AGRICULTURE RESILIENCE ACT
119th Congress

Section-by-Section Summary

TITLE I—NATIONAL GOAL

Sec. 101 - Goals

Establishes national goal for agriculture sector of net zero emissions by no later than 2040, and additional goals to achieve by no later than 2040 of –

- quadrupling the total federal funding for food and agriculture research and extension
- expanding adoption of soil health practices sufficiently to reduce nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils by 75 percent
- increasing soil carbon stocks by at least 0.4 percent annually on all agricultural lands
- including cover crops or other continual living cover on at least 75 percent of cropland acres
- encouraging conversion of 30 percent of current annual grain crop acres to perennial production systems
- eliminating farmland and grassland conversion
- establishing advanced grazing management on 100 percent of grazing land
- reducing GHG emissions related to the feeding of ruminants by at least 50 percent
- increasing crop-livestock integration by at least 300 percent over 2017 levels
- converting at least two thirds of wet manure handling and storage to alternative management
- implementing energy audits on 100 percent of farms
- tripling on-farm renewable energy production, and
- reducing food waste by at least 75 percent, and composting or otherwise diverting from landfills 90 percent of unavoidable food waste and byproducts.

Each goal also includes an interim goal to reach by 2030.

Sec. 102 - Action plan

Directs USDA, working with other federal agencies, to develop a plan for actions to reach the goals in Sec. 101. Requires the Secretary to make the plan available for public comment within a year and begin implementation within 18 months.

TITLE II—RESEARCH

Sec. 201 - Research, extension, and education purposes

Adds new tenth and eleventh purposes to the current nine statutory purposes for the federal investment in agriculture research, extension, and education: "to accelerate the ability of agriculture and the food system to first achieve net zero carbon emissions and then go further to be carbon negative by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere." And "to develop food systems that are healthful, sustainable, equitable, and resilient to extreme weather and other impacts of climate change and other potential intersecting global and national disruptions."

Sec. 202 - Regional hubs for risk adaptation and mitigation to climate change

Provides a first ever legislative authorization for the USDA Climate Hubs, administered by ARS and the USFS in coordination with other USDA and federal agencies and in cooperation with educational institutions, NGOs, private entities, and state and local agencies. Identifies that the priority work of the Hubs is to synthesize and disseminate climate science research. Requires each regional hub to solicit stakeholder input. Directs the hubs to work with Extension, conservation districts, and NGOs to assist farmers with business and conservation planning that takes climate risk science into account. Directs the hubs to work with RMA to better account for climate risk in RMA's actuarial tables. Establishes an authorization for appropriations of $50 million per year.

Sec. 203 - Sustainable agriculture research and education resilience initiative

Adds climate resilience and increasing soil carbon sequestration and storage to the overall purposes of NIFA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) competitive grants program and establishes a new SARE Agriculture and Food System Resilience Initiative, including research, education, extension, outreach, and farmer and rancher R&D, with $50 million per year in mandatory funding beginning in FY 2024 and an authorization for appropriations of $20 million per year.

Adds climate change adaptation and mitigation to the list of priorities for the extension, outreach, and professional development portion of NIFA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. Increases the authorization for appropriations for this subcomponent of the overall SARE program from $20,000,000 to $30,000,000 per year.

Sec. 204 - Long-term agroecological research (LTAR) network

Provides a first ever legislative authorization for the ARS Long-term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) Network. Makes climate change adaptation and mitigation a major purpose. Instructs LTARs to use standardized methodologies, manage and analyze large-scale data sets, and coordinate with Climate Hubs. Includes an authorization for appropriations of $50 million per year with a direction that each site in the network is to be adequately funded.

Sec. 205 - Public breed and cultivar research

Creates the position of public breed and cultivar research coordinator within the REE mission area and calls for creation of a strategic plan that includes a focus on delivery of resource-efficient, stress-tolerant, regionally adapted livestock breeds and crop cultivars that help build agricultural resilience to climate change and support on-farm carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas mitigation. For NIFA, requires $75 million from existing grant programs is spent for public breed and cultivar competitive grants. For ARS intramural research, requires at least $50 million per year.

Sec. 206 - ARS climate scientist career development program

Creates an ARS internship program, with up to $10 million per year in mandatory funding, for graduate students pursuing a degree or research related to climate change and agriculture.

Sec. 207 - Agricultural climate adaptation and mitigation through AFRI.

Creates a new climate change adaptation and mitigation subprogram within the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

Sec. 208 - Specialty crop research initiative

Adds climate change adaptation and mitigation to the list of SCRI research priorities and reduces the SCRI matching requirement from 100% to 25%.

Sec. 209 - Integrated pest management

Creates a priority for grants that prioritize ecologically based pest management approaches that are effective, affordable, and environmentally sound, maintain agricultural productivity and healthy communities, and improve climate resilience.

Sec. 210 - Appropriate technology transfer to rural areas (ATTRA)

Adds climate resilience to the statutory list of the ATTRA program's information services. Increases program authorization to $8.5 million, ensures funds help beginning, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers.

TITLE III—SOIL HEALTH

Sec. 301 - Crop insurance

Amends the Federal Crop Insurance Act to make the "sodsaver" grasslands protection provision nationwide in scope rather than restricted to just the northern Great Plains, to declare all NRCS conservation practices and conservation enhancements as automatically "good farming practices" for crop insurance indemnity payment purposes, and to authorize RMA to offer performance-based discounts for practices that can be demonstrated to reduce risk, including cover crops, resource-conserving crop rotations, management-intensive rotational grazing, compost or biochar applications,

agroforestry or other perennial production systems, and other risk-reducing, soil health-promoting activities.

Sec. 302 - Environmental quality incentives program

Makes GHG emission reduction, carbon sequestration, and resilience to drought a purpose of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), adds GHG emission reduction to the list of conservation activity plans, and adds GHG emission reduction and carbon sequestration to the list of top ten practices that can receive higher payment rates. Adds "sequestering carbon" and "increasing drought resilience" to list of conservation practices encouraged. Targets no less than two-thirds of the 50 percent of EQIP set aside for livestock practices to advanced grazing management. Eliminates the discriminatory separate, lower organic payment limit, and adds language to prevent payment limitation abuse. Makes climate adaptation and mitigation practices eligible for the new EQIP incentives contracts and creates an early termination option for producers enrolling in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to improve the pipeline from EQIP to CSP. Requires that CAFOs receiving EQIP funding must develop and implement GHG emissions reduction plan. Adds GHG emission reduction to the purposes for CIG Air Quality grants and increases CIG Air Quality funding from $37.5 million per year to $50 million per year starting in FY 2026. Expands the scope of CIG On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials to include nutrient cycling and perennial systems and increases funding for On-Farm and Soil Health Demonstration Trials from $25 million to $50 million per year (FY2028-29) to $100 million (FY2030-33). Via Section 305 (see below), increases total EQIP funding from $2.025 billion in FY 2025 to $3 billion in FY 2026 and beyond.

Sec. 303 - Conservation stewardship program

Adds soil health enhancement and GHG emission reduction to the criteria for ranking proposals for entry into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Adds climate adaptation and mitigation as a resource concern that may be addressed by the program. Adds language to ensure that losses in revenue due to climate-friendly production changes are considered when determining CSP payment amounts. Adds language on payments for practices specific to organic production or transitioning to organic production. Establishes a minimum payment of $4,000. Creates new supplemental payments for perennial production systems. Adds language to prevent payment limitation abuse. Creates a new CSP On-Farm Conservation Stewardship Innovation Grant program, patterned after the EQIP CIG On-Farm Trials program, for on-farm R&D and pilot testing of innovative conservation systems and enhancements. Reinstates automatic contract renewals for producers who demonstrate compliance with existing contracts and commit to addressing additional resource concerns in their next. Clarifies that CSP's Existing Activity Payments shall compensate producers for all land uses meeting and maintaining sufficiently high levels of stewardship. Charges NRCS to support producers with soil health test interpretation. Via Section 305 (see below), stair steps total CSP funding up to $4 billion in FY 2026 and beyond.

Sec. 304 - State assistance for soil health

Creates new USDA grants to state and tribal governments to improve soil health on agricultural lands by funding the development or implementation of state or tribal soil health plans. Implementing an approved soil health plan can include funding for any combination of technical assistance, financial assistance, R&D, education and training, and monitoring and evaluation. The federal grant is capped

at $1 million for projects to develop or modify a state or tribal soil health plan and $5 million for projects to implement a state or tribal soil health plan. Applications must include performance measures to be used for evaluation. The new program is funded at $60 million per year (FY2026-27), $80 million (FY2028-29), and $100 million (FY2030 and thereafter).

Sec. 305 – Funding and administration

- **Funding** - Provides for increases in farm conservation program funding as detailed in Sections 302, 303, 404, and 504.

- **Special technical assistance initiative** - Sets aside 1 percent of total farm bill conservation program mandatory funding each year for a major new conservation technical assistance (CTA) initiative to assist producers in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The technical assistance would be delivered by NRCS and by third parties and ensures individuals can provide CTA and would prioritize assistance to underserved producers. Includes adding perennial production systems, soil health planning, greenhouse gas emissions reduction planning, integrated pest management planning, agroforestry planning and organic transition planning to the list of possible expertise.

- **Beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers** - Increases the beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher set-aside in EQIP and CSP from 5 percent of funding for each to 30 percent of funding combined. Authorizes USDA in carrying out all conservation programs to provide incentives to establish a new generation of farmers and ranchers using the full array of climate-friendly practices from the outset of their farming careers.

- **Advanced Grazing Management** - Prioritizes advanced grazing management, including management-intensive rotational grazing, in the implementation of farm bill conservation programs.

- **Payment schedules** - As part of the mandated annual review of payment schedules, directs USDA to adjust payment rates as necessary to accelerate progress toward meeting the goals established in Section 101.

- **Environmental Services** - Creates a Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Carbon Sequestration Monitoring and Measurement advisory committee to oversee USDA's soil health and GHG emissions monitoring and inventory activities using the best available data and science. Directs USDA to evaluate existing outcomes-based measurement systems, issue guidance on those systems, conduct periodic review, undertake iterative soil health and GHG emissions inventories, and establish an accessible and interoperable database for the information collected through the inventory.

Sec. 306 - Conservation compliance

Adds soil health plans to the existing conservation compliance regime and applies that new component to all cropland. Expands conservation compliance to all cropland and limits the allowable erosion rate to the twice the tolerable soil loss level as determined by USDA. Requires effective treatment of ephemeral

gully erosion. Requires land leaving the Conservation Reserve Program to meet the same erosion standards.

Sec. 307 – