

# The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008

## A New Direction for Food and Farm Policy

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The conference report on the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 makes historic investments in our food and farm economy. The bill will expand food security programs, protect our vital natural resources, promote healthier foods and local food networks, and reform commodity and biofuel programs to reflect the priorities of the nation.

### Ensuring Food Security

- Nutrition programs increased by \$10.361 billion with appropriate benefit increases that are indexed to the cost of living
- Vital assistance to food banks increased by \$1.25 billion
- New funding boosts organic agriculture, fruit and vegetable programs, and local food networks
- Country-of-origin labeling for meat and produce made mandatory

### Promoting Homegrown Renewable Energy

- Provides \$1.1 billion to fund programs that will help the renewable energy industry invest in new technologies that use a variety of sources beyond feed grains.
- Corn ethanol tax credit reduced and redirected to incentives for cellulosic ethanol
- Creates a loan guarantee program and a program to encourage and develop production of dedicated energy crops
- Bioenergy research increased and renewable energy programs expanded

### Reforming Farm Programs

- Farm program safety net extended and modernized, with an updated adjusted gross income means test for commodity programs
- Farm and conservation program transparency increased, with direct attribution of payments and the ending of practices that result in multiple payment eligibility
- Crop insurance reformed to prevent windfall reimbursements to crop insurance companies
- Budgeted standing disaster assistance program for crops stricken by catastrophic natural disasters such as drought and flood

### Protecting the Environment

- Conservation program spending increased by \$6.6 billion
- Doubles funding for Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to protect agricultural lands from urban and suburban development pressure
- Increases funding for Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program to enhance and protect our natural resources
- Continues funding for Grassland Reserve and Wetlands Reserve programs
- Creates an Open Fields Program to encourage public access to private land for hunting and fishing as well as a Chesapeake Bay program to help restore and protect the Bay watershed

### Strengthening International Food Aid

- Provides \$60 million to purchase food overseas to feed people in need on top of the existing Food for Peace international aid program, along with an evaluation of this change and its effect on U.S. response times
- Reauthorizes the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program for infant, child, and school nutrition programs in underdeveloped countries and provides an infusion of \$84 million in additional funding