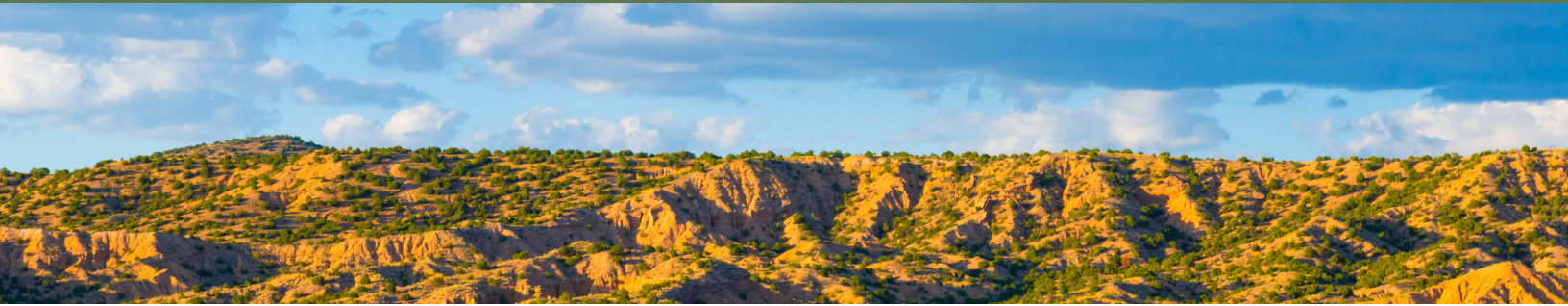


Field Notes: AgriPolicy Brief

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US Senate Releases Discussion Draft of the Farm Bill

On June 23, 2026, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Boozman unveiled his [discussion draft of the Farm Bill](#). The bill leaves out many of the controversial topics contemplated by the House in their Farm Bill negotiations including provisions preempting state and local pesticide regulation, the sale of year-round E15, or gasoline containing 15% ethanol, and federal law reversing California's Proposition 12 on farm animal containment. The bill contains many bipartisan provisions but did not include provisions that would mitigate the changes to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) as passed last summer in H.R. 1. The Senate Agriculture Committee Democrats issued a statement confirming that they are set on finding solutions to address cuts to SNAP and the cost shift to states. New Mexico US Senator Ben Ray Lujan issued a [statement](#) reading:

"Senate Agriculture Committee Democrats have been clear that a Farm Bill must meet the needs of both farmers and families across America. This bill does not address the devastating cuts to SNAP or the shift to state taxpayers passed into law as part of HR 1. We appreciate that bipartisan provisions have been included in the discussion draft and stand ready to work with Republicans to negotiate a bipartisan Farm Bill that both meets the moment and can be successful on the Senate Floor."

Senator Lujan is Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research. This Subcommittee oversees nutrition programs and Senator Lujan has been a champion in defending the nutrition programs and working to reverse the changes made to SNAP in H.R. 1.

The next step in this process will be for the Senate Committee on Agriculture to meet, markup the bill, and vote. The brief markup period provides the opportunity for Senators to introduce added programs and language for consideration. This process has not been scheduled as of July 9th, 2026. If the Farm Bill is not signed into law before September 30, 2026, Congress will have to extend the 2018 Farm Bill for the third time. A priority for Senator Lujan is a separate bill he is co-sponsoring, [Strengthening Local Food Security Act \(S.2338\)](#) that would establish long-term federal support for local food purchasing and emergency food distribution along with farmer to farmer education programs.

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Senator Luján Introduces the CHILE Act

Senator Luján recently introduced the [Cultivating Horticultural Innovation in Local Economies \(CHILE\) Act \(S. 4860\)](#), legislation to strengthen federal support for specialty crop growers facing economic losses and market disruptions.

