

UPDATE ON THE 2018 FARM BILL

NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

January 13, 2020
Roanoke, VA

Virginia Biological Farming Conference

About NSAC



- NSAC: a grassroots alliance of more than 130 member organizations from around the country working together to improve federal food & farm policy for 30 years!

About NSAC



FARMERS & STAKEHOLDERS

Share their experiences, ideas, challenges related to federal policy, programs, rules with local groups



MEMBER GROUPS

Collect input from farmers & stakeholders as well as their own experiences, bring asks to NSAC



NSAC

Helps members: identify top priority sustainable food & farm policy issues nationwide, set campaign strategies, campaign to win!



CONGRESS & FED AGENCIES

NSAC brings – directly and thru members – priority asks to Congress and agencies like USDA to improve federal food & farm policy

Farm Bill 101



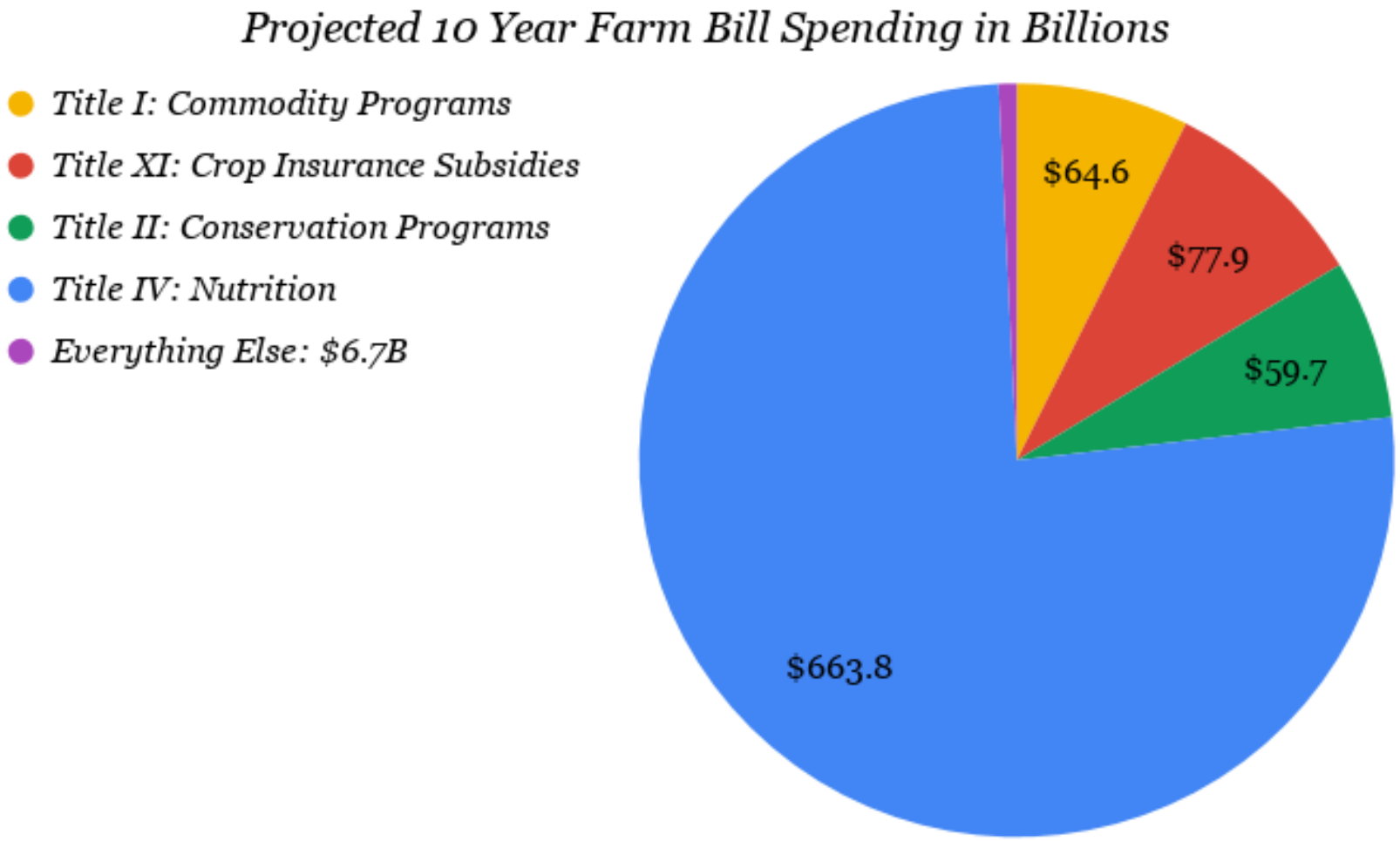
A **COMPREHENSIVE** piece of legislation *reauthorized* about every 5 years

