




REPORT CARD

United States Farm Bill
 Assignment: 2018 Farm Bill
 Name: Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018
 Topic Area: Food Access, Nutrition, and Public Health

FBLE Recommendation	Rating	Comments
 <p>Protect and Strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as our Nation's Most Vital and Successful Nutrition Assistance Program</p>		<p>FBLE provides recommendations for improving food security, food access, nutrition, and public health outcomes through the farm bill. Although the 2018 Farm Bill does not take major steps forward, it avoids cuts to SNAP and makes small technological improvements.</p>
Maintain SNAP's current structure and ability to adapt to changes in economic conditions.		The 2018 Farm Bill preserves existing eligibility requirements for SNAP , avoiding misguided efforts to take benefits away from low-income families who cannot work. Additionally, the 2018 Farm Bill provides more resources for education and training programs.
Expand SNAP to address food insecurity and revitalize local economies.		The 2018 Farm Bill does not expand SNAP . It maintains the program's current benefit levels and increases funding to help SNAP-eligible persons access training and employment opportunities.
Improve SNAP access and efficiency through technology.		The 2018 Farm Bill directs USDA to improve Farmers Markets access to SNAP through use of electronic benefits transfer (EBT) and expands EBT to all online retailers.
Remove ineffective barriers to food access that impose a high administrative burden.		Although the 2018 Farm Bill does not impose new barriers, it misses an opportunity to test new tools that could reduce barriers in verifying household income. Additionally, the bill decreases the percentage of waivers states may issue to time limit rules for able-bodied adults without dependents.
 <p>Improve Public Health and Increase Access to Healthy, Nutritious Foods, Especially for Vulnerable Populations and Rural Communities</p>		<p>The farm bill provides opportunities to strengthen public health, especially among vulnerable populations. The 2018 Farm Bill seizes many of these opportunities with important steps forward.</p>
Strengthen food assistance programs that promote healthy choices among SNAP participants.		The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorizes and increases funding for the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program , with \$250 million in mandatory permanent baseline funding over the course of the bill. The bill also funds the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) at the continued level of \$20.6 million per year.
Identify and scale successful SNAP-Ed programs.		The 2018 Farm Bill takes steps beyond earlier drafts to improve nutrition education. The Bill maintains the Nutrition Education State Plan , which provides funds but no metrics for success. However, the Bill includes promising new provisions for program evaluation and sharing best practices .
Improve rural public health.		The 2018 Farm Bill increases distance learning and telemedicine funding and maintains rural broadband loan and grant programs that enable rural communities access to telemedicine services. Further, the bill includes a minimum broadband service speed for projects and also authorizes a host of funding and technical assistance options to support broadband initiatives.
Improve health outcomes of low-income individuals living with serious diseases by establishing a Food is Medicine pilot.		The 2018 Farm Bill creates Produce Prescription Program, which prescribes fresh fruits and vegetables to improve health. FBLE supports this project but would have liked to see language about a medically tailored meal program and more focus on evaluation.

 = Aligns with FBLE recommendations | Updated to reflect the final H.R. 2 signed by President Trump 12/20/18