The CHILE Act builds upon language included in the House-passed Farm Bill that creates a Specialty Crop Emergency Assistance Framework. This legislation would ensure that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses this framework when providing direct assistance to specialty crop growers. Currently, specialty crop growers generally do not have a standardized, predictable disaster assistance framework comparable to the support available to other agricultural producers. The CHILE Act would help ensure a consistent process for providing emergency assistance to specialty crop growers during times of economic hardship and uncertainty.

"Specialty crop growers are critical to New Mexico's agricultural economy and to feeding communities across the nation," said Senator Luján. "When disasters, market disruptions, and other challenges threaten their livelihoods, growers deserve a reliable process for getting the emergency assistance they need. My CHILE Act strengthens support for specialty crop producers by ensuring USDA has and uses a reliable framework to provide timely assistance when specialty crop growers need it most."

Specifically, the CHILE Act would:

- Require USDA to use the Specialty Crop Emergency Assistance Framework when providing direct assistance to specialty crop growers;
- Clarify that specialty crops include fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops, including floriculture; and
- Provide \$5 billion in direct assistance to specialty crop producers for fiscal year 2027.



Photo Credit: Cathy Day, New Mexico Farm To Table

Project Jupiter and Data Centers in New Mexico

In June, [NPR](#) reported about concerns New Mexicans are raising about Project Jupiter, a data center installation planned in southern New Mexico in the Chihuahuan Desert and other potential sites across New Mexico. Throughout the US, data centers have been breaking ground, raising concerns about the community's access to water and affordable energy. According to the [Data Center Map](#), there are 22 data centers in New Mexico with likely more to follow. Project Jupiter has been the recipient of \$165 billion in investment capital and is planned to span 1,400 acres.

While the community has raised concerns over the amount of water the data center is expected to consume, New Mexico water officials stated that the data center is not using "new" water, it is assuming a water right previously held by a New Mexico sod farm.

Public comment has had a massive impact on the project's implementation. The project is currently pursuing an air quality permit and, while changes have been made to reduce emissions from the project, the community is still seeking information on how the installation will impact them. According to the [Santa Fe New Mexican](#) the New Mexico Attorney General is now investigating fraudulent public comments made in support of the air quality permit.



US Office of Management and Budget on Federal Assistance

The US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a rule for public comment in May 2026. The rule aims to change the "Uniform Guidance" or 2 C.F.R. Part 200. This section of regulatory law governs how federal agencies administer funding and grant programs. Experts have outlined that the rule will result in less certainty for federal grant awardees and provide administrations with more authority to cancel grant and funding agreements based on current national priorities.

Public comments submitted on the rule have expressed concerns over additional administrative burden and compliance tracking, abrupt termination of grant funding after organizations have invested time and resources in delivering on the grant objectives and, the need to increase oversight and monitoring of subawardees.



Photo Credit: Cathy Day, New Mexico Farm To Table

[The Hill](#) reported that Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) has called on the Trump administration to withdraw portions of the rule on July 7, 2026. The Senator highlighted that the rule may "potentially harm small and rural communities and add uncertainty to scientific and biomedical research." Senators Heinrich and Luján signed on to a [letter](#) sent to OMB Director Russel Vought on July 1, 2026 expressing concern over the rule and asking the rule to be withdrawn completely.

Public Comments on the rule were due on July 13, 2026 and the rule has garnered almost half a million individual public comments.

Wildfires in New Mexico

As a result of a dry winter, wildfires have sprung up across the United States. Currently, in New Mexico the Sacaton Fire is burning in the Gila National Forest. As of July 9th, the fire spans over 9,500 acres and is reported at 34% contained. According to [InciWeb](#), the fire was caused by a lightning strike in mid-June and fire response teams have been working to control the fire since. For more information about New Mexico wildfires, see www.nmfireinfo.com. Farmers and ranchers impacted by adverse weather events, including wildfire are typically eligible for government programs. See the last page of this newsletter for a list of resources for losses due to natural disasters.

New World Screwworm

New World Screwworm (NWS) was detected in June in Texas and subsequently in New Mexico. The fly, previously eliminated in the U.S. in 1966, provides a substantial hazard to livestock.

(NWS) is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the tissue of warm blooded animals. This can cause severe wounding and left untreated can kill an animal in 7-10 days. This parasite is a threat on a number of fronts. Primarily, the fly is a threat to human and animal health, but equally as important, the fly is an economic threat. An outbreak can have devastating effects for a farm or ranch operation by increasing costs to account for treatment. Disruptions to production can also cause food supply inconsistencies and impact local rural economies.

According to the [USDA New World Screwworm Confirmed Detections Dashboard](#), there are 34 total domestic animal cases in the United States. These cases are so far contained in South Western Texas and South Eastern New Mexico. Lea County, New Mexico had one reported case on June 7, 2026 but the case has since been classified as inactive. The infected animal has made a full recovery according to a local veterinarian.

Vigilant monitoring for NWS has never been more important.

The State of New Mexico has created a [website](#) to help folks navigate information and resources about the outbreak. The website includes important resources like a preparedness sheet for transporting animals to fairs, information on how to identify NWS and links to reporting portals.

At this time, financial assistance does not appear to be available for farmers and ranchers directly impacted by NWS.

The New Mexico Congressional Delegation has written to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins urging USDA to address the outbreak. The full text of the letters can be found below.

- [Luján, Heinrich, Klobuchar, Slotkin, Colleagues Urge USDA to Address New World Screwworm Outbreak](#)
- [Reps. Stansbury, Schweikert, Grijalva, Stanton, and Leger Fernández send Bipartisan Letter to Secretaries Rollins, Kennedy on Screwworm Outbreak](#)
- [U.S. Representatives Leger Fernández \(NM-03\) and Gabe Vasquez \(NM-02\) introduced the Protecting America's Herds Act](#)



Disaster Programs for New Mexico

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a number of programs for farmers and ranchers who are impacted by disasters. To assist in finding the right program, FSA has created the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) to help navigate the full suite of programs. For additional information about enrollment, eligibility, or other FSA programs, contact the [local FSA Service Center](#). Below is a short description of FSA's legacy disaster programs:

Livestock Forage Program (LFP)

[LFP](#) provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who have had forage losses for their grazing livestock as a result of drought. Payments for this program are calculated using eligible acreage and the U.S. Drought Monitor. Many counties in New Mexico are eligible for payments in 2026.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

[LIP](#) compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock deaths, above normal mortality, due to eligible loss conditions. LIP provides a payment of 75% of the market value of the animal, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Currently, livestock deaths due to the NWS are not eligible for this program.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

[ELAP](#) provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffer losses from specific conditions that are not covered by other government programs. These losses include feed purchased above normal, water and feed transportation, and honeybee losses as a result of colony collapse disorder.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

[TAP](#) provides financial assistance for orchard and nursery tree operators to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

[NAP](#) helps farmers and ranchers mitigate risk on their operation by providing disaster assistance for crops not covered by crop insurance. This includes forage losses and many specialty crops. For farmers and ranchers to be eligible for this program they must enroll before they experience a disaster.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

[ECP](#) assists farmers, ranchers, and landowners in rehabilitating farmland and conservation structures damaged during natural disasters. ECP covers reshaping of farm land, removal of destroyed fencing and debris, replacing destroyed fences and emergency water conservation in times of drought.

Emergency Loan Program

The FSA offers [emergency loans](#) to help farmers and ranchers recover from losses due to natural disasters. Emergency loan funds can be used for restoring or replacing property, paying production costs for a disaster year, paying family living expenses, and refinancing certain debts.

Disaster Set-Aside Program (DSA)

The [DSA](#) assists farmers and ranchers with existing FSA loans who have been impacted by natural disasters. This program provides financial relief by allowing eligible producers to move one annual installment for each loan to the end of the loan term. This set-aside installment helps producers regain their financial footing without facing immediate repayment pressure, enabling them to focus on recovery efforts.

**Farm
toTable**