



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG
SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC HEALTH

Section B: The 2008 Farm Bill and Public Health

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Overview

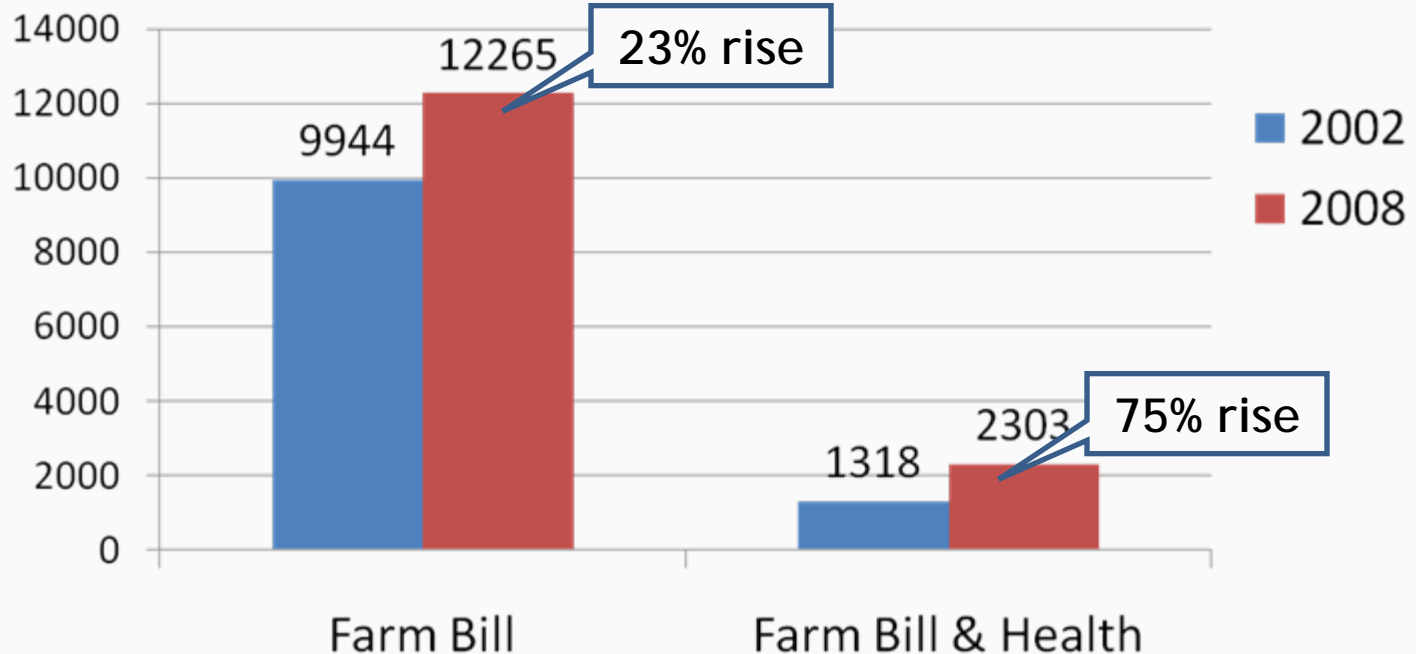
- Goal: To provide an overview of the 2008 Farm Bill from a public health point of view
- Public health in the process
 - Public health advocacy
 - Use of public health concepts
- Key changes in the farm bill
- Onwards to building a public health constituency for food and farm advocacy

History: The Farm Bill and Public Health

- Not much!
- Historically driven by agricultural interests
- Farm bill strategy: finding allies
 - For example, the Food Stamp Program brings urban legislators on board
- Some entrance in recent farm bills by other advocates, particularly environmental

Media Coverage

- Newspaper articles mentioning “Farm Bill” in text vs. those mentioning *both* “Farm Bill” and “health,” 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills*



