

# FOOD FIGHT



## Why the Farm Bill is Must-Watch Legislation

Our country's food and agricultural policies have a profound impact on people at home and abroad. The Farm Bill, a massive package of legislation that must be renegotiated and reauthorized every five years, is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the federal government.

For anti-hunger advocates in particular, the Farm Bill is a crucial piece of legislation to watch. The current Farm Bill (formally the Agricultural Act of 2014), authorized a total of \$956 billion in spending over ten years, 79% of which supported nutrition programs, including SNAP - the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps.

SNAP has proven itself to be both effective and efficient, helping 42 million individuals each month afford an adequate diet while achieving the lowest payment error rate in the program's history. Defending and strengthening this critical program, which is a lifeline for so many vulnerable Americans, is crucial.

As negotiations on the Farm Bill ramp up this fall and continue into next year, here are some things to keep an eye on:

- **Budget Cuts:** The Farm Bill authorizes nutrition programs and establishes policies for them, but these programs are funded through the budget, which is proposed and enacted separately. While the President's budget sets the tone and direction for federal priorities, it is the House and Senate that will conceive and pass the actual budget. If they use the President's budget as a starting point, we can expect significant cuts to vital programs like SNAP.

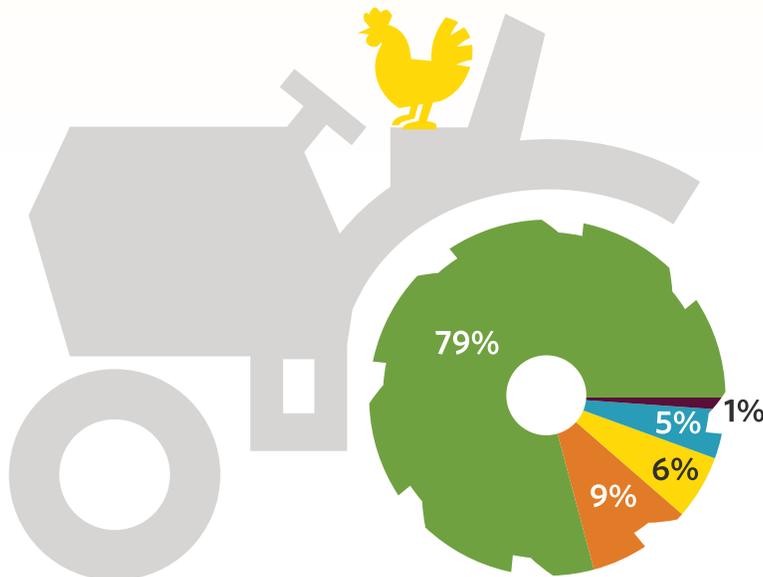
- **Block Grants:** Some lawmakers want to change the structure of SNAP by turning it into a "block grant," a capped sum of money given to the states by the federal government. A block grant would impose burdensome administrative costs on states and would open the door for states to use the federal money for other programs.

This would reduce the amount of money going to help the people who need it most.

- **"Deserving" Poor Rhetoric:** Watch out for arguments by policymakers that we should categorically exclude certain individuals and families from SNAP eligibility. They paint a picture of a 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor—a cynical and narrow-minded view that some people are worthy of assistance and others are not. This portrait is inconsistent with the daily realities of those who depend on SNAP, and offends the ideals upon which this nation was built.

### WHERE YOU COME IN

Visit [MAZON.org/take-action](http://MAZON.org/take-action) and sign our petition to ask Speaker Ryan to protect SNAP. Already signed? Share on your social media platforms and encourage your friends to add their name and their voice.



## WHAT'S IN THE FARM BILL?

- **SNAP and Nutrition Programs** - \$756 billion
- **Crop Insurance** - \$89.8 billion
- **Conservation Incentives** - \$56 billion
- **Commodity Programs** - \$44.4 billion
- **Everything Else** - \$8.2 billion

(trade and foreign food aid, forestry, agricultural credit, rural development, research and education, marketing, food safety, animal health and welfare, energy, and organic agriculture)