



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Why does the Farm Bill matter to ending global hunger?

The U.S. government is committed to helping end global hunger and malnutrition through foreign assistance, which supports countries around the world that are grappling with hunger crises caused by conflict, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S. programs have provided food assistance for more than 65 years, reaching more than 4 billion people in 150 countries.¹ An early example is the Marshall Plan, geared at ending hunger and poverty by aiding the recovery of European countries devastated by World War II. The plan included food assistance that saved lives and strengthened the health of the population, enabling them to rebuild their countries and economies more quickly and effectively.

Today, U.S. international food assistance programs have evolved. The needs are now largely based in countries outside Europe, but they are caused by similar problems, particularly conflict. One of the main U.S. responses to current needs comes through provisions in the farm bill—the very large, multi-year legislation that governs an array of U.S. and global agricultural and food programs. The farm bill's stated purposes are to supply U.S. agricultural surpluses to fight world hunger, expand international trade to combat poverty, and foster friendly foreign relations and U.S. foreign policy to promote peace and security.

International food assistance is provided in three main ways: in-kind, (or actual food commodities shipped from the United States), market-based support (food vouchers or cash programs), and local procurement (purchasing food directly from local farmers). The programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Currently, the U.S. government provides international food assistance through:

1. **Food for Peace Title II**, which enables the U.S. government to donate food produced in the United States to a qualifying international organization that will distribute it directly to people in need. It also authorizes market-based assistance and programs aimed at enabling people to produce their own food.
2. **John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program (Food for Peace Title V)** finances short-term U.S. volunteer placements in developing countries to provide technical assistance to farmers.
3. **McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program** advances food security, nutrition, and education for children, especially girls, by providing food for school meals.
4. **Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) Program** finances the purchase of foods produced locally or in the region, usually in nonemergency situations. The LRP food assistance also supports countries that participate in McGovern-Dole and are preparing to take full local ownership and implementation of their school feeding programs. Purchased food must meet nutritional standards.
5. **Food for Progress** facilitates the donation of U.S. agricultural commodities to international organizations, NGOs, foreign governments, or private entities, which can then distribute the commodities to households or sell them locally to raise funds for development projects.
6. **Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust: Africa Seeds of Hope** holds funds or commodities to be used for rapid response to emergency food needs in humanitarian contexts.

Historically, the U.S. government provided international food assistance exclusively through in-kind aid.

Thanks partly to the persistent efforts, over several farm bills, of Bread members and our partners, the share of assistance that is purchased locally or regionally reached 59 percent in 2020, while the remaining 41 percent was in-kind food aid. This is a substantial improvement over 2010, only a decade before, when in-kind food aid was 89 percent of the total and market-based assistance only 11 percent.²

The farm bill is a major part of the U.S. commitment to ending global hunger. Its funding for food assistance is increasingly important as the number of people in hunger emergency situations continues to rise.

Endnotes:

1 USAID Frequently Asked Questions. <https://www.usaid.gov/food-assistance/faq>

2 Congressional Research Service: U.S. International Food Assistance: An Overview (Updated February 23, 2021) <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R45422.pdf>