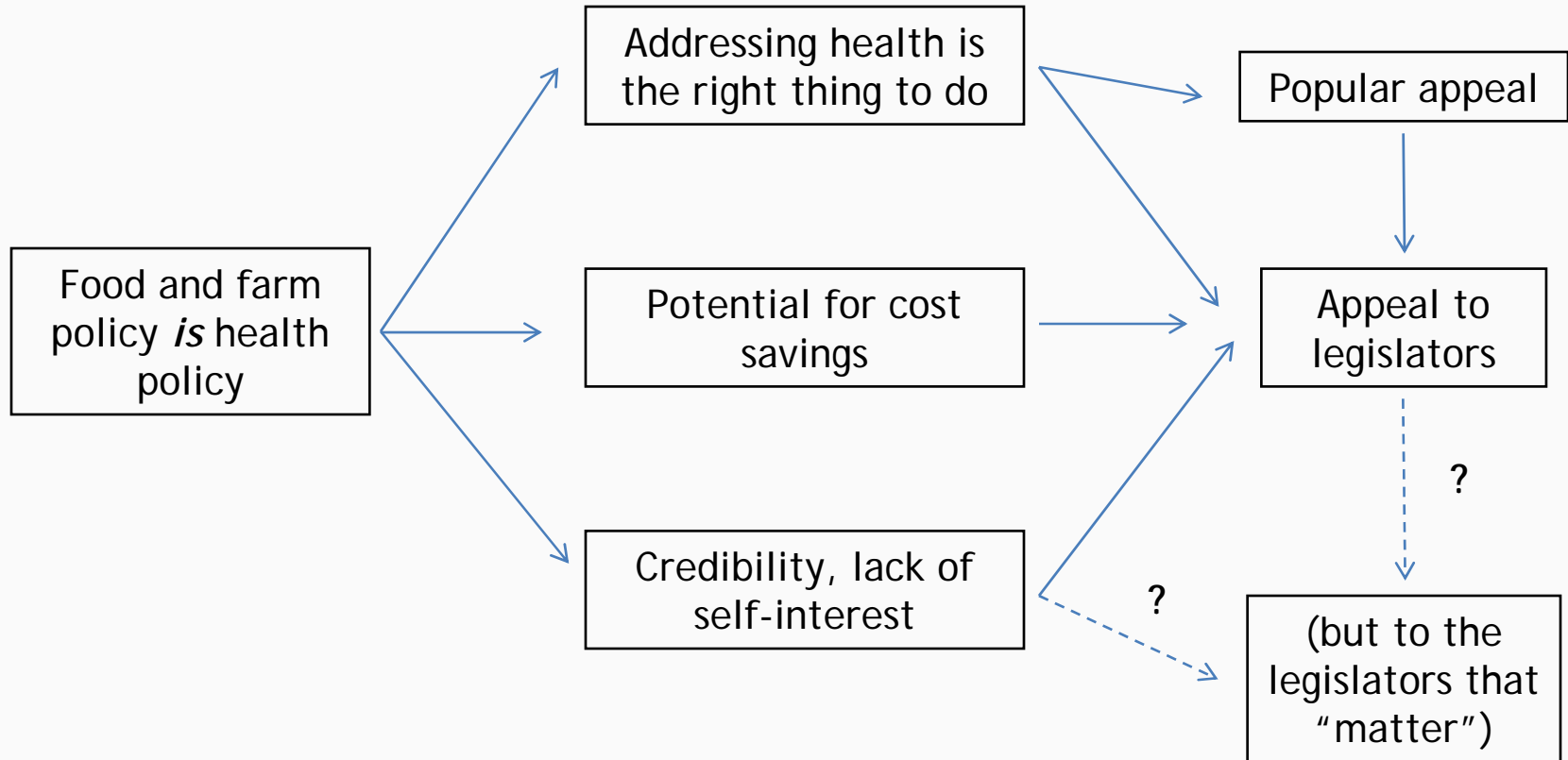
*Calculated from 424 U.S. Newspapers in Access World News Database, 1 September 2000 to 1 September 2002 vs. 1 September 2006 to 1 September 2008 (by RN)

What the Farm Bill Has to Do with Public Health

1. What we eat
 - Commodity subsidies for less healthy foods
 - Promotion of healthier/more sustainable food
2. Hunger
 - Domestic—food stamps, WIC, food banks, etc.
 - International—food aid programs
 - Indirect effects
3. Environmental health
 - Conservation programs, support for organic and sustainable agriculture
 - Support of agriculture with negative environmental impacts
4. Food safety and infectious disease
 - Food safety programs and research
 - Antibiotic resistance
5. Rural income and quality of life

