



Boozman Bulletin: Certainty for Arkansas Agricultural Producers

I was proud to support the 2018 Farm Bill that Congress sent to President Trump's desk.

Our farmers and ranchers have been dealing with low commodity prices, high input costs, volatile weather events and an uncertain trade environment. The last thing they need is continued uncertainty that would only intensify if we failed to see this through to the finish line. That is why we worked hard, in a bipartisan manner, to reach consensus on a final version that will deliver for Arkansans and all those who earn their livelihood in the agricultural economy, protect key risk management tools and maintain strong farm policy for producers of all stripes.

This legislation reauthorizes nearly every program housed under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, including commodity programs; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; rural development loans and grants, including rural broadband; forestry; trade promotion; international food aid; research; livestock; and horticulture, among others.



[Watch my floor speech about the importance of this bill to Arkansas](#)

Here are what Arkansas agricultural groups are saying about the Farm Bill:

Andrew Grobmyer, Executive Vice President of the Agricultural Council of Arkansas:

“We thank Senator Boozman and Congressmen Rick Crawford and Bruce Westerman for their efforts as farm bill conferees, and we are very pleased to see this measure nearing completion. We cannot stress enough the importance of the farm bill and the need for it among Arkansas farmers. Right now, there is nothing in place as the previous law has expired, and the agriculture economy, especially the row crop segment, is struggling mightily.

A farm bill with meaningful support is critical in preventing significant harm to Arkansas farms. In addition to the farms, there are many other Arkansas businesses with direct and indirect connections to agriculture that are suffering in this rough ag economy. Simply put, the downturn in prices we've seen in recent years and recent months with trade dispute impacts has cut deeply into the cash flow of many farms and businesses in Arkansas.”

Randy Veach, President of the Arkansas Farm Bureau:

“We are pleased that Congress has recognized how important a new farm bill is to the hard-working farmers and ranchers of this country and we are grateful they have come together to pass this critical legislation before the new year. While this bill may not have everything we were hoping for, it will provide much-needed financial protections and allow access to funds for livestock producers. It also has a solid conservation program and will allow us to continue to promote our agricultural products to other countries.”

Jeff Rutledge, Rice Farmer, Newport Arkansas, Chairman, Arkansas Rice Federation:

“We are extremely pleased to see progress in the final stages of a farm bill that provides some certainty in such a variable agricultural climate. Senator Boozman’s advocacy on behalf of Arkansas producers cannot be overstated and our family farms will continue to benefit from his leadership for years to come.”

Joe Mencer, Rice Farmer, Lake Village Arkansas, Chairman, USA Rice Farmers:

“We greatly appreciate Senator Boozman going to bat for rice farmers and the entire agriculture industry. Revisions to the definition of actively engaged to help preserve family farms as well as timing of the sequester deduction are certainly beneficial and largely due to his leadership.”

Cody Burkham, Executive Vice President of the Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association:

“The Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association is thrilled at the recent progression of the 2018 Farm Bill. We are particularly pleased to see authorization for a new Foot-and-Mouth Disease Vaccine (FMD) bank included in the conference report. This FMD bank will provide a critical safety net for cattle producers and rural economies in Arkansas and across the nation should an outbreak occur. We are grateful for Senator Boozman’s leadership on the Senate Agriculture Committee and his support for Arkansas cattle producers.”

Quick Takes:

- **Holding VA Accountable:** A provision in the Forever GI Bill that Congress passed last year included an increase in housing stipend rates. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has inadequately implemented this provision resulting in missed or underpaid benefits. I'm [leading efforts to ensure veterans receive their full housing benefit](#) and called on the VA's Inspector General to [investigate allegations](#) that the department would not reimburse veterans who have been shortchanged. We must hold the VA accountable and provide veterans their full benefits.
- **Securing Funding for Arkansas Road Projects:** Congress approved, with my support, funding for the Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program which funds nationally and regionally significant projects. I helped secure funding for two Arkansas projects; the [Arkansas/Missouri connector](#) and the [Hot Springs Bypass extension](#). These projects will strengthen economic growth and enhance quality of life in the region.
- **Supporting our Allies** – I recently traveled with a bipartisan, bicameral group of Members of Congress to Canada to participate in the Halifax International Security Forum. We sent a strong message of support for democracies and democratic values around the world as well as our continued commitment to NATO and our allies. The need for [a strong NATO continues to be important](#).
- **Recognizing Arkansas Veterans:** The 'Salute to Veterans' series honors the service and sacrifice of Arkansas veterans who served our nation in uniform. In the latest edition, I recognized [Vietnam veteran Kenneth Ziemer](#). He served as a pharmacy specialist in Nha Trang, Vietnam as a member of the 523rd Field Hospital. One of his favorite things to do while off-duty was to visit the local orphanage. He was passionate about continuing to help the children and missionaries in the area so he took Vietnamese lessons in hopes of returning to work with them after his service was complete. His interview will be submitted to the Veterans History Project.
- **Connect on Social Media:** Stay up to date with what I'm doing for Arkansans via social media. You can find me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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