

The farm bill is an extensive, omnibus piece of legislation that is reauthorized roughly every five years. 'Farm bill' is really a misnomer, because although the legislation does contain a number of provisions that are critical to **family farmers', ranchers', and fruit and vegetable growers' economic success**, more than 75 percent of the bill's funding is allocated for nutrition assistance for the underprivileged, both in the United States and abroad.

Much of the remaining provisions relate to rural business development, incentives for renewable energy production, and protection of our country's most precious natural resources. So, above all, the farm bill is really a food, energy and jobs bill, and all consumers, farmers and rural Americans have a responsibility to be engaged in the farm bill debate.



- **Pass the farm bill before it expires on Sept. 30, 2012.** Thirty-seven programs vital to the rural American economy will end after this date. Although a temporary extension of the farm bill is better than no farm bill at all, an extension poses many problems and the longer Congress waits, the more difficult it will be to craft a strong bill.
- **Farmers, just like any other small business, need certainty.** Long-term government policies that protect against low yields, price volatility and high input costs are needed so that they can craft effective business plans and provide confidence to bankers in order to lend to farmers.
- **Pass legislation that would retroactively authorize disaster programs [Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)] for losses suffered in 2012.** The severe drought plaguing U.S. agriculture necessitates that these disaster programs be included in the farm bill.

WWW.NFU.ORG/FARMBILL

Contact: Chandler Goule, NFU vice president of government relations, cgoule@nfdc.org