



Chairman Robert Aderholt

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup – FY 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
April 19, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared

You have before you the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill and report for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies as reported by the Subcommittee on April 13. When the Subcommittee met, the bill passed by voice vote and with much praise for the bipartisan nature of the legislation.

I want to thank the Ranking Member for his cooperative spirit and all of his work, and that of his staff, to bring this bill to the Committee today. During his last full committee markup of the agriculture appropriations bill, I want to once again recognize his tireless work on behalf of American agriculture, rural communities, and the hungry here and abroad. Mr. Farr, you will be sorely missed.

I also want to express my appreciation to all of our Subcommittee members for participating in our hearings, sharing their ideas and concerns, and helping to develop the bill. Of course, none of this would be possible without Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, and their commitment to a regular annual appropriations process.

The overall total for both discretionary and mandatory programs in this bill equals \$147.7 billion. This is \$2.3 billion below the President's request and \$7.2 billion above the FY16 enacted level. The bill includes \$21.3 billion in discretionary budget authority, which is \$451 million lower than the FY16 enacted level and \$281 million below the President's budget request. The mandatory funds in this bill support USDA's farm, conservation, crop insurance, and nutrition programs.

The bill focuses investments in programs that bolster U.S. agriculture, support rural communities, maintain food and drug safety, ensure sound markets, and provide nutrition for children, families, and seniors at home and abroad. The bill also targets funding to national programs that have the most benefit to the American people and the U.S. economy, while reducing inefficient, wasteful, or lower-priority programs and agencies.

I would like to briefly mention a few highlights of the bill:

We provide a total of \$2.85 billion for agricultural research – the highest level ever. We received broad support from members and the public for the land-grant colleges and universities. We were able to provide targeted increases for a select number of research programs. In particular, we provide a total of \$375 million, a \$25 million increase over the FY16 enacted level, for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – USDA's premier competitive research grant program.

We provide \$931 million for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – an increase of \$36.4 million above last year and \$29.6 million above the President's budget. This agency is on the frontline, working to eradicate plant and animal diseases and keep invasive pests out of the country.

The bill provides an estimated \$1.69 billion for the Farm Service Agency. We also fully fund the various farm loan programs that will reach approximately 40,000 farmers and ranchers, including those just starting out for the first time.

For the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we provide \$855 million to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest land owners to conserve and protect their land, and \$12 million for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

As I noted in our Subcommittee markup, many of us come from rural districts. I know firsthand that rural parts of the country face unique challenges. As such, we provide a total of nearly \$2.9 billion for rural development programs. This represents an increase of \$113 million above the FY16 enacted level. We include funding to support \$920 million in business and industry loans, \$1.25 billion in loans for rural water and waste programs, and \$6.9 billion for rural electric and telephone infrastructure. We also provide \$1 billion for the single family direct loan program, \$1.4 billion for rental assistance, and \$30 million for the Mutual and Self-Help program.

As you know, this bill includes both discretionary and mandatory funding for USDA's food and nutrition programs. Specifically, it provides \$6.35 billion for the Women, Infants, and Children program and \$79.7 billion in required mandatory funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The bill provides \$23.2 billion for child nutrition programs, including the annual allocation of \$25 million for school meals equipment grants.

I also want to clarify that the bill provides full funding as requested for the Summer Food Service Program at \$628 million. The bill provides an additional \$21 million to continue the Summer EBT pilot program. I would emphasize that Summer EBT is a pilot program, and there is no reduction in the traditional Summer Food Program.

To support those in need in places like South Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and the Central African Republic, the bill provides \$1.87 billion for overseas food aid. I'm pleased to report we were able to provide level funding for Food for Peace grants and for the McGovern-Dole education and child nutrition program.

The Food and Drug Administration receives \$2.75 billion in discretionary funding in this bill. When the user fees are included, FDA will receive \$4.81 billion in FY17. Within the total, the Committee provides increases of \$33.2 million for food safety activities and \$9.4 million for medical product safety activities. The bill also provides a one-time increase of \$10 million, which allows FDA to spend its available funding reserves on the more urgent needs of the Zika virus and then use these new funds to support the remaining needs associated with Ebola or other emergency outbreak activities.

The bill provides \$250 million for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and provides savings for out-of-control leasing costs. This level maintains the previous increase the agency received and it still represents an increase of 123 percent since the collapse of the nation's financial markets in 2008.

The Subcommittee members worked very hard to incorporate the funding priorities of those on both sides of the aisle. Thank you for your attention and I ask for your full support of this bipartisan legislation. I look forward to reporting this bill to the House today.

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