Source: Building on framework of Partnership for Prevention/UCLA School of Public Health. *Summary of the health impact assessment of the 2002 Federal Farm Bill*. Retrieved from <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/hs/health-impact/docs/FarmBillSummary.pdf>

Arguments for Bringing Public Health into It



Public Health and Farm Bill Coalition

- Focus on nutrition title
 - Community Food Projects
 - Healthy Food Enterprise Development
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program
 - DOD Fresh
 - Food Stamps Nutrition Education
- Members include
 - APHA (American Public Health Association)
 - Community Food Security Coalition
 - United Fresh Produce Association
 - Northeast/Midwest Institute
 - Farm and Food Policy Project
 - NACCHO
 - Trust for America's Health
 - American Heart Association
 - Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellows Program
 - Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
 - Center for Science in the Public Interest

Public Health and Farm Bill Coalition—Activities

- Numerous Hill visits
- Outreach to leaders in public health and APHA members
- APHA—Farm Bill is one of top three policy priorities
- Health professionals' sign-on letter
- Networking

APHA and the Farm Bill



American Public Health Association

Working for a Healthier World

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February 20, 2008

United States Congress
Washington, D.C.

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), I urge you to protect the public's health a top priority during the second session of the 110th Congress. As the oldest, largest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the United States, we represent all Americans, their families and their communities from preventable, serious and community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and are universally accessible in the United States. APHA urges Congress to support a health care system so that it is able to respond to everyday health threats, including emergencies, and ensure that all individuals—regardless of race, ethnicity or income—have access to the health care and prevention services they need.

Increase funding for vital public health programs. The President's FY 2009 budget proposal would cut funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health service agencies. These agencies have more with less and not have sufficient resources to plan for and respond to public health emergencies, let alone to adequately respond to past and future natural and man-made disasters. While we applaud efforts to provide additional funding to CDC, including a possible influenza pandemic, we urge you to resist any attempts to cut programs at the expense of other important public health programs.

Strengthen nutrition policies in the Farm Bill. We are pleased that both the House and Senate passed bills to reauthorize the federal Farm Bill in 2007. We urge Congress to move quickly to modernize federal policies, including the Food Stamps Program, under the Farm Bill, to allow states to provide access to fresh, healthy food and safe, enjoyable physical activity programs to help communities develop retail food markets and urban agriculture projects in underserved neighborhoods. In addition, we encourage you to create and expand food systems programs to help communities develop retail food markets and urban agriculture projects in underserved neighborhoods. In addition, we encourage you to create and expand food systems programs to help communities develop retail food markets and urban agriculture projects in underserved neighborhoods. In addition, we encourage you to create and expand food systems programs to help communities develop retail food markets and urban agriculture projects in underserved neighborhoods.

Pass mental health parity legislation. Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Representative Jim Cooper (R-NC) introduced mental health parity legislation in 2007 that would provide equal access to health insurance. Specifically, these bills would prohibit a health plan from covering mental health benefits differently from the coverage of medical and surgical benefits. We urge you to support broad support and APHA is committed to working to see comprehensive mental health parity legislation enacted this year.

Give FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products. For decades, the tobacco industry has marketed deadly products to our children, deceived consumers about the harm they cause, and evaded any meaningful action to make their products less harmful or less addictive.

Dear Member of Congress ... In particular, we urge you to ...

Strengthen nutrition policies in the Farm Bill. We are pleased that both the House and Senate passed bills to reauthorize the federal Farm Bill in 2007. We urge Congress to move quickly to modernize federal policies, including the Food Stamps Program, under the Farm Bill, ***to allow states and localities more flexibility to provide access to fresh, healthy food and safe, enjoyable physical activity to food stamp recipients.*** We also encourage you to create and expand food systems programs to ***help communities develop retail food markets and urban agriculture projects in underserved neighborhoods.*** In addition, Congress should ***strengthen school child nutrition programs*** by increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables in schools, implementing wellness policies and expanding nutrition education.

