

2012 Farm Bill will revitalize rural America and make much needed updates to agriculture policy

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Tim Walz, a member of the House Agriculture Committee, voted to bring the 2012 Farm Bill to the House floor for consideration by the full chamber. The bill passed through committee with a bipartisan vote of 35-11.

“With the current Farm Bill set to expire at the end of September, we owe it to our farmers, ranchers, and those who rely on agriculture production, to enact a new farm bill before October to avoid the uncertainty that comes with extensions or lame duck action.” **said Walz.** “While this bill is not perfect, Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Cantor should bring the Farm Bill forward immediately so we can move to the next step, a conference with the Senate to resolve the differences between the two bills. This will allow us to bring forward a bipartisan, bicameral agreement to send to the President for his signature before October.”

“I’m especially concerned about the draconian cuts to families who need assistance to put food on the table,” **Walz continued.** “Many times these folks have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and rely on these programs to feed their families until they’re back on their feet. Americans don’t want a handout, just a hand-up in times of need. This hand-up should not be taken away from families who need it, which is why I voted for amendments that would restore much of this funding.”

The 2012 Farm Bill that passed through committee today includes many provisions Walz introduced, including:

- Legislation that will make it easier for young adults to take up farming and ranching operations and agriculture entrepreneurship.

- Legislation the will increase energy access in rural America, improving efficiency and reducing overhead costs for farmers and small businesses.

- Legislation that will ensure farmers have the flexibility to grow a wide array of crops without penalty or fear of losing insurance.

- Legislation that will work to save taxpayer dollars, conserve critical wildlife habitat, while still allowing farmers to manage their lands as they see fit.

- Legislation that will help to ensure we keep shipping costs low by directing the Secretary of Agriculture to participate in the activities of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) on behalf of the interests of agriculture and rural America.

In addition, the new Farm Bill streamlines many programs at the USDA to cut down on unnecessary paperwork and regulations for farmers while increasing the Department's efficiency. It eases access to lines of credit to ensure farmers who want to grow and expand their business have the tools necessary to do so. And it reforms out-of-date dairy policy and strengthens crop insurance to protect taxpayers while also ensuring farmers won't literally lose the farm if disaster strikes.

Walz believes that it's important to give certainty to rural America by passing a new, long term Farm Bill before the current one expires at the end of September. That is why last March he led a group of 38 of his colleagues in sending a [letter to House leadership](#) calling on them to pass a new farm bill in 2012.

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