



Harvest Real Savings by Reforming Agriculture Policy

February 14, 2013

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the millions of Americans represented by the undersigned organizations, we write urging you to take common sense steps to reform federal supports for agriculture and save taxpayers at least \$100 billion over the next decade. This may sound like an ambitious goal, but it is achievable with modest reforms that would still provide for a robust farm safety net.

The 113th Congress has a prime opportunity to reduce the federal government's meddling in the agricultural sector while helping to pay down our \$16 trillion national debt. A number of common sense steps can be taken to create a more accountable, responsive, and cost-effective agricultural policy.

- Despite the 2012 drought being one of the most severe in history, the agriculture industry “suffered” with near-record profits. Given today’s extraordinarily high commodity prices and farm profits and our monumental fiscal crisis, agriculture subsidies should be reduced by at least \$100 billion over the next decade. Enacting simple and long-overdue reforms like eliminating outdated direct payments, trimming the skyrocketing cost of federal crop insurance subsidies, and not replacing direct payments with market distorting “shallow loss” entitlement programs would realize at least this level of savings.

- Federal supports for agriculture must be evaluated on their own merits. Though explosive growth in nutrition programs, particularly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), must be addressed, that discussion must not be used to sidetrack necessary reforms to federal subsidies to agricultural businesses. Any serious effort to strengthen our nation's agricultural and nutrition safety nets will put these two disparate programs in separate debates.
- Congress must consider changing the law under which America operates in the absence of a new farm bill. The current fallback, the horribly outdated Agricultural Act of 1949, forces taxpayers to decide between Farm Bills with inadequate reforms or reverting to even more detrimental World War II-era law. This cynical ploy must be eliminated if we are ever going to have a real debate about the merits of federal programs.

It's time for Congress to craft a limited, effective, and efficient safety net for American agriculture instead of lavish, poorly directed subsidies. That goal can be achieved while saving overburdened taxpayers at least \$100 billion on farm payouts.

Sincerely,

American Commitment
Americans for Prosperity
Americans for Tax Reform
Center for Individual Freedom
Competitive Enterprise Institute
Cost of Government Center
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste
FreedomWorks
Heritage Action
National Taxpayers Union
R Street Institute
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance