

# Grown in the Golden State: Charting Californian & American Priorities for a Farm Bill

**It's time for a Farm Bill that addresses the needs and challenges of farmers and families in California and across the country.** Thanks to the hard work of our farmers and farmworkers, California is the largest agricultural state in the U.S., growing nearly half of the nation's vegetables and over three-quarters of the nation's fruits and nuts. The state supplies a tremendous percentage of some of the country's healthiest, most delicious food while serving as a significant economic driver and leading the way in innovation. **When California's agriculture thrives, so does the rest of the country.**

It's been eight years since Congress passed a Farm Bill, and a comprehensive package is long overdue to address the mounting challenges farmers, farmworkers, and rural communities are facing. Extreme weather events, high input costs, and the nature of farming itself make entering and staying in agriculture hard enough. The Trump administration's policies around trade, immigration enforcement, and foreign conflict have only left farmers needing more relief. Consumers also face everyday challenges, with high prices at the grocery store and recent cuts to federal food programs causing families to go hungry.

**As the first U.S. Senator from California on the Senate Agriculture Committee in over 30 years, Senator Schiff is proud to advocate for a Farm Bill and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that reflects our values: economic opportunity, health, sustainability, national security, and prosperity.**



## **Senator Schiff's priorities for the next Farm Bill include policies to:**

**Strengthen nutrition programs so American families and the most vulnerable can easily access nutritious food:** Deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's largest food assistance program, have posed serious threats to Americans' ability to afford food, and fend off poverty and hunger; one estimate projects hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths due to SNAP cuts by 2040. **We must reverse cuts to SNAP as well as bolster other federal feeding programs like WIC, which provides healthy food for women and children, and GusNIP, which increases low-income consumers' purchasing power of fresh fruits and vegetables. We must simultaneously support small and mid-size farmers while providing fresh, healthy food to schools, food banks, and other centers by bolstering farm-to-institution programs.**

**Protect Proposition 12:** Demand from consumers, food companies, and farmers propelled California's voters to approve Proposition 12, enacting bare-minimum public health, food safety, and welfare standards for the in-state production of and sale of products from egg-laying hens, veal calves, and sows. The April 30 House-passed Farm Bill includes language to nullify Proposition 12 and other state laws. **Poison pills like preempting Prop 12 must be excluded from any Farm Bill.**

**Make fruits and vegetables affordable and convenient for farmers to grow and for consumers to eat:** Federal agriculture policy has often neglected farmers who grow some of our healthiest foods - fruits, vegetables, and nuts (otherwise known as specialty crops). These are the very foods behind the saying, "Food is medicine." **We must ensure that the accessibility of USDA programs for specialty crops is on par with that of commodity crops (e.g., corn, soy); this must cross a plethora of programs - insurance, disaster, conservation, marketing, procurement, research, and more. We must also ensure that the unique challenges of specialty crop production are addressed through robust and tailored science, research, and pest and disease mitigation.**

**Increase market opportunities for more farm and food businesses:** Global events like the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the harms of a consolidated food supply chain. Creating new markets for local and regional foods, for small and diversified producers, and for sustainable proteins, will cultivate a more resilient, competitive supply chain. **We must provide additional business opportunities so that more farm and food businesses have a means of selling their products to more people in more places and so that consumers have more options.**

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**Invest in rural communities - their infrastructure, economies, livelihoods:** Rural America is disproportionately impacted by persistent poverty, health care shortages, and economic challenges. **We must level the playing field for rural communities by modernizing and increasing funding for federal programs that advance rural health care, housing, broadband, infrastructure, and business opportunities.**

**Protect farmworkers:** Farmworkers are the backbone of the agricultural industry. They work day in and day out, often under significant exposure to heat and pesticides, to provide families in the U.S. and around the world with food on the table. **We must give farmworkers the dignity they deserve, chiefly a pathway to citizenship and safe working and living conditions for them and their families.**

*In the coming weeks and months, Senator Schiff intends to introduce legislation for consideration in the Farm Bill that spans a number of topics: improved mechanization of specialty crops, enhanced fruit and vegetable procurement in federal food programs, increased nutrition incentives, artificial intelligence and innovation in agriculture, regional food systems development, organic agriculture, and more.*



**During the first year of the Senator's term on the Senate Agriculture Committee, he has advocated for Californian and American farmers in various ways, such as:**

- Visiting farms across the entirety of California, learning about the Golden State's countless agricultural industries, including strawberries, almonds, broccoli, celery, and leafy greens.
- Advocating for USDA programs and proposals to reflect the vitality of California agriculture and of specialty crops in their organizational structure and disaster relief policies.
- Successfully fending off efforts to close several key USDA offices open in California.
- Pushing back on the Trump administration's destructive trade and immigration enforcement policies, which have caused input prices for American farmers and food prices for American families to skyrocket.
- Introducing an amendment that would have prevented the One Big, Ugly Bill Act from cutting food assistance for families with children under the age of 12. Cosponsoring legislation to repeal all the recent devastating Republican cuts to SNAP.
- Pressing USDA to restore and continue its highly successful and popular programs to provide healthy, local foods to food banks, schools, and child care centers. Asking USDA to provide transparency regarding its cancellation of funding for farmers. Cosponsoring legislation requiring USDA to release illegally withheld funding for its contracts and agreements.
- Introducing legislation that would support school districts in serving more plant-based meal options and legislation that would make a strategic federal investment in protein innovation through boosted support for research, workforce development, and domestic manufacturing capacity.
- Introducing legislation that would help rural communities prepare and recover from emergencies that threaten the availability of safe drinking water.
- Cosponsoring legislation that would establish enforceable standards for workers in high-heat environments (e.g., farmworkers) with measures like paid breaks in cool spaces and water access.