



Ways to improve America's farm and food policies

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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

finding the ways that work

America's farm policies could do much more to help farmers—and the environment. The time is ripe for reform. Many trends—including growing consumer demand for healthier food and trade negotiations over farm subsidies—make farm policy reform not only possible, but inevitable.

Better farm policies can benefit more farmers—and the environment

Farmers, ranchers and private forest owners are anxious to help solve many of America's most pressing environmental, health and energy challenges. However, more than 50,000 farmers are rejected each year when they ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture to share the cost of improving air and water quality, providing healthy food choices, or creating wildlife habitat. Overall, three out of four farmers seeking stewardship incentives from USDA are turned away due to lack of funds.

Farmers, ranchers and private forest owners manage more than half of the American landscape. So it's no surprise that private landowners dramatically impact the quality of America's rivers, lakes and bays or the fate of the nation's rare species. Unless we reward landowners when they take steps to help the environment, we can not hope to meet some of our most pressing environmental challenges.

Increasing conservation and energy investments would not only help the environment, it would also help landowners. Conservation payments can flow to all

farmers, ranchers and private forest owners regardless of what they grow. So, expanding conservation and energy incentives will help producers remain profitable.

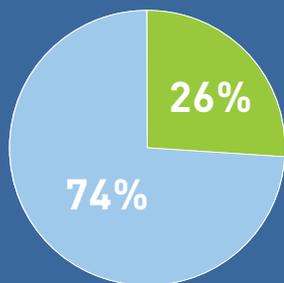
By contrast, only one-third of America's farmers grow crops that are eligible for traditional farm subsidies.

Two-thirds of America's farmers, and 90 percent of

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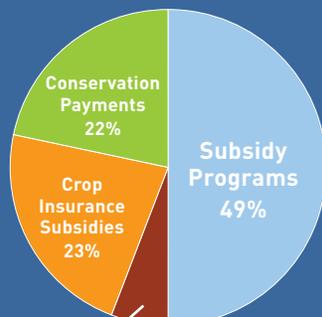
Farmers and ranchers are turned away from conservation funding...

(2004)



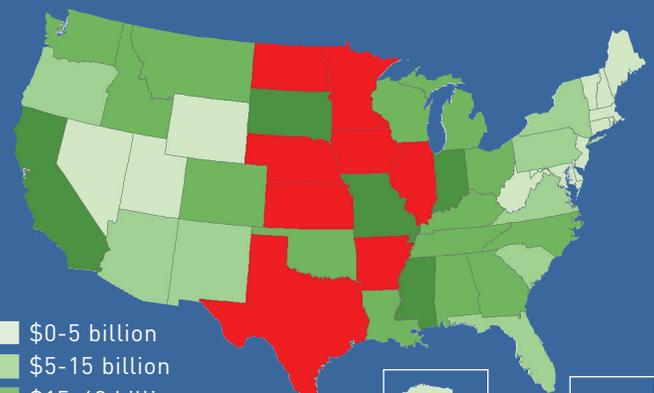
■ Funded Applicants
■ Unfunded Applicants

...while subsidies soak up funds



Eight states collect over half of all farm spending

Farm subsidies 1995-2004



■ \$0-5 billion
■ \$5-15 billion
■ \$15-40 billion
■ \$40-70 billion
■ Over \$70 billion (Top 8 states)



minority farmers, produce fruits, vegetables, livestock and other farm products not subsidized by the taxpayers.

Most subsidized crops are concentrated in a handful of states, so 8 states and 22 Congressional Districts collect more than half of all farm spending. In addition, because payments are tied to how much you produce, subsidy payments are also concentrated in the hands of a few farmers: Ten percent of subsidized farmers collect 70 percent of farm subsidies. While some farmers collect more than \$2 million a year, most subsidized farmers collect less than \$200 a month.

America's farm policies could do much more to help our farmers. Between 1995 and 2003, the U.S. lost 87,000 farms, many of them small, family-owned operations. Today, many farmers are working to adapt to a changing market by developing new markets and products. However, less than one-tenth of one percent of farm spending supports such innovation.

Increasing conservation and energy payments would help more landowners get a fair share of federal farm spending. Additionally, conservation and energy payments—unlike traditional farm subsidies—don't invite retaliatory tariffs on our exports.

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Reform farm policy to help farmers—and the environment

Next year, Congress will reauthorize federal farm programs giving legislators an unprecedented opportunity to reshape farm policies to reward environmental stewardship, boost energy production, expand markets at home and abroad, and reward economic innovation. Here's what they can do:

(1) Reward stewardship

Farm policy should reward farmers, ranchers and forest landowners when they take steps to improve air

and water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, or serve as the frontline against sprawl.

(2) Boost energy development

Farm policy should support energy development on farms, ranches and forest lands.

(3) Help farmers develop new markets

Farm policy should provide incentives for farmers to create new products and new markets.

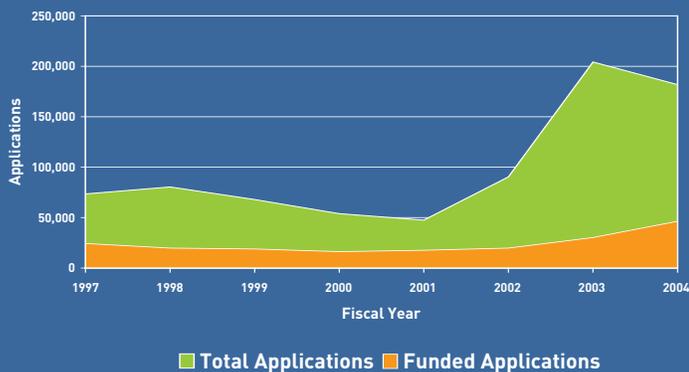
(4) Help farmers provide healthy food choices

Farm policy should reward farmers when they take steps to provide more healthy food choices.

(5) Enhance rural communities

Farm policy should create jobs and improve the environment in rural communities.

More Landowners Seeking Conservation Funding



The number of landowners seeking stewardship opportunities through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program continues to soar, while funding remains largely the same.

Our state's coordinators:

Bill Bobier (MI)	Tim Male (NJ)
Curtis Bohlen (ME)	Will McDow (NC)
Suzy Friedman (VT)	David McNaught (NC)
Karl Gebhardt (OH)	Glenda Neff (NY)
Dan Grossman (CO)	Kathryn Phillips (CA)
Jay Healy (MA)	Mary Sanger (TX)
Eric Holst (CA)	Ted Toombs (WY)

For more information, including contact information for those listed above, please contact Meghan Stasz at 202.387.3500 or mstasz@environmentaldefense.org

www.environmentaldefense.org