



Farm Bill Facts for The United States

Population: 299,398,484 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006)

Hunger and Poverty in the United States

Hunger

- Approximately 11.3% of households in the United States are hungry or at risk of hunger*. (Economic Research Service, USDA, 2006, 3 year average)
- 12% of rural households in the United States experience hunger. (Economic Research Service, USDA, 2005)

Poverty

- About 12.7% of people in the United States live in poverty, including 14.4% of its rural population. (Economic Research Service, USDA, 2004)

Farm Bill Nutrition Program Usage in the United States

Food Stamp Program

- The average monthly Food Stamp benefit per participant in the United States is \$94.31, equaling \$1.05 per meal.
- In the United States, 26,671,819 people receive food stamp benefits each month.
(Both Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 2006 preliminary data)
- 65% of eligible people in the United States participate in the Food Stamp program. (Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 2005)

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

- In the United States, 462,349 people are served by the Commodity Supplemental Food Program annually. (Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 2006)

* The U.S. Department of Agriculture has reclassified food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger as "low food security" and "very low food security." The methodology for measuring food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger has not changed. Cross comparisons can still be made between years.

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Agriculture in the United States Economy

Role in the United States Economy

- 6% of the United States rural population is employed in farming; 12% is employed in manufacturing and 56% is employed in services. *(Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004)*
- The value of agricultural exports from the United States is \$62.4 billion, while the value of agricultural imports is \$57.7 billion. *(Economic Research Service, USDA based on FY 2005 data)*
- The value of specialty crop sales in the United States is \$49.9 billion, compared to the \$53 billion generated by the major crops receiving commodity payments. *(Economic Research Service, USDA, 2005)*
- There are 2,128,982 farms in the United States. This number has remained stable over the last 15 years. Between 1992-1997, the net loss of farms was .7%[°]. *(2002 USDA Census of Agriculture and Economic Research Service, USDA 2006)*
- In the United States, 59% of farms receive less than \$10,000 in sales, 26% receive between \$10,000 and \$99,999 in sales, 11% receive between \$100,000 and \$499,999, and 3% farms receive \$500,000 or more in sales. *(2002 USDA Census of Agriculture)*
- Farms with annual sales of \$500,000 or more account for 45% of U.S. agricultural production. *(Economic Research Service, USDA, 2003)*
- The median income of farming households is \$47,620. The average farming household in the United States has consistently earned more than the average non-farming household since 1996. *(Economic Research Service, USDA, 2005)*
- In 2002, 683,000 of farming households, or 33%, reported neither operator nor spouse working off of the farm. *(Economic Research Service, USDA, 2002)*

Federal Support of Agriculture in the United States

Commodity Payments

- Of the 2,128,982 farms in the United States, 707,596, or 33%, receive commodity payments. *(Environmental Working Group, Compiled from 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture)*
- In 2005, farmers in the United States received a total of \$14.3 billion in commodity payments. *(Environmental Working Group, Compiled from USDA data, 2005)*
- In 2005, the top 10% of U.S. farms receiving commodity payments received 66% of total payments, with an average payment of \$90,599, while the bottom 80% of farms receiving commodity payments received 17% of those payments, with an average payment of \$2,985. *(Environmental Working Group, Compiled from USDA data, 2005)*
- In 2003 and 2004, the three crops that received the most commodity payments in United States were corn (\$7.3 billion), cotton (\$3.6 billion), and wheat (\$2.7 billion).
(Environmental Working Group, Compiled from USDA data. Amounts reflect total Direct Payments, Countercyclical Payments, and Loan Deficiency Payments received in 2003 and 2004)

Policy Implications

- Of the 2.7 million farm households in 2004, 38,097, or 1.46% would potentially be excluded from receiving commodity payments by reducing the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) cap to \$200,000. *(Economic Research Service, USDA, 2004)*
- Implementation of a proposed \$250,000 limit on commodity payments would impact an estimated 387 payment recipients nationally. *(Environmental Working Group, Compiled from USDA data, 2005)*

[°] A farm is defined by USDA as "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products (crops and livestock) were sold or normally would have been sold during the year under consideration."

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