



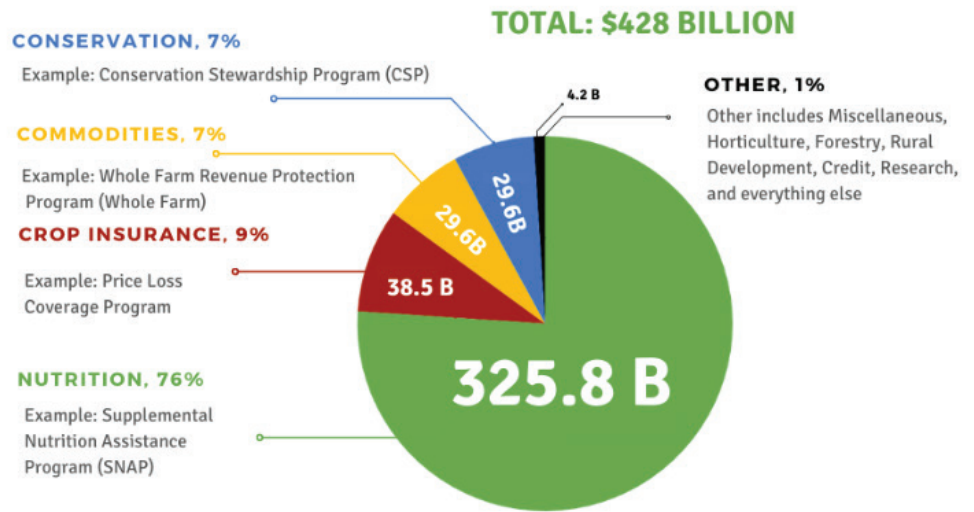
breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Why the Farm Bill Matters to Ending Hunger in the United States

The U.S. farm bill has tremendous influence on efforts to end hunger at home and abroad. The farm bill is reauthorized every four to five years, with the next reauthorization scheduled for 2023. It has been a priority for Bread for the World since the organization was founded.

The farm bill, despite its name, includes much more than farm policies and programs. As much as three-quarters of its funding is spent on nutrition programs, primarily the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). See figure at right. SNAP is the largest federal nutrition program, enabling tens of millions of people across the country to put food on the table. No other nutrition program has such widespread reach.

Farm Bill Projected Funding, in Billions, 2019-2023



Farm Bill Titles

The legislation authorizing the farm bill has separate chapters or “titles” for each of its food and agricultural policy areas. The table below shows the 12 titles of the 2018 farm bill, which is in effect at this writing. The titles remain largely the same from one farm bill to the next, although the policies and programs within the titles change frequently. Below we point out the parts of the farm bill that are most important for advocates working to end hunger in the United States.

The 2018 Farm Bill, by Title

Title 1, Commodity Programs. Supports major commodity crops: wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, and sugar.
Title 2, Conservation. Encourages environmental stewardship of farmlands.
Title 3, Trade. Supports U.S. agricultural exports and international food assistance.
Title 4, Nutrition. Provides nutrition assistance, mainly through SNAP.
Title 5, Credit. Makes loans to farmers and ranchers.
Title 6, Rural Development. Supports rural businesses and community development.
Title 7, Research, Extension, and Related Matters. Supports agricultural research and extension programs.
Title 8, Forestry. Supports forestry management programs.
Title 9, Energy. Encourages development of renewable farm and community energy systems.
Title 10, Horticulture. Supports the production of specialty crops, USDA-certified organic foods, and locally produced foods.
Title 11, Crop Insurance. Provides federal crop insurance.
Title 12, Miscellaneous. Includes support for livestock and poultry production, food waste reduction, and support for socially disadvantaged farmers.

Title 4, Nutrition

The Nutrition title is the primary focus of Bread for the World’s work on the farm bill, especially SNAP. The Nutrition title also includes several smaller nutrition programs. These include the Emergency Food Program (TEFAP), which distributes nutritious foods to food banks that in turn distribute it to local organizations that serve the public, such as food pantries and soup kitchens. Other food distribution programs in Title 4 include the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDIPR); the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which serves

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mainly seniors; and the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, which funds incentives for households, primarily SNAP participants, to purchase more fruits and vegetables.

It is important to note that the farm bill does not include all federal nutrition programs. The National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, WIC, and other child nutrition programs are governed by separate legislation. But the *de facto* largest child nutrition program is SNAP, with children comprising nearly half of all participants.

Title 7, Research, Extension, and Related Matters

Title 7 is crucial to achieving sustainable progress against hunger. Climate change impacts are rapidly accelerating, with more severe and frequent disruptive weather events hindering the ability of farmers and ranchers to produce food. Funding for research is arguably more important than ever since it generally takes years for agricultural research to develop and deliver innovative solutions to today's problems. High-quality research is being conducted in federal labs and at land-grant universities, among them Tribal Colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Title 10, Horticulture

The Horticulture title provides support to local food programs, including farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and other programs that connect farmers directly with consumers. Strengthening local food systems primarily supports small- to medium-sized farmers and ranchers, a group largely neglected by the farm bill's other agricultural

programs. In addition, Title 10 supports the development of infrastructure that local food systems need to flourish. Investing in local infrastructure helps build a more resilient national food system because it makes food supply chains more stable and creates opportunities for additional farmers to participate in local markets.

Title 12, Miscellaneous

Several of Bread for the World's priorities are included in the Miscellaneous Title. For example, advancing racial equity is one of the objectives of Title 12's assistance for "socially disadvantaged farmers," since socially disadvantaged farmers are predominantly farmers of color. The history of U.S. farm policy is rife with discrimination against these farmers.

Title 12 also includes policies and programs designed to reduce food waste and loss, such as efforts to recover safe, edible, healthy food and distribute it to households in need. Food waste and loss also contributes to climate change: food that is decomposing is producing greenhouse gases. As Bread for the World has said in the past, climate change is one of the greatest threats, perhaps *the* greatest threat, to ending global hunger.

The Farm Bill and the U.S. Food System

Like USDA, Bread for the World believes that the U.S. food system should "support health and ensure producers receive a fair share of the food dollar while advancing equity and contributing to national climate goals."¹ The omnibus farm bill is where we must ensure that these policies converge.

Endnotes:

1 <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/12/06/usda-establishes-food-purchase-program-transform-food-system-build>