



May 22, 2023

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chair
House Agriculture Committee

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of the below organizations representing leaders in the agriculture, food, and charitable food sectors, together we urge Congress to consider our shared principles for the agriculture and nutrition titles in the 2023 Farm Bill.

We are [Farmers Feed America](#). Our diverse coalition represents a cross section of the nation’s agricultural growers and producers, along with the Feeding America nationwide network of 200 food banks that help distribute food to more than 46 million people through pantries, shelters and other community- and faith-based organizations.

Our nation’s farmers pride themselves on producing the safest and highest-quality food in the world, and they also believe in helping neighbors facing hunger. For decades, the farm bill has created pathways for farmers and others in the food supply chain to take their surplus product—created by supply chain or other disruptions or excess production—and connect this nutritious food with individuals and families facing hunger.

With that in mind, the members of our coalition came together to meet this moment with our partners and supporters in the federal government and help ensure our neighbors facing hunger can access the food they need to thrive. Farmers Feed America is working today to tackle the challenges of tomorrow by advocating for the shared principles below. These principles are aimed at bolstering our nation’s food resilience, meeting the continued needs of communities, and enhancing markets for farmers and ranchers and

communities throughout this country. We urge Congress to consider them ahead of the 2023 Farm Bill.

- The farm bill represents a historic alliance between the interests of the nation's agricultural growers and producers with hunger-relief advocates. The legislation is designed to connect agricultural supply with demand. It bolsters the nation's food security by supporting farmers as well as reducing hunger in our population. The farm bill is stronger when it includes robust agriculture and nutrition titles; **we urge Congress to continue this balance.**
- Since the 1930s, Congress and USDA have used funding flexibility provided through Commodity Credit Corporation and Section 32 authority to increase domestic consumption of U.S.-grown agriculture products. USDA has also used selective procurement to mitigate market disruption by connecting people facing hunger with surplus farm production. **We urge Congress to maintain that flexibility so that it can be used to address trade, pandemic, and other economic disruptions in years to come.**
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) serves multiple vital functions. TEFAP provides a key market for domestic producers, a relief valve for farmers during times of oversupply, and free emergency food assistance for individuals and families with low incomes. **We urge Congress to strengthen TEFAP by providing sufficient funding to keep up with rising demand and costs and ensure that hard-to-reach areas, including rural areas, have access to nutritious foods.**
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused supply chain disruptions and increased the need for emergency food assistance and the need for flexibility in procurement. Local purchases have many benefits, including increasing the farmer's share of the food dollar, lowering transportation and processing costs for food banks, and improving commodity delivery lead times. More flexible procurement helps ensure responsiveness in the face of supply chain disruptions. **We urge USDA and USDA to be as flexible, nimble, quick, and responsive as possible in its procurement processes.**

In 2022, Feeding America provided more than 5.2 billion meals to Americans in need – including 1.6 billion meals from food retail donations, 695 million meals donated by farmers and growers, 575 meals from food manufacturers, and an additional 937 million purchased meals. As long as there is the need, we should build capacity to harness the power of collaboration between the food supply chain and USDA to address food insecurity in these ways – with the ultimate goal of ending hunger once and for all.

Thank you for your consideration of these principles as you write the next farm bill. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for further clarification. We would also appreciate the opportunity to meet with you either virtually or in person.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
Consumer Brands Association
Feeding America
FMI
International Dairy Foods Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
North American Blueberry Council
United States Sweet Potato Council