



## **ASA Priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill May 25, 2022**

As the House and Senate Agriculture Committees lay the foundation for the 2023 Farm Bill, the American Soybean Association shares these initial priorities which will be further refined into more specific requests by early 2023. These priorities reflect feedback gathered from 12 virtual farm bill listening sessions held this year, an in-depth farm bill survey administered to soybean growers in late 2021, and current policy resolutions.

### General

- Increased budget authority for the next farm bill is justified in this current environment marked by economic and geopolitical volatility. Additional resources are needed to address needs and interests throughout this comprehensive piece of legislation.
- Congress should maintain the agricultural and nutrition titles in the next farm bill.
- Review of USDA staffing, technological capabilities and cybersecurity, and pathways for knowledge transfer should occur to ensure readiness for farm bill implementation. Gaps should be prioritized to receive appropriations or farm bill implementation funding.
- Policy should support innovation in data collection, data analysis, and internal data sharing between USDA agencies, while emphasizing the confidentiality and nonpublic disclosure of individual producer data.

### Farm Safety Net

- Crop insurance is the most effective and important component of the farm safety net and must remain affordable.
- The Title I farm safety net components of Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must be improved for soybeans. Strong consideration should be given to increasing the soy reference price combined with an option for farmers to update base acres. Planting flexibility must be maintained.
- Marketing assistance loans must be maintained, and consideration should be given to increasing marketing loan rates.
- Program eligibility should not be restricted through means testing.
- As a condition of receiving Title I and crop insurance benefits, farmers are required to meet specific environmental standards such as protecting water quality, wetlands or soil health. These should be maintained but not augmented.
- If a standing disaster assistance program is created, the financial protection provided by Title I programs and crop insurance should not be reduced to fund the disaster program, and it must not undercut or disincentivize participation in crop insurance.

### Conservation

- Conservation programs must remain voluntary, incentive-based and flexible; one size does not fit all. Early adopters must be fully eligible for conservation programs. Regulatory burdens regarding program enrollment and adaptive management should be reduced.

- While all resource concerns are important, funding should be directed to programs and practices that address cropland soil quality and health, water quality and quantity, regulatory certainty and saving input costs. Funding should be directed to working land programs over land retirement programs, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) should take priority over the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres should remain approximately unchanged from current levels. Rental rate limits should remain the same or increase. Haying and grazing provisions should be revisited, both for mid-contract management and under emergency scenarios.
- Climate-smart provisions should reward farmers for overall ecosystem services provided and year-round ground cover, not just additionality. Growing Climate Solutions Act provisions should be included if not already passed.
- Incentives to encourage use of precision agriculture technologies and specialized equipment to implement certain conservation practices should be considered.

#### Trade

- The Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMD) are successful public-private partnerships which are cooperative, cost-share programs between private industry groups representing farmers and USDA. Annual funding should be doubled to \$69 million for FMD and to \$400 million for MAP.
- USDA's export credit guarantee program (GSM-102) and the Facility Guarantee Program (FGP) should continue and be fully utilized.
- International food aid programs should allow for increased flexibility for monetization requirements.

#### Energy

- Authorization and funding for the Bioenergy Program, the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program, and Biobased Market Program (BioPreferred Program) should be included.
- When considering on-farm renewable energy programs, priority should be placed on energy projects that utilize soybeans and other crops.

#### Rural Development

- Statutory authority and funding should be provided for the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program.
- Reliable broadband coverage remains out of reach for many in rural America, yet it is essential for precision agriculture technologies, farm efficiencies and community connectivity. The Broadband-ReConnect program should align with the goals of other broadband programs supported through the bipartisan infrastructure law.

#### Research

- Increased investment should be provided in priority areas strategic to soy interests.

#### Nutrition

- Opportunities to promote soy as a food ingredient should be included.