

TO: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
The Honorable Bryan Steil, Chairman
Committee on House Administration

FROM: The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture

DATE:

SUBJECT: Authorization and Oversight Plan for the House Committee on
Agriculture for the 118th Congress

This authorization and oversight plan is filed pursuant to Rule X, clause 2(d)(1) of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 118th Congress. This plan was prepared in consultation with the Ranking Member and was presented to the full Committee for its consideration.

The Committee and its Subcommittees expect to exercise appropriate oversight activity with regard to the issues listed below. In general, the Committee intends to identify programs that are inefficient, duplicative, outdated or more appropriately administered by State or local governments for possible consolidation or elimination. In addition to the list below, the Committee will conduct any other general oversight as appropriate and necessary. The Committee will consult, as appropriate, with other Committees of the House that may share subject matter interest.

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
118TH CONGRESS
AUTHORIZATION AND OVERSIGHT PLAN**

The Committee expects to exercise appropriate oversight activity with regard to the following issues:

2018 FARM BILL AND CURRENT AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS:

- Review the current state of the U.S. farm economy;
- Review the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) implementation of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review programs for waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement;
- Review the state of credit conditions and availability in rural America;
- Review the effect of weather conditions on crop production;
- Review of the market situation, including effect of crop reports and projections;
- Review USDA’s implementation of the U.S. Grain Standards and U.S. Warehouse Acts;
- Review how Administrative Pay-Go is affecting Department actions;

- Review discretionary actions by USDA that are not directly authorized by legislation, including the Secretary’s use of the Commodity Credit Corporation; and
- Review the National Appeals Division (NAD) at USDA.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

- Review the regulatory activities of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and how such activities effect agricultural productivity, including EPA’s regulations under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Clean Air Act (CAA);
- Review EPA grant program activities that impact agriculture;
- Review the effect of regulatory activities carried out pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or any proposed legislative changes to such Act, on agricultural producers;
- Review the effect of the Administration’s regulatory activity regarding crop protection tools on production of agriculture in the U.S.;
- Review regulatory activities by the Securities and Exchange Commission, specifically the Rules to Enhance and Standardize Climate-Related Disclosures for Investors and how such activities effect agriculture producers;
- Review budget and program activities of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);
- Review implementation of all of USDA’s conservation programs;
- Review USDA’s implementation of the conservation compliance provisions in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review ongoing discussions and potential consequences for American agriculture under the United Nations Climate Change Conference;
- Review EPA’s implementation of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act of 2022 (PRIA V), and the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA);
- Review EPA’s regulation of Animal Feeding Operations; and
- Review Total Maximum Daily Load strategies and effects on production agriculture.

FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE, COMMODITY POLICY, AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

- Review USDA’s implementation of crop insurance provisions of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review implementation and effectiveness of Commodity Title programs, including the Agriculture Risk Coverage program, the Price Loss Coverage program, and marketing assistance loans;
- Review the role and effectiveness of Federal crop insurance;
- Review the Risk Management Agency’s (RMA) administration and oversight of Federal crop insurance;
- Review the Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA) and the terms and conditions for private sector delivery, including reimbursement rates for Administrative and Operating (A&O) expenses and agent commissions;
- Review the availability of crop insurance as a risk management tool;

- Review the adequacy and availability of risk management tools for the livestock, dairy, and specialty crop industries;
- Review USDA's activities established to identify and reduce crop insurance waste, fraud, and abuse;
- Review USDA's crop insurance rating methodology;
- Review RMA's yield and revenue protection crop insurance products;
- Review RMA's progress in approving crop insurance products for underserved commodities, underserved producers, and underserved regions;
- Review implementation and effectiveness of standing disaster programs including the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) as well as ad hoc disaster assistance programs including the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+), the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), and the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP); and
- Review data sharing between FSA and RMA.

