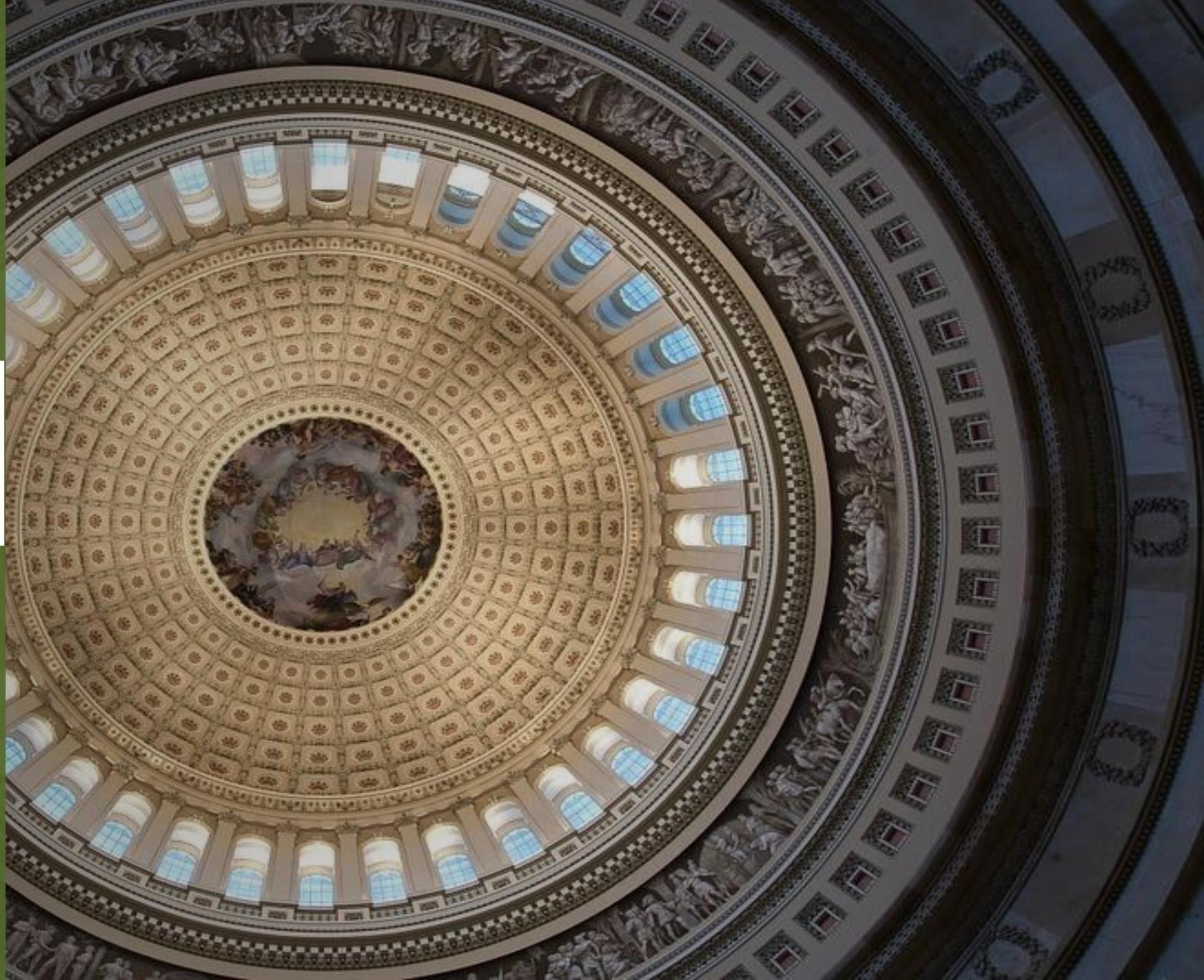


TEXAS'S VISION FOR THE 2023 FARM BILL



May 30, 2023

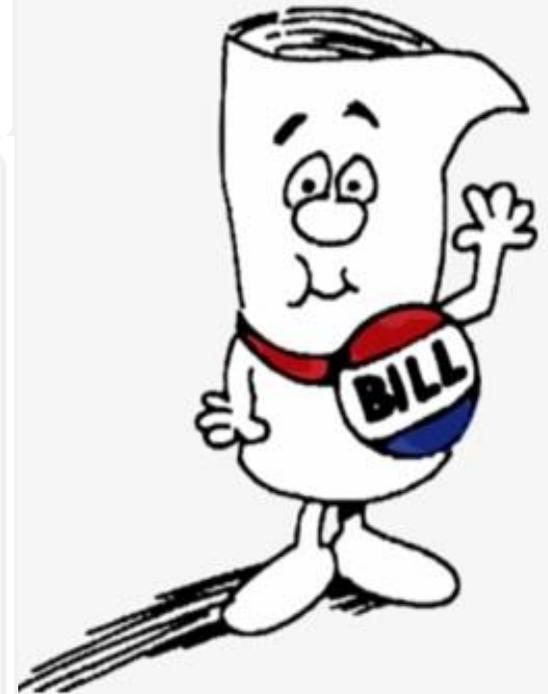


What is the Farm Bill?

