

ADC: \$2 trillion stimulus package unanimously approved, includes billions for agriculture.

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March 26th, 2020: Last night, a massive stimulus package was unanimously approved by the U.S. Senate, which includes billions in new farm aid. [The legislation](#) is the most substantial legislative action taken to address the rapidly intensifying coronavirus situation and the largest emergency aid package in U.S. history.

The 883 page bill outlines a \$2 trillion economic rescue package and provides billions to replenish the Agriculture Department's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) authority. It also earmarks dollars for local agriculture and livestock and specialty crop producers, and includes funding for rural hospitals, direct payments to Americans and assistance for small businesses. The spending authority allows the USDA to make additional Market Facilitation Program (MFP) payments, which we've previously seen to mitigate trade tariffs and sluggish exports.

The breakdown of the stimulus package in terms of agriculture includes:

- \$14 billion to the CCC (capped annually at \$30 billion)
- \$9.5 billion to livestock and specialty crops (which includes dairy producers)

Other agricultural elements of the bill include:

- \$15.5 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as an increase in demand is projected
- \$8.8 billion for child nutrition programs.
- \$450 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, or TEFAP (funds food distribution to food banks)
- \$100 million for additional rural broadband grants through USDA's ReConnect program.
- \$33 million to the Food Safety and Inspection Service to cover the cost of

temporary and intermittent workers, relocation of inspectors and overtime costs.

- \$25 million for the Rural Utilities Service to support telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas.
- \$4 million to cover the cost of repatriating Foreign Agricultural Service staff.

According to the USDA, CCC funds are utilized to implement specific programs established by Congress as well as to carry out activities under the broad authorities of the CCC Charter Act. The main programs of the CCC include:

- Domestic farm income, price support and conservation programs under various statutes including the Agricultural Act of 2014;
- Foreign market development and other international activities of the Department of Agriculture under several statutes including the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978;
- Activities of the United States Agency for International Development under Title II of the Food For Peace Act.

ADC CEO, Laurie Fischer, expressed more work is still needed to help farmers, by stating, "This assistance will be helpful but it is not enough. The future of the dairy industry is at risk. The industry has lost an estimated 2.85 billion dollars over the last 5 weeks- a direct loss of income for dairy producers. Our nation's dairy farmers, who are providing essential food for consumers during this unprecedented time, must be a top priority to receive assistance from the government so they can continue to feed the nation."

Additional aspects of the bill include \$250 billion for direct cash assistance payments to individuals and families, \$350 billion in small business loans, \$250 billion in unemployment benefits, and \$500 billion in loans for distressed companies. Also, \$130 billion will be allocated to hospitals and another \$150 to state and local governments that are being heavily impacted by the coronavirus. The bill will now head to the House for vote on Friday.