that covers **MANY** federal farm, food, forestry, and rural policies and programs

under the jurisdiction of the **House Committee on Agriculture** and the **Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry**.

How the Pie is Sliced

2018 Farm Bill Spending



NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

Implementation 101



- **What does IMPLEMENTATION look like?**
  - Direct feedback to the agency!
  - Keeping Congress involved
  - Program outreach and use
  - Evaluation
  - Appropriations

The Rulemaking Process!

- **Interim Final Rules are out** for EQIP, CSP, ACEP, CRP, with RCPP coming soon
- The public is encouraged to comment on these rules
- FY20 sign-up periods will be first enrollment periods under the new rules

FEDERAL REGISTER

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)





Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)



- CSP helps farmers put in place *comprehensive, ongoing,* advanced conservation projects.
- Address water quality or soil erosion;
- Provides increased biodiversity and wildlife and pollinator habitat;
- Sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gases to mitigate climate change

CSP (continued)



- CSP can be a natural next step for EQIP users.
- CSP has existed in its current form since 2003 – the 2018 Farm Bill brought many changes to CSP.
- 2018 bill increased payments for:
  - cover crops
  - crop rotations
  - advanced grazing management
- Created a separate funding pool for organic farms.

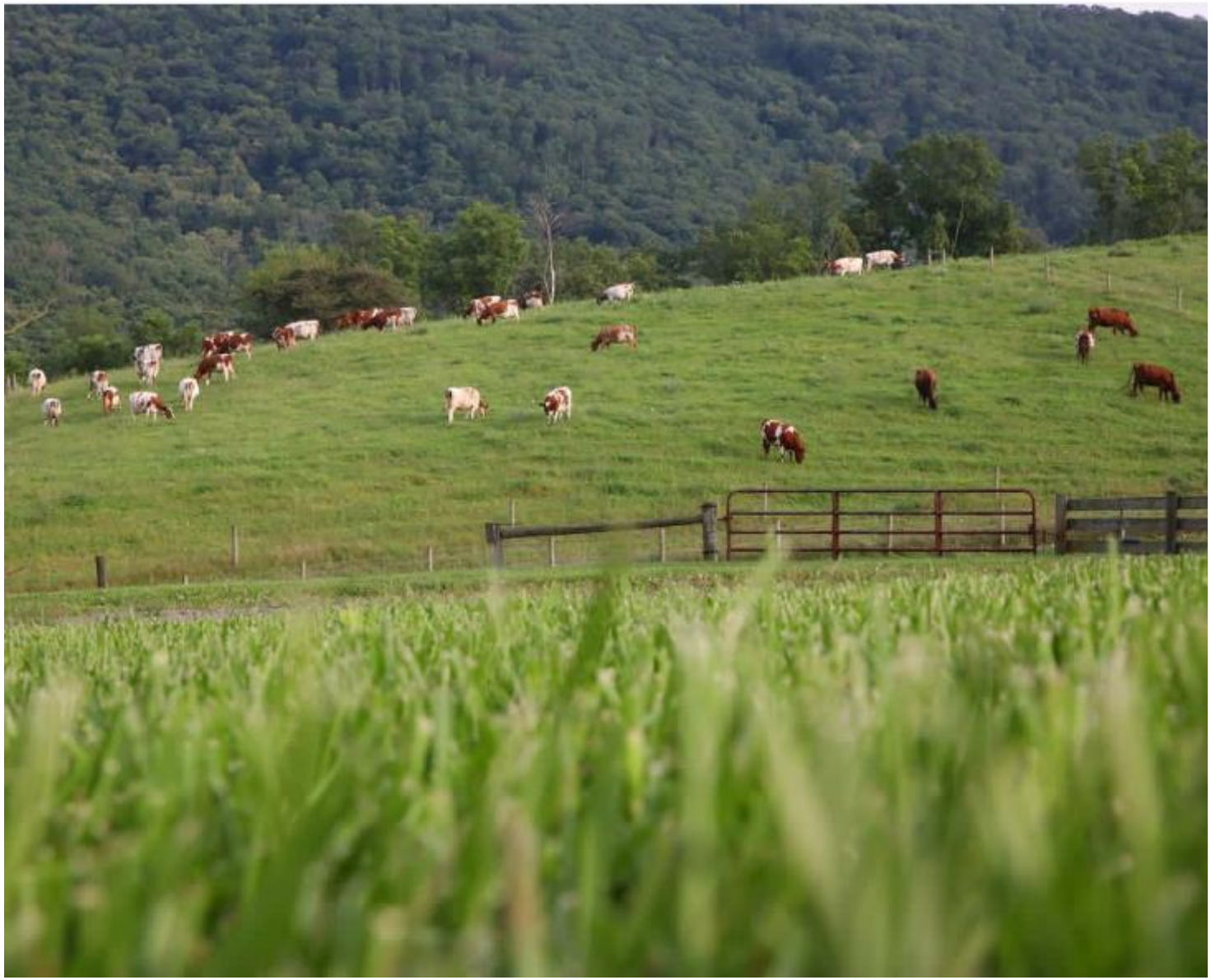
CSP (continued)



- Comments are due TODAY!
- CSP is meant to reward early and comprehensive adopters.
- Written to allow farmers to keep renewing as long as they are still doing best practices.
- Conservation is not a “one-and-done” deal.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)





EQIP (continued)



- EQIP is a cost-share program for *individual* land conservation practices.
- EQIP participants can install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices –
  - Improving irrigation efficiency
  - Restoring pasture
  - Nutrient and pest management
- 50% of national funding is set aside for livestock.
- EQIP Organic Initiative
- Comments are due February 18

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)



- Reserves marginal, erodible land
- While CSP and EQIP are working lands programs, CRP land is set aside, with some exceptions.
  - One of these exceptions is new Grasslands Program
- 2018 Bill included new conservation buffer initiatives.
- Comments are due on February 4

Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP)





Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP)



- Helps landowners and trusts place lands into long-term easements, protecting from development, other threats.
- Created in 2014 by combining 3 programs:
  - Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
  - Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)
  - Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP)
- Comments are due March 6

Why should farmers submit comments?



- It's important that NRCS hears from real farmers who use these programs.
  - NSAC is today submitting 25 pages of comments on CSP.
  - We are undertaking the comment-writing process for other programs as well.
  - It's important that NRCS hears from real farmers who use these programs.

If practitioners of biological farming don't submit comments – whose voices will be most heard?

Free Resources available Online



- Want to learn more?
- *Updated FREE Grassroots Guide to Farm Bill Programs for Farmers and Organizations*
- https://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/

Never too early to plan for next Farm Bill!









Stay in touch!



- **NSAC:**
  - https://sustainableagriculture.net
  - Facebook: sustainableag
  - Twitter: @sustainableag
  - Email updates: http://bit.ly/newsfromNSAC
  - Blog: https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog

Questions?