Sign-on Letter: Endorsed by >300 Health Professionals

June 13, 2007

Rep. Collin C. Peterson, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture

Rep. Bob Goodlatte, VA, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on Agriculture

Sen. Tom Harkin, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

Sen. Saxby Chambliss, Ranking Republican Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

Re: Strengthening the Farm Bill to Reduce Childhood Obesity, and Improve our Environment and Nation's Health

Dear Sirs,

We, the undersigned, are physicians and healers, public health and other health professionals, not farmers. But we eat, we have patients and families who eat, and so we care about what farmers grow. We want to see the 2007 Farm Bill become a "Healthy Food Bill".

Obesity and unhealthy eating constitute a national crisis, with \$117 billion per year in estimated treatment and indirect costs. The epidemic of child obesity, however, promises a worse crisis in the making – these children will have more heart disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke, in some cases not long after they become adults.

Today's agricultural policies are inconsistent with healthy eating. They help flood our communities, including our schools, with high-calorie, nutrient poor, highly processed foods made from cheap starches, sweeteners and oils derived from grains and soybeans. These foods are a big part of the health problems we face. We must do better.

U.S. agricultural policy helps to make unhealthy foods some of the cheapest, "most affordable" to buy. It also contributes to a population deficient in healthful omega-3 fatty acids, with likely impacts on inflammation and other chronic disease – heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. We must do better.

We also care about how farmers grow our food. Current farm policy promotes agricultural methods that deplete water resources, and use pesticides and fossil fuels intensively, with impacts on consumers, communities and our climate. By underwriting the industrial-scale production of animals raised on grain, our farm policy also supports significant air and water pollution.

Grain-fed animals raised under confinement can be more disease-prone than those raised in traditional pasture-based systems. These animals are routinely fed human antibiotics to counter disease and to promote more rapid growth. The Institutes of Medicine confirm this practice hastens the spread of antibiotic resistance, while in medicine we are losing our arsenal of antibiotics that work. We must support healthier agriculture.

With the 2007 Farm Bill, our government has the opportunity to invest taxpayer dollars in a food system that promotes rather than hinders individual health. Farmers, communities, and the health of our environment would benefit as well. ...

Healthy Farm Bill Web Site



THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Final Farm Bill helps make way for healthy, fresh, local foods

While a disappointment to those who hoped for more significant reform of our nation's farm policies, the "Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008"—more commonly referred to as the 2008 Farm Bill—makes important incremental changes in support of local and organic food, conservation, and better agriculture policies. Also, there are new programs and funding for socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers, support for rural entrepreneurship, and reforms to improve fairness and market access in the livestock market.

Some highlights:

- Significant new support for farmers' market promotion and development, creation of a Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center, increased financing opportunities for local food entrepreneurs, increased funding for community food projects, and targeted support for rural micro-businesses.
- An overall increase in conservation program and farmland protection funding of more than \$5 billion over 10 years and a new cooperative conservation partnership empowering local communities and farmers to address local and regional environmental needs.

Sign Up for Updates

* Title * First Name

* Last Name

* Street 1

Street 2

* City

* State * Zip Code * Phone

* Email Address

* Required Field

**I Support Healthy,
Fresh, Local Food**

Dilemma for Public Health: Subsidies

- Problems: money to wealthy and large farms, upside down food pyramid, environmentally unsustainable, harm to international farmers, hindering trade agreements
- Economics: small role in retail price, but ...
 - Low cost of corn/soybeans makes sugars and fats cheap for food processors to use, “adds value” without adding cost
 - Meat: about half of corn, soy to animal feed
 - ▶ Tufts study: industrial animal producers \$35 billion indirect subsidy due to feed grains 20 to 25 percent below production cost
- Are subsidies the problem, or a symptom/safety net?
 - Need price supports, storage of reserve commodities, reduced incentive to plant fencerow to fencerow
- Without subsidies, what happens to farmers/food production?

