, are out of date and so fundamentally different from current technology, production practices, and recent farm bills that they would be costly and market distorting.

The following provides an example illustrating the effect of permanent law. In July 2025, the permanent-law support price for milk based on parity prices was 252% of the market price of milk.[56] Under these conditions, permanent-law policy would require the government to purchase enough milk to raise demand until the market price of milk reached the permanent-law support price. This would be expensive for the government and expensive for consumers. For consumers, the grocery store price of milk may more than double. It would also be disruptive to the availability of fluid milk and the production of dairy products like cheese and nonfat dry milk. In 2025, CRS estimates that the effect of supporting dairy under permanent law may cost the government about $17 billion for one year, using the same methodology last published during the Obama Administration.[57] By comparison, the CBO projected outlay for dairy in FY2025 under the 2018 farm bill policy was $10 million.[58] Current farm bill policy negates permanent-law government intervention of buying milk, processing it, and holding it off the market to raise prices to a century-old standard. Instead, based on recently enacted policy targets, current farm

[55] For a description of permanent law and its consequences, see the heading "Possible Reversion to Permanent Law" in CRS Report R47659, *Expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill and Extension for 2025*.

[56] In this agricultural context, a *parity price* is computed to be a target for the purchasing power of a commodity relative to the cost of inputs based on a standard set in the 1910-1914 era. A *market price* is the amount for which a commodity can be sold in a market at the current time. In July 2025, the parity price for milk was $69.80/hundredweight (cwt.), and the market price for milk was $20.80/cwt. (Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service [NASS], *Agricultural Prices*, August 29, 2025, https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/c821gj76b). Permanent law establishes a support price for milk of 75%-90% of the parity price (7 U.S.C. §1446(c)). The minimum support price under permanent law, therefore, would be $52.35/cwt., which is 252% of the market price.

[57] A 2013 White House report about the effect of permanent law used the same economic responsiveness from a 1985 USDA study (Sources: White House, *The Economic Importance of Passing a Comprehensive Food, Farm, and Jobs Bill*, November 2013, pp. 24, 27, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/farm_bill_report_211.pdf; and USDA Economic Research Service, *Possible Economic Consequences of Reverting to Permanent Legislation or Eliminating Price and Income Supports*, AER-526 (1985), pp. 65-67 and pp. 21-35). At current levels of production, removing 15% of 226 billion pounds of milk currently produced, or 339 million cwt., may cost about $17 billion per year at a parity-based dairy support price of $52.35/cwt. (USDA NASS, *Milk Production*, September 22, 2025; and USDA NASS, *Agricultural Prices*, August 29, 2025).

[58] CBO, *Baseline Projections for USDA Mandatory Farm Programs*, January 25, 2025, https://www.cbo.gov/data/baseline-projections-selected-programs#23.

bill policy pays farmers for the difference (a margin) between certain costs and market prices without as much market intervention.[59]

The 2018 farm bill suspended permanent law through the 2023 crop year (that is, for crops harvested in 2023). This suspension has been further extended through the 2026 crop year with multiple year-long extensions (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102; P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101; and P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002). The 2025 budget reconciliation law did not extend the suspension of permanent law because such extensions have not scored as having a budgetary effect. Without congressional action, permanent law would begin to take effect on January 1, 2027, despite the fact that Congress has already reauthorized the farm commodity programs through the 2031 crop year in the budget reconciliation law. Dairy would be the first commodity affected by permanent law coming into effect in the 2027 crop year because the harvest for dairy in a crop year begins on January 1. For other commodities, the harvest for a crop year begins later in the year, such as on June 1 for wheat and October 1 for corn.

Conclusion

A periodic farm bill provides Congress with an opportunity to reexamine agriculture and food policies and programs. Historically, Congress addressed these issues through multiple, standalone laws. Over time, Congress combined many of these separate policies into larger omnibus farm bills that created broad coalitions of support among conflicting interests for policies and programs. As such, the scope of a farm bill typically includes a variety of programs with different authorities, funding sources, and reauthorization requirements. Congress may consider a combination of political support, funding availability, economic conditions, and committee jurisdiction in determining a farm bill's contents.

The FY2025 budget reconciliation law enacted some changes to farm bill programs that Congress might have considered too politically challenging to include in a farm bill outside the reconciliation process. The lower vote threshold in the Senate required for budget reconciliation passage facilitated inclusion of such provisions. The policy and political consequences of having enacted the reconciliation provisions, and the likely corresponding effects on the breadth of the next farm bill, may affect the historical coalition of farm bill support. The expiration of certain programs and the political environment for other policy changes may influence the timing of a farm bill reauthorization.

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[59] CRS Report R48573, *U.S. Dairy Policy*.

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