

Field Notes: AgriPolicy Brief

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Farm Bill Update

The farm bill has historically been a bill considered by Congress every five years. The bill covers everything from food and nutrition to rural electricity and research. However, in 2023, Congress failed to pass a farm bill and has since been approving one year extensions of the 2018 bill. While the farm economy and rural America have been evolving, the policies built to support them have not. This year we have seen more progress toward the passage of a farm bill but functioning farm and food policy is still a long way off.

In February 2026, House Agriculture Committee Chairman GT Thompson (R-PA-15) introduced his version of the farm bill. Not long after, on March 3, 2026, the Committee began the markup process in which Committee members add suggested amendments that may or may not be considered. While the bill covered highly controversial issues, it passed out of Committee with some bipartisan support. Almost two months later, on April 30, 2026, the House of Representatives voted on the bill on the House floor and passed the farm bill, requiring the Senate to act. The April 30th action marked the furthest a farm bill had made it in the process since 2018.

Between May and mid-June, action on the farm bill seemed to slow considerably. On June 23, 2026, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-AR) unveiled a discussion draft of the farm bill. Immediately, the bill was met with pushback from the Senate Agriculture Committee minority. Led by Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), the Senate minority was steadfast in its stance that they would not support a bill that did not address the changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) (See more information on SNAP and the OBBBA on page 2).

On August 3, 2026, Senator Boozman (R-AR) released a revised discussion draft outlining a one-year delay in the provisions of the OBBA going into effect for the SNAP cost shift. Just three days later on August 6, 2026, the Senate Committee on Agriculture met to mark up the discussion draft of the farm bill where only two amendments passed, the Chairman's en bloc (see page 2) and Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD)'s amendment for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (mCOOL).

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Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling

A law requiring Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (mCOOL) would require that all meat is labeled with the country from which the animal originated. Many American ranchers would like to see this come to pass because they believe that it will make it easier for the consumer to choose American-raised meat over imported meat.

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SAfter hours of debate, the farm bill failed to pass out of Committee in a vote of 10 Republicans to 11 Democrats.

What's next?

Currently, the Senate Committee on Agriculture is in recess, meaning that Chairman Boozman can call the Committee back at any time to vote on the farm bill again. This means that there is still opportunity for advocates to request action on their farm bill priorities. In order for the farm bill to move forward, the bill would need to pass out of Committee and be considered by the full Senate body. If this happens, the bill will be reviewed by a conference committee to make sure both chambers of the legislature agree on the bill.

What is an En Bloc Amendment?

En bloc amendments allow for the committee to move past amendments that the group has already agreed to as part of informal negotiations and formalize them all at once.

At the beginning of the Senate Agriculture Committee's business meeting on August 6, 2026, Chairman Boozman called for the Committee to consider an "en bloc package." He read the amendment numbers and titles on which the group had agreed, and then the committee went on to vote. Of course, any member could move for the amendments to be considered separately if they desired.

In the Senate farm bill 34 amendments were accepted as part of the en bloc including two amendments proposed by Senator Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM).

The two amendments made by Senator Lujan (D-NM) are as follows

Lujan (D-NM) Amendment #13 - An amendment supporting farmer to farmer education

This amendment leverages existing technical assistance resources by supporting farmer-led education networks and building capacity for new ones as a key strategy to increase adoption of conservation practices. Specifically, the bill would authorize the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to enter into cooperative agreements with community-based organizations in each state that are able to identify and build on established and burgeoning peer-to-peer networks and create new ones.

Lujan (D-NM) Amendment #8 - An amendment to strengthen local food purchasing (modified)

This amendment supports the Strengthening Local Food Security Program.



Strengthening Local Food Security Program

SLFS is a proposed program that would create noncompetitive funding for state and tribal entities to purchase locally grown and raised food for distribution to local schools and hunger relief programs like food banks. The program was introduced by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Jim Justice (R-WV) in S. 2338

The Farm Bill's Challenging Road to Passage

The farm bill is a very broad package of legislation, second only to the annual defense package in complexity and comprehensiveness. So, a wide spectrum of constituencies closely follow the farm bill's policy proposals. However, there are a few main groups that tend to have the greatest sway in its outcomes.