- The Farm Bill is the **major federal food and farm legislation** that includes a wide range of agricultural and nutrition policies. Congress seeks to reauthorize the Farm Bill every five years
- Initially passed as **part of President Roosevelt's New Deal** during the 1930s to address the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.
- 18 farm bills have been enacted: 1933, 1938, 1948, 1949, 1954, 1956, 1956, 1965, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1981, 1985, 1990, 1996, 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2018.
- The 2018 Farm Bill, officially entitled the Agriculture Improvement Act, **expires Sept 30, 2023.**

Key policy areas covered in the Farm Bill

 Farm commodity supports	 Conservation programs	 Agricultural trade	 Nutrition assistance
 Farm loans and credit	 Rural economic development	 Research and extension programs	 Forestry stewardship
 Energy and biofuels	 Local foods, organics, and fruits and vegetables	 Crop insurance supports	 Socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers



Key Nutrition Programs Authorized by the Farm Bill

The Farm Bill impacts access to nutritious food for millions of Texas families struggling with hunger. Nutrition provisions include:

- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - SNAP Benefit Levels and Enrollment Policies
 - SNAP Outreach
 - SNAP Nutrition Education
 - SNAP Employment and Training (E&T)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)



Impact of TEFAP on Texas

- TEFAP provides 35% of the food distributed by the Feeding America network.
- Twenty-one Texas food banks receive food through TEFAP – including the Brazos Valley Food Bank – and most of their member agencies.



TEFAP moves food from farms to food banks to families.

