



REPORT CARD

United States Senate
 Assignment: 2018 Farm Bill
 Name: Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018
 Topic Area: Diversified Agricultural Economies

FBLE Recommendation	Rating	Comments
 Access to Markets		The Senate farm bill increases market opportunities for small and mid-sized operations, beginning farmers and ranchers (BFR), socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFR), and specialty crop producers while supporting community access to diverse sources of nutritious food.
Support the development of farmer-driven distribution channels to improve small farmers' access to consumers.		S. 3042 enhances programs that support diversified farms by merging the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Programs and the Value-Added Producer Grant to create the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). LAMP provides permanent baseline funding to these programs. The bill also maintains funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.
Reduce barriers to grant and loan programs for diverse producers.		The Senate bill directs the USDA to establish simplified application procedures for market-related grants and loans for smaller farms and beginning farmers, which helps these farmers access the programs.
Increase access to organic certification for small farms.		S. 3042 maintains but does not augment spending for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program, missing an opportunity to help more small-scale farmers to achieve organic certification.
 Access to Insurance		S. 3042 enable more farmers and ranchers who embrace diversified production systems to access subsidized insurance policies through Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP).
Make Whole Farm Revenue Protection more accessible.		The Senate bill improves and expands WFRP by simplifying paperwork requirements and providing additional funding for WFRP outreach. S. 3042 also takes steps to fairly compensate insurance agents who write whole-farm policies.
 Access to Credit		The Senate farm bill takes modest steps to help socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers (SDFR and BFR) access the credit they need.
Improve outreach to SDFR and BFR to increase participation rates in USDA programs.		The Senate bill increases funding for SDFR and BFR support . It combines the Outreach Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program to create the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program and funds it at a higher level.
Ensure that existing credit programs are reaching SDFR and BFR.		The bill increases limits on FSA Guaranteed Ownership and Operating Loans from \$1.39 to \$1.75 million. Such increases harm smaller-scale farms , perpetuate a system that disproportionately benefits large-scale producers, and make it harder for SDFR and BFR to access credit.
Raise loan limits and grow credit programs geared toward SDFR and BFR.		The Senate bill maintains loan programs that disproportionately support BFR and SDFR by increasing loan limits on Direct Ownership Loans to align with rising cropland values and reauthorizing the Microloan program. But, the bill misses opportunities to better target credit programs to the needs of BFR and SDFR.
Improve access to data on SDFR groups and discrimination complaints.		S. 3042 fails to direct the USDA to disclose FSA loan data , critical information which could reveal how to best meet the needs of SDFR and ensure the USDA treats loans applicants equitably.
 Access to Land		The Senate bill does not adequately facilitate land transition planning, incentivize farmland transfers to SDFR and BFR, or reduce the legal impediments that currently make long-term investments impossible in some communities.
Support land transitions between the retiring and beginning generations of farmers.		S. 3042 recognizes challenges of land transition by calling for a study of farmland tenure. It also increases funding for CRP-TIP, a program that helps BFR and SDFR access land. Still, the bill misses opportunities to encourage and aid land transitions , e.g., by providing direct services.
Mitigate potential for loss of heirs' property.		The Senate bill directly addresses some issues with heirs' property by removing some red tape that currently prevents farmers on heirs' property from accessing USDA programs, including critical credit programs.

 = aligns with FBLE recommendations | Updated to reflect S. 3042 as it passed the Senate on 6/28/18