

Actively Engaged in Farming (AEF) regulations: The conference report maintains current AEF regulations and continues to ensure all individuals eligible for the farm safety net are required to contribute land, labor, or capital to the farm operation AND provide the necessary amount of labor and/or management. The conference report amends the definition of family to include first cousins, nieces, and nephews to ensure family farms are not subjected to cumbersome regulations only intended for non-family operations.

Title II: Conservation

The conference report continues the voluntary, locally-led, incentive-based conservation model. It builds on the success of the 2014 Farm Bill by streamlining, simplifying and improving program administration. The conference report also provides additional investment in soil health practices, such as cover crops, ultimately providing “downstream” benefits to communities in the form of cleaner water, cleaner air, healthier soils, and more wildlife habitat.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): The conference report allows for an increased acreage cap of 27 million acres by 2023, while also addressing the issue of CRP competing with farmers for productive land by reducing rental rates and incentive payments. The conference report includes House-passed provisions to increase the grassland acre floor to 2 million acres and provides more flexibility for grazing.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): The conference report continues the commitment to working lands by increasing funding for EQIP to \$2.025 billion by fiscal year 2023. Furthermore, the conference report adds producer-focused flexibility by establishing incentive contracts and alternative funding arrangements for irrigation districts. The conference report fosters innovation through Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). Furthermore, it authorizes Conservation Innovation Trials and the Soil Health Pilot Project, connecting farmers and ranchers in the conservation innovation space with public and private entities and reporting findings for public review.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): The conference report continues the commitment to comprehensive working lands conservation by reforming and adding much needed flexibility to CSP. By removing the average \$18 per acre funding requirement for the program, the conference report intends to better incentivize farmers to address local resource concerns. Current CSP contracts will be honored with an option for a one-year extension for contracts expiring in 2019. Otherwise, funding for CSP is reduced from approximately \$1.8 billion per year to no more than \$1 billion per year with the savings being used to fund other higher-priority initiatives like EQIP, ACEP, and RCPP.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): The conference report restores funding for ACEP to \$450 million per year and provides additional flexibility for ACEP to make the program more efficient for farmers, stakeholders, and USDA. The conference report continues to perform the functions of conserving agricultural lands through Agriculture Land Easements (ALE) and wetlands through Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE). The conference report makes important changes to streamline the requirements for ALE plans, add flexibility to matching fund requirements, reform the right of enforcement, clarify the need for conservation plans, and lift burdens on land trust certification.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): The 2014 Farm Bill consolidated the authorities of the many regional programs into RCPP, where USDA partners with private organizations to address natural resource concerns. Targeted conservation initiatives are developed on the local level and selected by USDA through a competitive, merit-based application process. The conference report increases funding for RCPP to \$300 million per year and streamlines the program to allow greater flexibility for NRCS, partners, and producers.

Watershed and Flood Prevention and Small Watershed Rehabilitation: The conference report provides \$500 million over 10 years for conservation infrastructure initiatives like Watershed and Flood Prevention and Small Watershed Rehabilitation.

Additional producer access: The conference report removes impediments to conservation adoption by eliminating requirements for entities to have a SAM/DUNS number and providing USDA the ability to waive AGI limits for environmentally sensitive land of special significance.

Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot: According to USDA, feral swine cause an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage to property, crops, and natural resources annually and present a risk for the transmission of African Swine Fever (ASF) and other potentially catastrophic diseases. The conference report establishes the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot with \$75 million for threat assessment, control methods, and land restoration.

Emphasizes protection of drinking water sources: The conference report reserves 10 percent of covered conservation funding for the protection of sources of drinking water, allows community water systems to work with State Technical Committees to identify local priority areas for source water protection, and allows additional incentives for practices that protect source water.

Other highlights:

- Provides \$50 million for the Voluntary Public Access Program.
- Provides \$5 million for Grassroots Source Water Protection.
- Reauthorizes the Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program.
- Updates the Technical Service Provider (TSP) definition and the TSP certification process.

Title III: Trade

Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation: In an era where global agricultural markets are routinely distorted by the high and rising subsidies, tariffs, and non-tariff trade barriers of foreign governments, U.S. trade promotion programs are critical to promoting American agricultural products. The conference report streamlines the four existing trade promotion programs under one umbrella—as envisioned in the House-passed farm bill—to establish and maintain budget baseline for each of the programs moving forward. The conference report includes \$255 million each fiscal year for Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation with a Priority Trade Fund of \$3.5 million annually to be used amongst the four programs at the discretion of the Secretary.