THE U.S. COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION AND THE DERIVATIVES MARKETS:

- Review the general operations of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to provide a reauthorization of the Commission;
- Review enforcement and oversight policies and their implementation by the CFTC;
- Review rulemakings, guidance, and other actions taken by the Commission and its staff for consistency and compliance with the Commodity Exchange Act and Congressional intent;
- Review the impact of emerging commodity markets and financial technologies and examine the authority of the Commission to deter fraud and manipulation, promote market integrity, and protect investors in digital commodity derivatives and at organized digital commodity trading platforms;
- Examine existing and novel derivatives market structures to promote market integrity, support the needs of end-users, and expand access to risk management tools;
- Review the impact of COVID-19 and increasing commodity market volatility on derivatives markets;
- Review international treatment of the U.S. derivatives industry, including market participants and infrastructure; and
- Review the risk-mitigation, resilience, and recovery planning of the Commission, registered entities, and registrants.

AGRICULTURE TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID:

- Review tariff and non-tariff trade barriers currently applied by agricultural product producing countries around the world;
- Review ongoing multilateral, regional, and bilateral trade negotiations and dialogues (including World Trade Organization (WTO) accession agreements) to assess their potential effect on U.S. agriculture;

- Review implementation of existing trade agreements and commitments as well as proposed frameworks, trade agreements and commitments to determine:
 - (1) whether they are consistent with current U.S. law;
 - (2) whether they will promote economic development in rural areas of the U.S.;
 - (3) their effect or potential effect on current production of import sensitive agricultural commodities, and on exports of U.S. agricultural products;
 - (4) their effect or potential effect on the overall competitiveness of the U.S. agricultural sector, including the production, processing and distribution of agricultural products; and
 - (5) whether the agreements provide adequate, enforceable provisions to minimize non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports;
- Monitor existing trade agreements to ensure trading partners are meeting obligations and enforcing trade commitments;
- Review agricultural export programs to determine how well they are promoting the interests of U.S. agriculture and examine proposals to improve, modify or expand such programs;
- Review U.S. food aid programs to determine their effect or potential effect on the reduction of world hunger—particularly the potential effect of trade negotiations on the effectiveness of U.S. food aid programs;
- Review USDA and USAID’s implementation of the Global Food Security Act (GFSA);
- Review the market assessments USDA and USAID use to evaluate the potential impact of U.S. food aid on recipient countries;
- Review USAID’s increasing use of cash-based food aid, including financial controls and impact on resiliency;
- Review monitoring and evaluation activities carried out by USDA and USAID; and
- Review sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) barriers and other technical barriers to U.S. agricultural exports and examine efforts to eliminate such barriers.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND PROMOTION:

- Review USDA’s implementation of research, education and extension programs authorized in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review the administration of the Agricultural Research Service research stations and worksites;
- Review USDA’s foreign animal disease research, training and diagnostic programs at the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility;
- Review USDA’s regulation of organic standards and the collection of organic production and market data;
- Review administration of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA);
- Review the administration of the Agricultural Food Research Initiative and other competitive grant programs;
- Review efforts to leverage Federal research investment with state, local, and private sources of funding;
- Review coordination between ARS, the Economic Research Service (ERS), NIFA and other USDA agencies to prevent duplicative research across the department;

- Evaluate the current mix of research funding mechanisms to ensure maximum benefits from these investments to producers, processors and consumers;
- Review administration of USDA’s marketing and promotion programs;
- Review coordination between USDA and the Department of Energy on carbon sequestration and energy research programs;
- Review the sufficiency of research funding under ARS, ERS, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and NIFA;
- Review ARS, ERS, NASS and NIFA national program priorities;
- Review activities funded by the Biomass Research and Development Act (BRDA) and input from the external BRDA Advisory Board; and
- Conduct oversight of the research grant process to coordinate and prevent overlapping research.

BIOTECHNOLOGY:

- Review current regulations and research regarding animal and plant biotechnology;
- Review the Administration’s efforts to modernize the regulatory framework for genetically engineered animals;
- Assess USDA’s efforts to develop and promote the benefits of biotechnology for increasing agricultural productivity and combating hunger globally; and
- Review USDA’s implementation of biotechnology labeling standards.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE ADMINISTRATION:

- Review the U.S. Forest Service’s (USFS) strategy for dealing with wildfire, including the effect of hazardous fuels management, forest health efforts and fire preparedness;
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the USFS fire management program;
- Review the effect of fire expenses on other USFS program delivery;
- Assess the USFS strategy for timber harvesting on federal lands;
- Review effects of environmental regulations on National Forest land management;
- Review economic effects of National Forest land management on rural communities;
- Review USFS efforts to utilize public-private partnerships that promote active forest management and forest health;
- Review the impact of invasive species and disease on forests and landscapes;
- Review USFS efforts to promote utilization of National Forest biomass for renewable energy purposes; and
- Review USFS’s management tools contained in the Farm Bill and other recent legislation.

