

Urgent Farm Bill Action on the floor of the Senate: The Senate will be considering *The Food and Energy Security Act* (HR 2419), the version of the Farm Bill approved by its Senate Agriculture Committee last week. Send a strong message to Congress that our farm and food policies must reflect our values, reducing hunger and poverty, providing a safety net to smaller and moderate size farmers and helping farmers in developing countries to feed their families and make a decent living. Agriculture policies should not hurt or displace smaller family farmers and ranchers out of the marketplace, nor threaten the livelihoods of farmers in developing countries.

LINKS -

Call your Senator(s) now (Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121). Ask to speak with the staff person who deals with nutrition and agriculture policy. Urge your Senator(s) to:

Vote YES on amendments that provide additional funding for Food Stamps and for emergency food assistance (TEFAP). The Senate Agriculture Committee-approved bill contains \$1 billion less in new investments for the Food Stamp Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) than the House-passed bill (H.R. 2419).

Vote YES on the Dorgan-Grassley amendment, which ensures support for U.S. farmers who need it most. Today 66 percent of commodity payment programs go to 10 percent of our nation's farmers, the biggest and most affluent. Urge the Senate to pass a fair commodity title that better targets payments to those who need them while closing loopholes that have permitted the powerful to collect multiple payments.

Vote YES on amendments that reduce trade-distorting subsidies. Our brothers and sisters who till the land in developing countries, where three-quarters of the population rely on small-scale farming for their livelihood, are struggling to survive in an increasingly global market that stymies their efforts to feed their families and work their way out of poverty.

Support the Food Aid provisions of the bill. Support the committee bill which provides for a "safebox" with no waivers, and sets aside \$600 million of PL 480 Title II resources for development programs. We must protect Title II resources that address chronic hunger, in order to mitigate future emergencies and to help the poorest reach long term food security. Oppose attempts to weaken Committee-passed provisions on Food Aid.

BACKGROUND:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services have been working together to seek a new kind of Farm Bill that reflects a commitment to feed the hungry at home and abroad, to offer effective support for those who till the land, while promoting fairness and equity for farmers and ranchers. We especially support efforts to target agriculture resources to those who need help the most rather than those who need it least.

The 2007 Farm Bill was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives (HR 2419) this summer. The Senate expects to begin voting on its version of the Farm Bill the week of November 5. The bill approved by the Senate Agriculture Committee makes important investments in conservation and includes key provisions for beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers. However, more needs to be done to address the inequities in farm supports, especially programs that are trade distorting and that harm farmers in developing countries. While ensuring a genuine farm safety net, savings from greater fairness improvements need to be used for nutrition assistance to low-income people, conservation and rural development.

We will continue to work for fairness and justice in our food and farm policies as the Farm bill moves to conference committee for final passage, possibly before Thanksgiving.