



# REPORT CARD

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

FBLE Recommendation	Rating	Comments
<b>Access to Markets</b>		
<b>The 2018 Farm Bill 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.</b>		
Support the development of farmer-driven distribution channels to improve small farmers' access to consumers.		The 2018 Farm Bill <b>enhances programs that support diversified farms</b> 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 <b>provides permanent baseline funding</b> to these programs. The bill also <b>maintains funding</b> for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.
Reduce barriers to grant and loan programs for diverse producers.		The 2018 Farm Bill directs the USDA to establish <b>simplified application procedures</b> 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.		The 2018 Farm Bill <b>slashes mandatory spending</b> by more than half for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program and <b>misses an opportunity</b> to enable more small-scale farmers to achieve organic certification.
<b>Access to Insurance</b>		
<b>The 2018 Farm Bill maintains current levels of support for farmers who embrace diversified production systems gain access to risk management through Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP).</b>		
Make Whole Farm Revenue Protection more accessible.		The 2018 Farm bill <b>strengthens WFRP</b> by simplifying reporting requirements and providing additional funding for WFRP outreach. However, the bill <b>does not include provisions that fairly compensate</b> insurance agents who work with farmers to write whole-farm policies.
<b>Access to Credit</b>		
<b>The 2018 Farm Bill farm bill takes modest steps to help socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers (SDFR and BFR) access the credit they need.</b>		
Improve outreach to SDFR and BFR to increase participation rates in USDA programs.		The 2018 Farm Bill slightly <b>increases funding for SDFR and BFR support</b> . It combines the Outreach Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program to <b>create the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach Program</b> and creates permanent baseline for the programs
Ensure that existing credit programs are reaching SDFR and BFR.		The law increases limits on FSA Guaranteed Ownership and Operating Loans from \$1.39 to \$1.75 million. Such increases <b>harm smaller-scale farms</b> , 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 2018 Farm Bill does not contain specific programs that would help SDFRs access credit similar to BFR. However, the 2018 Farm Bill does <b>commission the Comptroller General and GAO to study</b> credit and related services available to SDFR, which may result in future programs that are more targeted and data-driven.
Improve access to data on SDFR groups and discrimination complaints.		The 2018 Farm Bill requires a GAO report on credit service to SDFR. That <b>report must make recommendations for improvement</b> and must <b>be released to Congress</b> . The study could result in more targeted and data-drive future credit programs for SDFR, but will mean that the data relied upon in the report will be available to SDFR groups.
<b>Access to Land</b>		
<b>The 2018 Farm Bill studies but does not adequately address land transition planning, farmland transfers to SDFR and BFR, or legal impediments to long-term investments.</b>		
Support land transitions between the retiring and beginning generations of farmers.		The 2018 Farm Bill <b>recognizes challenges of land transition</b> by calling for a study of farmland ownership and land access. It also maintains CRP-TIP, a program that helps BFR and SDFR access land, but does not provide additional funding. Still, the bill <b>misses opportunities to encourage and aid land transitions</b> , such as by providing direct services for sales and probate.
Mitigate potential for loss of heirs' property.		The 2018 Farm Bill directly <b>addresses the challenges of heirs' property</b> by directing USDA to authorize relending projects and plan for succession. The Law makes heirs' property farms eligible to receive county committee farm identification numbers. Both provisions will assist with un-tangling titles and improve access to farm programs.