DAIRY:

- Review USDA’s implementation of the dairy risk management provisions in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review options to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of dairy programs; and

- Review the effectiveness of the federal milk marketing order system.

OUTREACH AND CIVIL RIGHTS:

- Review the operations of the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement;
- Review of the operations of the office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights;
- Review USDA’s process for evaluating and settling discrimination claims; and
- Review the current status of the Agricultural Census and efforts to reach undercounted farmers and ranchers.

USDA GENERAL ADMINISTRATION:

- Review confidentiality of information provided to USDA by agricultural producers;
- Review USDA’s implementation of field office consolidation for the purpose of effectively and efficiently delivering commodity, conservation, energy and rural development programs;
- Review USDA’s current staffing plan and related infrastructure;
- Review USDA’s efforts to modernize its Information Technology (IT) systems; and
- Review the administrative structure of USDA for effectiveness and efficiency.

FARM CREDIT, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE RURAL ECONOMY:

- Review the Farm Credit Administration’s (FCA) regulatory program and activities regarding the Farm Credit System (FCS) to assure its safety and soundness;
- Review the activities and programs of the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (also referred to as Farmer Mac);
- Review FSA’s direct and guaranteed loan programs and graduation efforts;
- Review the Rural Electrification Act (REA);
- Review the farm economy and access to credit;
- Review access to essential utility services in rural America;
- Review implementation of rural development policies and authorities contained in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 and the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act;
- Conduct oversight of the USDA’s rural broadband programs;
- Review technology, processes, and controls at Rural Development to increase program access, improve application evaluation, and speed application decisions;
- Conduct oversight of the implementation of USDA’s telecommunications programs;
- Assess the state of rural water systems and effectiveness of federal funding to build and upgrade those systems;
- Assess the effectiveness of USDA programs targeted toward rural infrastructure, business needs, and job creation;
- Review agricultural lending practices;
- Review public-private partnerships in lending through guaranteed loans;
- Review the definition of “rural” under rural development programs;
- Review USDA’s programs to support rural access to health care and health services;

- Review USDA Rural Development’s use of the funding provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, the American Rescue Plan, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act;
- Review rural development loan programs and default rates; and
- Review the success of rural development programs in persistent poverty areas.

ENERGY:

- Assess energy programs authorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018;
- Review availability of agriculture and forestry feedstocks for renewable energy production;
- Review current status of research on energy crops and feedstocks;
- Review current provisions in existing law that support agriculture-based energy production and use;
- Review USDA’s biofuel initiatives;
- Review implementation of the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS); and
- Review renewable fuel programs and their effect on agriculture.

USDA FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS:

- Review food and nutrition programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), fruit, vegetable, and dairy initiatives, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) program, and other commodity distribution programs;
- Review household eligibility criteria for SNAP;
- Review the interaction between SNAP and other low-income assistance programs;
- Review the efficiency and accountability of the SNAP Employment & Training program;
- Review educational initiatives such as SNAP-Ed and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP);
- Review efforts by USDA and the states to promote program integrity and combat error, fraud, and abuse within nutrition programs;
- Review efforts by USDA to promote technology improvements and encourage innovation in the electronic benefits transfer system;
- Review efforts by state SNAP administrators to modernize and streamline their programs; and
- Review the implementation and impact of the National Accuracy Clearinghouse.

FOOD LOSS AND WASTE:

- Review current activities and future opportunities within USDA programs to reduce food loss and waste.

SPECIALTY CROPS:

- Review implementation of the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act;

- Review the Specialty Crop Block Grant program to ensure the grants awarded are enhancing the specialty crop industry;
- Review the Local Agriculture Market Program and other farmers market programs;
- Review the administration of the IR-4 Project to ensure specialty crop growers have access to the latest innovations in crop protection; and
- Review the Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

FOOD SAFETY:

- Review USDA’s administration of meat, poultry, and egg product inspection laws to ensure the maintenance of scientifically sound systems for food safety assurance;
- Review USDA’s efforts to educate consumers regarding safe food handling practices and streamline the assessment and approval of food safety technologies;
- Review development and implementation of new protocols for meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood safety inspection that promote scientific and technological innovation;
- Review USDA’s response to litigation regarding the implementation of food safety inspection programs;
- Review rulemaking concerning the Food Safety Modernization Act and the impact those rules have on production agriculture in the U.S.; and
- Review the mechanisms to establish scientifically based international food safety standards.

PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH:

- Review USDA’s implementation and enforcement of the Plant Protection Act, Animal Health Protection Act, and Animal Welfare Act;
- Review U.S. animal health threats and related prevention and response capabilities including animal health programs established in the 2018 Farm Bill;
- Assess federal efforts to reduce threats to plant health due to invasive species;
- Review implementation and effectiveness of cooperative plant health programs, including Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention and the Clean Plant Network;
- Review efforts to reduce and resolve livestock predation, conflicts between wildlife and people, and wildlife damage; and
- Review USDA’s efforts to modernize animal disease traceability.

LIVESTOCK MARKETING:

- Review USDA’s implementation of the Packers and Stockyards Act including the promulgation of new rules under such act;
- Review the implementation of USDA efforts to enhance market transparency including the cattle contracts library pilot program;
- Review USDA efforts to diversify and increase processing capacity; and
- Review and reauthorize USDA’s livestock mandatory reporting program.

HOMELAND AND AGRICULTURAL SECURITY:

- Examine USDA’s preparedness against terrorist threats to production agriculture;
- Review cooperative efforts between the Department of Homeland Security and USDA to protect against foreign animal disease;
- Review agricultural inspection activities under the Department of Homeland Security; and
- Review implementation of the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act and related oversight of foreign investments in U.S. agricultural land.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Review the effects of sequestration on USDA operations and programs;
- Review the cost and impact of appropriations and programming related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as funding and programming found in the Inflation Reduction Act; and
- Review the effect of transportation infrastructure issues on agriculture and forestry;

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER COMMITTEES TO REDUCE DUPLICATION:

- With Natural Resources on forestry issues, ESA issues and other public land issues;
- With Science, Space, and Technology on research;
- With Ways and Means and Education and the Workforce on nutrition programs;
- With Ways and Means on tax and trade issues;
- With Homeland Security on biodefense, cybersecurity, and border inspection and security measures related to agriculture;
- With Armed Services on global and military food security;
- With Judiciary on immigrant agricultural labor;
- With Energy and Commerce on food safety, biomass energy, and broadband programs, both existing and new;
- With Transportation and Infrastructure on certain Clean Water Act compliance issues, livestock hauling, and food aid delivery;
- With Financial Services on Dodd-Frank Act and emerging financial technology issues;
- With Foreign Affairs on food aid and trade issues;
- With Small Business on addressing economic opportunities for rural America; and
- Any other committee as appropriate.

AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE 118TH CONGRESS

Most of the programs and authorities under the purview of the House Committee on Agriculture are reauthorized every five years through the Farm Bill. The current Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2023. During the 118th Congress, the Committee intends to conduct a thorough review of all Farm Bill programs culminating in the reauthorization of

the Farm Bill. Farm Bill preparation will begin with hearings, both in Washington and in the field, to hear from producers and USDA about how the programs are working. Although dependent on timing in the Senate, it is the Committee's goal to reauthorize the Farm Bill before it expires.

Though historically not part of the Farm Bill negotiations, the Livestock Mandatory Reporting (LMR) program is also set to expire on September 30, 2023. This authority has been subject to several short-term extensions during the 117th Congress and the Committee remains committed to the reauthorization of this program to give much needed certainty to the livestock industry.

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission was last reauthorized in 2008, and that authorization lapsed in 2013. Since then, the House Committee on Agriculture has produced and reported four separate reauthorization bills, three of which have passed the House. During the 118th Congress, the Committee again intends to conduct a thorough review of the Commission's operations and authorities, culminating in a legislative package reauthorizing the Commission. With the engagement and cooperation of the Senate, the Committee's goal is to reauthorize the Commission before the end of the 118th Congress.

**AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
119TH CONGRESS**

The U.S. Grain Standards Act is slated to expire on September 30, 2025. The Committee fully intends to reauthorize the program in a timely manner.