“Left-Right” Coalition Challenged Subsidies

- Coalition: environmentalists, deficit hawks, anti-poverty, international food security, taxpayer groups, religious organizations, those supporting free trade
- Fairness in Farm and Food Policy Amendment (Ron Kind, D-WI)
- Save \$10 billion by reforming subsidy system
 - Revenue-based safety net, income limit \$250,000 to receive subsidies, subsidy limit up to \$250,000, gradually reduce automatic direct payments
- Put money (plus other funds) towards hunger, conservation, fruit/vegetable producers, healthy food promotion, minority farmers, deficit reduction, school lunch overseas, etc.
- Opposition: agriculture; many progressive food/farm groups wanted to support but couldn't
- Amendment failed July 2007

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act

- \$290 billion, 673 pages
- Passed in May 2008, two-thirds majority overrides a Bush veto
- 15 Titles (those in bold, larger font are new)
 - Title I: Commodities
 - Title II: Conservation
 - Title III: Trade
 - Title IV: Nutrition
 - Title V: Credit
 - Title VI: Rural Development
 - Title VII: Research
 - Title VIII: Forestry
 - Title IX: Energy
 - **Title X: Horticulture and Organic Agriculture**
 - **Title XI: Livestock**
 - **Title XII: Crop Insurance**
 - **Title XIII: Commodity Futures**
 - Title XIV: Miscellaneous
 - **Title XV: Trade and Taxes**

Key Changes in 2008 Farm Bill

- Incremental—foot in door
- Domestic nutrition: \$10 billion extra (now about 68 percent of Farm Bill budget)
 - Food price crisis
 - Exciting advances in nutrition programs
- Commodity subsidies essentially same
 - But now about 10 percent of Farm Bill spending (vs. 23 percent in 2002)
 - No challenge to profits of agribusiness
- Expanded Conservation Stewardship Program

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Nutrition Title: Healthy, Sustainable

- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (\$500 million mandatory, five years)
- Pilot program to evaluate incentives for buying fresh fruits/vegetables (\$20 million mandatory)
- Farmers' markets—large increase
 - Farmers' Market Promotion Program (\$33 million mandatory, five years)
 - Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (\$20.6 million per year mandatory)
- Community Food Projects (\$5 million mandatory)—becomes permanent
- Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center (\$3 million mandatory)
- USDA “Food Desert” Study (\$500,000 discretionary)

Nutrition Title: Food Security

- Food Stamp Program renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (\$7.8 billion new funds)
 - Benefits increased, indexed to inflation
- Expand infrastructure/capacity of food banks
 - Handle perishable food, procure local food
- Food bank purchase of commodities (\$1.26 billion new)

New Titles: Livestock, Organic

- Livestock
 - Focuses primarily on competition issues
 - Provisions to help smaller livestock producers
- Organic
 - From \$3 million annually, increased mandatory funding to \$78 million for 2009-2012, plus authorized additional annual appropriations of \$25 million
 - Supports assistance for certification, production, marketing; funds for organic standards; research

Other Titles

- Conservation
 - Working lands conservation expands
 - ▶ Conservation Stewardship Program, EQIP
 - Non-working lands conservation—reduced levels
 - Chesapeake Bay watershed conservation

- Trade
 - Pilot program for local and regional procurement funds: \$60 million
 - Study of prior local and regional food procurements for food aid programs by other countries, private orgs, etc.

- Research
 - Many provisions promoting coordination and management of agricultural research functions

After the Farm Bill

- These gains need support and follow-up—need a champion
- Appropriations process
- Internal follow-up/oversight with agencies
- Stay vigilant to other challenges
 - For example, conservation—farmers interested in withdrawing early from Conservation Reserve Program due to flooding, agriculture secretary said they still face penalty

Where Is the Public Health Community?

- How can we make public health arguments even more compelling, ubiquitous, and in the ears of the right people?
- How can we broaden conceptualization of public health in future Farm Bill debates?
 - What we eat
 - Hunger
 - Environmental health
 - Food safety and infectious disease
 - Rural income and quality of life
- Constraints
 - Benefit of focusing on limited number of issues
 - Small number of people working on it
 - Do we need several separate public health coalitions?

Roles for Public Health Professionals

- Maintain coalition
 - Interim advocacy/education on Farm Bill issues
 - Other issues, such as Child Nutrition Reauthorization
- Sign up for advocacy emails, respond to them
- Speak out
 - Letters, Hill visits, contacts to legislators, op-eds, sign-on letters, etc.
- Research on relevant issues
- Organizing, fundraising, communicating within the public health community and beyond to mobilize the grassroots and find a central “champion”