

Family Farming and the Current Farm Bill 2016 Special Order of Business

2016 has the potential to be a year of crisis for agriculture due to the dramatic reduction in commodity and livestock prices over the past year and a half. The projected price outlook of commodities shows no sign of strengthening, therefore possibly extending this crisis for years to come.

The primary objectives of national agricultural policy are to enable farmers to significantly increase net farm income, improve the quality of rural life, and increase the number of family farmers, so that family farmers may continue to provide a reliable supply of food, fuel and fiber and serve as stewards of our nation's resources.

Farmers depend on the programs offered in the Farm Bill in order to provide the food, fuel and fiber needs of the country. National Farmers Union believes the deal that was struck when passing the 2014 Farm Bill should be honored and will vehemently oppose any cuts until the next Farm Bill is passed.

In addition to opposing cuts, we advocate for increased funding in programs that are needed for the success of family farming. We call on Congress to give USDA the authority to use the CCC program to provide additional funding for the guaranteed loan program as well to develop innovative tools and safety net options for young and beginning farmers who are being adversely impacted due to their lack of equity.

Cash flow is also a concern for producers, so USDA should consider paying ARC and PLC farm program payments by March following the crop year instead of November. These payments could be made earlier by changing the Market-Year-Average price from a twelve month to a six month average or by estimating and making partial payments.

In summary, NFU will advocate for policies that support family farmers, like fully funding programs passed in the 2014 Farm Bill, earlier delivery of ARC and PLC payments, and increased funding for guaranteed loan programs. NFU asks Congress to fully understand the dire situation facing farmers and implement any and all solutions to address the financial crisis that is impacting farmers.