



AMERICA'S FARM BILL 2012

Evaluating Farm Programs for Better Policy

Committee Audits

- Between June and September, the House Agriculture Committee conducted 11 audits of farm programs
- Each program was evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness
- Members learned how USDA is spending taxpayer dollars and looked for ways of improving service to America's farmers and ranchers
- All told, the Committee collected 19 questionnaires with detailed information on USDA programs and heard 22 separate testimonies from USDA officials
- These audits have given the Committee a wealth of information to draw upon when writing the next Farm Bill



Audit Highlights

"A combination of higher commodity and energy prices is significantly increasing the amount of capital required to finance agricultural production. Crop-related expenses grew 77 percent between 2002 and 2008, and are expected to rise by 9.5 percent in 2011."

—[Bruce Nelson, Administrator, Farm Service Agency](#)

"Voluntary, incentive-based conservation works. Reduced tillage is used on 95 percent of the cropland—sediment losses are reduced by an estimated 69 percent as compared to a scenario where full conventional tillage is used...Targeting can greatly enhance program effectiveness. Treating the most critical acres can have 3 to 5 times the effect on sediment and nutrient reduction as compared with treating acres with less serious problems."

—[Dave White, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

"Crop insurance is a vital part of the farm safety net and has become an integral part of business life for a large majority of American farmers and ranchers. They would find it difficult to continue providing the United States and the world with an abundant supply of food, fiber and fuel without the protection provided by this part of the farm safety net. Many lenders now require crop insurance coverage in order to make operating loans to crop and livestock producers, and many producers use crop insurance as collateral for the loans. "

—[William J. Murphy, Administrator, Risk Management Agency](#)

U.S. food and agricultural exports increased by \$35 for every dollar invested by government and industry on market development. Additionally, U.S. agricultural exports in 2009 were \$6.1 billion higher than they would have been without the increased investment in market development.

—[Suzanne Heinen, Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service](#)