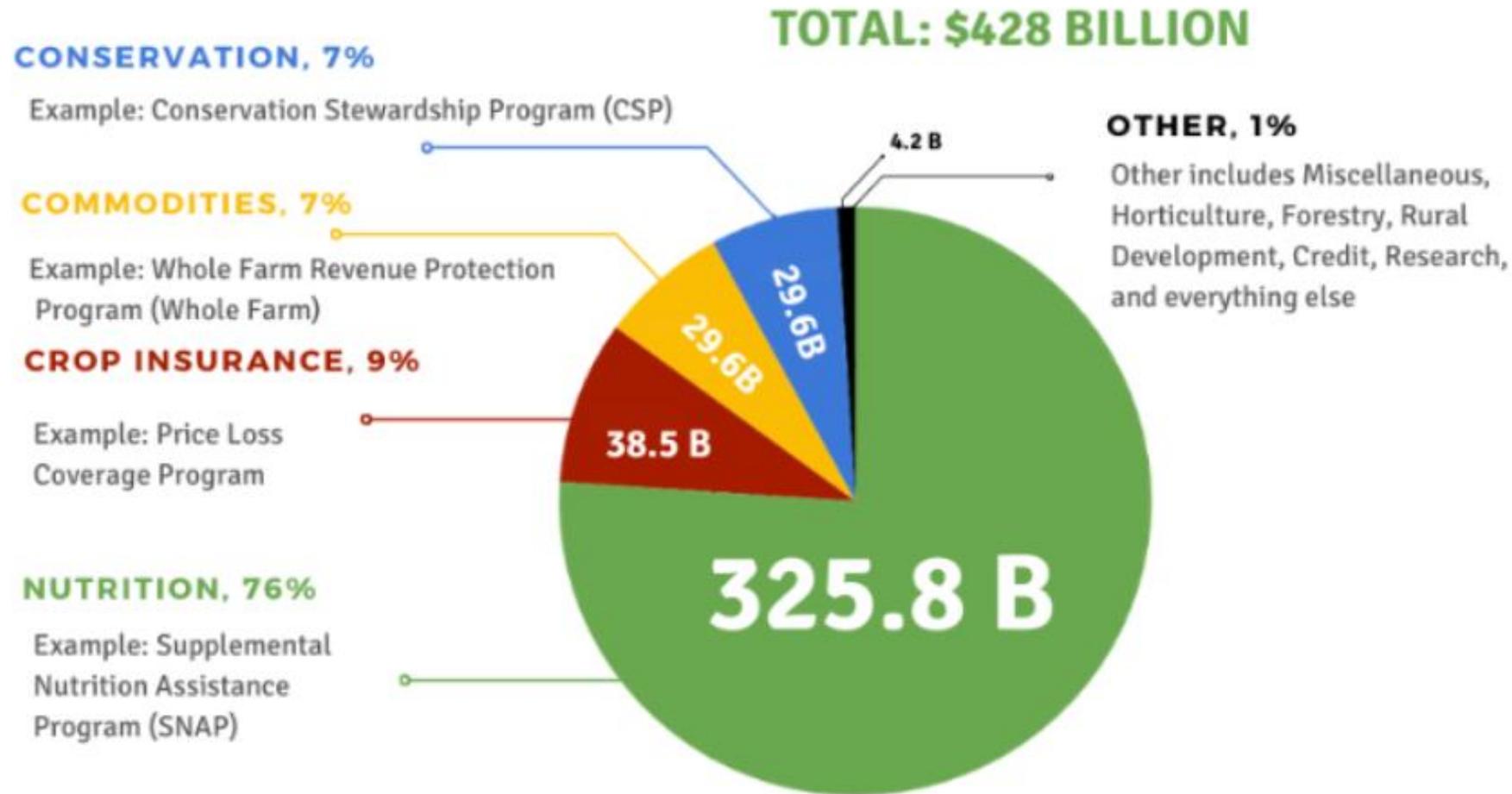


Impact of SNAP on Texas

- SNAP provides nine meals for every meal provided through food banks in Texas.
- Last month alone, SNAP assisted over 1.5 Million Texas families by providing over \$570 Million in food purchasing assistance.
- SNAP supports Texas families, food retailers, and farmers.
- When SNAP benefits are cut or eligibility is tightened, those families appear in your lines.



FARM BILL PROJECTED FUNDING, IN BILLIONS 2019-2023



Texas Farm Bill Policy Goals

Feeding Texas, our 21 member food banks and the Texas Food Policy Roundtable (TFPR), a coalition of more than 60 organizations created a joint vision statement for this year's Farm Bill.



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Improve the adequacy and use of SNAP benefits

Congress should make the standard SNAP benefit stronger by basing it on USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan or improving expense deductions.

SNAP should also be as **convenient to use as cash** — giving families every option to eat conveniently and healthily.



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Remove barriers to financial security among SNAP participants

SNAP supports Texans as they continue to climb the economic ladder. But if a SNAP participant owns a reliable car to get to work or wants to go back to college, SNAP regulations disqualify them from receiving food assistance.

Congress should encourage financial security by **eliminating these barriers** to economic mobility.



Texas Farm Bill Policy Goals

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Bolster the charitable food response

During periods of insecurity, Texans who don't qualify for SNAP must rely on charitable food providers like food banks. Our food banks depend on support from Congress and USDA to bring healthy staples to every Texas county.

Congress should **double the current authorization** for both TEFAP and TEFAP Storage & Distribution grants and **increase investment** in the Farm to Food Bank program.



2023 Farm Bill Timeline

- ✓ The House and Senate Agriculture Committees will hold Farm Bill congressional hearings and field hearings this summer to hear from advocates on how to improve nutrition programs in the Farm Bill.
- ✓ Several members of Congress have already introduced “marker” bills around policy priorities they want to address in the Farm Bill. A marker bill is a policy proposal that is introduced as individual legislation and can be used as a starting point to debate inclusion of it in bigger legislation like the farm bill.
- ✓ Committees have already begun prepping their versions of the Farm Bill. The Senate Agriculture Committee could release their version in mid-summer.
- ✓ The bill expires on Sept. 30, 2023; it’s unknown if a new bill will be passed by then. The last several farm bills have not been passed on time.



2023 Farm Bill Campaign

We need you!



Farm Bill Advocacy Tactics

Our advocacy tactics are built on key successes in past campaigns. Core tactics include:

- Engaging members of Congress in DC and at home in their districts: food bank visits, roundtables, community events, etc.
- Making the case for our priorities in the news media and via our collective digital presence – blogs, social media and emails lists.
- Providing opportunities for grassroots and grasstops advocacy: sign-on letters, digital advocacy actions, and power mapping.
- Building coalition partnerships with key allies: food and ag groups, local elected officials, faith partners, health care, local business, etc.



Messages.

Children, older adults, and people with disabilities represent 90% of the households who get SNAP. They should not have to deal with hunger.

We need to invest more in SNAP while inflation and high food costs are causing millions of families to struggle to afford food.

Food is medicine and research shows enrolling in SNAP improves the health of adults and children because it enables them to eat healthier foods.

Most workers enrolled in the program are paid low wages and are in service or sales jobs like cashiers, cooks, or home health aides. SNAP helps low-wage workers afford food and continue to work.

Even though SNAP helps people afford groceries, it is still not enough. On average, participants only receive about \$5.45 per person per day in food benefits (not counting the temporary extra benefits during the pandemic).

Research shows the program improves local economies. Every dollar in new SNAP benefits generates business for local grocery stores and other retailers.

Abuse and fraud in SNAP has been greatly reduced thanks to new technology and data matching that enables the program to verify income and other applicant data. We should continue to invest in these advances. *

SNAP has modernized in recent years and uses technology to make the program more efficient, easier to use, and more accountable. We should continue to invest in these modernizations to the program.

* A top message for Republicans.

Texas Farm Bill Targets

Greg Casar



Monica De La Cruz



Jasmine Crockett



Ronny Jackson



John Cornyn



and every member of the House

But every member of the House

Key Opportunities

- Roundtables and convenings in your communities with your farm bureau, business leaders, faith leaders.
- Galvanizing your grass tops and board members to discuss the importance of hunger and having strong federal nutrition programs throughout the debate.
- Lifting voices of affected families and unlikely partners in the media and public settings to inform the debate.
- Utilize our Farm Bill Advocacy Toolkit.

Questions?

Jamie Olson
Director of Policy and Advocacy
Feeding Texas
Jolson@feedingtexas.org

