Overview of the 2018 Farm Bill

2018 Farm Bill Update
March 3, 2020
2018 Farm Bill Conservation Overview

- Strengthens and expands support of conservation practices and activities
- Balances farm productivity with conservation benefits
- Ensures cost-effective financial assistance for improved soil health, water and air quality, and other natural resource benefits
- Encourages entry into farming through increased access for young, beginning, veteran, and underrepresented farmers
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- **Raises financial assistance cap for organic producers** to $140,000
- **New incentive contracts** enrollment option to address priority resource concerns
- **Facilitates an advance payment option** for historically underserved producers
- **Authorizes direct program assistance to irrigation districts**, including acequias and other entities, for purposes of improving water use efficiencies
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities
- Authorizes contract extensions to facilitate renewals
- Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production
- Public lands that are an integral part of a producer's operation and they can demonstrate effective control are now eligible
- Grassland Conservation Initiative created
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

• Authorizes ‘Buy-Protect-Sell’ transactions

• Requires a conservation plan for highly erodible land that will be protected by an agricultural land easement

• Increases flexibility for partners to meet cost-share matching requirements

• Identifies water quality as a program purpose for enrollment of wetland reserve easements

• Expands wetland types eligible for restoration and management under wetland reserve easements
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **Simplifies funding authorities** for program implementation
- **Authorizes Regional Conservation Partnership Program contracts** rather than requiring enrollment through other program authorities
- **Expands flexibility for alternative funding arrangements** with partners
- **Expands availability of watershed program authorities to projects outside critical conservation areas**
FB 2018 Other Programs

Strengthens conservation assistance framework through support for—

- Conservation Innovation Grants
- Technical Service Providers
- Veteran Farmers
- Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program
- Conservation Compliance for Highly Erodible Lands and Wetlands
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program
FB 2018 Requests for Comment

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