The farm bill coalition is broadly three groups with differing interests in the agricultural industry, and together they are able to make compromises and pass a giant omnibus bill. An omnibus bill covers many topics, and, in the case of the farm bill, has traditionally been a 5-year law covering significant policies and expenditures on food, agriculture, and conservation. Typically, the farm bill coalition can be divided into three groups, each with their own focus:

Production Agriculture:

This pillar of the farm bill coalition is primarily focused on the long-term viability of commonly large-scale commodity crop production. In the current debate, corn, soy, and wheat organizations have been advocating for updates to safety net programs called the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. These programs provide some financial assurances to commodity producers who face market volatility and allow farmers to plan from year to year.

Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC)

The Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs are federal programs administered by the Farm Service Agency. These programs mitigate risk for row crop producers by ensuring that they receive a specific price for their commodities. These prices use Congressionally established "reference prices" to determine payment rates. ARC and PLC were recently revised as part of [P.L. 119-21](#).

Food & Nutrition Assistance Programs:

The stakeholders of this group tend to be from more metropolitan areas; however, rural communities depend on food assistance programs as well. The group's main focus is to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their distance to a farm, have access to nutritious food. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) are among the key priorities of this group.

Conservation:

This pillar of the farm bill coalition looks to protect the nation's natural resources and ensure that farmers and ranchers have access to the tools they need to make good conservation decisions on their farms. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) are among this group's key interests in the bill.

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The Farm Bill's Challenging Road to Passage Continued...

Because part of the farm bill was passed as part of the 2025 reconciliation package (P.L. 119-21), many organizations focused on the farm bill have been apprehensive that the farm bill coalition will no longer be motivated to pass comprehensive farm policy. Based on what we are seeing today, this remains a legitimate concern.

In addition to cuts to the program, [P.L. 119-21](#) shifted the cost burden to states by requiring that states pay a cost share of the program based on their error rate. New Mexico has a SNAP error rate of more than 16.6% (the average rate nationally is 10.6%). It is important to understand that while this number includes overpayments that result from incomplete or incorrect documentation, it also includes underpayments. Underpayments happen when the government calculates a payment incorrectly and a participant receives less benefits as a result. New Mexico knows that our error rate will mean a potential federal penalty of at least \$149 million and a potential cost of about \$173 million to the state annually.

In Congress, Democrats have been sounding the alarm that many states will simply not be able to absorb the costs resulting from this massive policy change and Republicans have remained steadfast in their position that this is what is necessary to address government spending and fraud, waste, and abuse. While not the sole reason for the gridlock, this issue has resulted in an impasse with passing farm policy.

As nutrition is one of the core pillars for the farm bill coalition, support from nutrition-focused members of Congress will be needed to advance a farm bill. By passing parts of the farm bill in P.L. 119-21 and drastically reducing the benefits received by the nutrition programs, the farm bill coalition is severely fractured. Until all groups of this coalition can see their priorities reflected in the bill, it is possible that Congress will not be able to advance policy.

Working Families Tax Cut Act?

One of the key pieces of legislation in the last two years has received many monikers. On July 4, 2025, Donald Trump signed a bill into laws that was known at the time as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Since its passage, the bill has been referred to by a number of names including the Big Ugly Bill, H.R. 1, and the Working Families Tax Cut. Because of the changes this bill made to existing farm policy, it is possible that the media will be using one, a combination, or all of the names of this bill in the media. Rest assured, all of this bill refers to the same law [P.L. 119-21](#).



Strengthening New Mexico Farms, Food & Communities

Save the Date! Roots & Resilience Conference

New Mexico Farm to Table's Farmer Innovation Program is hosting Roots & Resilience: Strengthening New Mexico Farms, Food & Communities on December 1-3, 2026 at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. The conference will help attendees build meaningful networks and partnerships, share tools, resources, and serve as a platform for exchanging practical knowledge across the New Mexico agricultural landscape. For more information, please visit the [conference webpage](#).



Farm to Table's mission is to build a local, healthy, equitable and sustainable food system through education and advocacy.

AgriPolicy Brief: Reader Survey.

Please complete by October 5.

In August 2025, Farm to Table launched the AgriPolicy Brief. Our goal is to keep all of our stakeholders informed about how federal policy changes are shaping the landscape here in New Mexico.

Our stakeholders in the food and agriculture space—from farmers and ranchers, food processors, school food system managers, and so many others growing, processing, moving, and serving food to local, state, and federal policymakers—are important to every aspect of what we do.

We are writing the AgriPolicy Brief for your use. We would love to know what is useful to you. If you could take 5-10 minutes to fill out the [survey](#) at right, it will shape the nature of the AgriPolicy Brief going forward.

Scan here to take the survey!

