



REPORT CARD

United States Farm Bill
 Assignment: 2018 Farm Bill
 Name: Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018
 Topic Area: Productivity and Risk Management

FBLE Recommendation	Rating	Comments
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Commodity and Crop Insurance Programs</p> </div> </div> <p>The 2018 Farm Bill maintains a status quo that favors megafarms and insurance companies over small-scale, sustainable, or diversified farmers and rural communities. Congress misses opportunities to protect farmer and long-term soil health through risk management reforms.</p>		
Ensure crop insurance programs promote sound risk management practices.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill fails to reform government incentives that encourage environmental and financial risk-taking . Existing crop insurance incentives favor short-term financial over long-term investments in productivity and resilience in the face of climate change and other threats to resources.
Increase fairness in public-private crop insurance administration.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill continues to guarantee excessive profits to insurance companies that administer federal crop insurance. Congress missed an opportunity to cut corporate largesse and reinvest the savings.
Target program payments toward payoffs for farms, communities, and stewardship.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill maintains the adjusted gross income cap for commodity payments and expands the family member loophole in the actively engaged in farming determination, meaning more individuals who do not farm but are related to farmers on the largest farms may be eligible for farm payments. The bill also lacks income limits on crop insurance subsidies and still disproportionally benefits the largest farms over small and midsize operations.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Conservation Compliance</p> </div> </div> <p>The 2018 Farm Bill fails to address serious deficiencies in conservation compliance implementation and enforcement. Without changes, the program cannot guarantee producers are protecting the most sensitive soil and wetlands in return for subsidies.</p>		
Bring transparency to conservation compliance.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill does not require USDA to provide meaningful data on conservation compliance to Congress or the public. The bill fails to adopt reporting requirements that would ensure accountability.
Update conservation compliance standards to conserve more soil.	👎	Although the 2018 Farm Bill preserves Sodsaver, which protects native grasslands in six states, most sensitive crop and wetlands acres remain vulnerable because compliance standards are too weak or do not apply.
Fund robust enforcement and technical assistance of compliance standards.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill does not provide funding for USDA to implement conservation compliance programs. Without funding, USDA cannot enforce compliance standards or provide farmers the support they need to comply.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Voluntary Conservation Programs</p> </div> </div> <p>The 2018 Farm Bill better targets voluntary conservation programs to support effective stewardship practices. But, it reduces funding to core conservation programs and fails to incentivize large-scale conservation innovations and climate resilience.</p>		
Invest in long-term soil and water and quality.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill programs better target stewardship priorities , including new permanent and long-term conservation options. But, it makes harmful and unnecessary cuts to the long-term working lands program, CSP.
Restore EQIP's focus on smaller farms performing voluntary conservation.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill strengthens EQIP with more funding and reduces set-asides that benefit concentrated animal feeding operations, but it also expands program eligibility in ways that can make it harder for farmers to get grants.
Prioritize innovation in conservation program spending.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill misses an opportunity to make decisive investments in the future of conservation , but it takes a small step forward by creating on-farm conservation trials.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Pilot Programs and Research</p> </div> </div> <p>The 2018 Farm Bill improves collection and availability of key agricultural data. This data can inform policy strategies that prioritize long-term productivity and risk management. Still, it fails to address critical opportunities to build agricultural resilience.</p>		
Bolster links between insurance subsidies and soil health.	👎	The 2018 Farm Bill takes steps toward collecting and using data to understand linkages between agricultural practices, weather conditions, yield, and risk. These changes can help tie subsidies to public values .
Ensure a coordinated and robust USDA response to climate change.	👎	In the 2018 Farm Bill, EQIP and other programs better address climate priorities including small programs for carbon sequestration and biogas energy generation. Still, the bill misses opportunities for USDA to lead in helping farmers mitigate and adapt to climate change.
Invest in improving innovative agricultural systems.	👎	Despite some support for precision agriculture, the 2018 Farm Bill fails to make a significant public investment in research into promising new conservation methods, such as perennial agriculture.

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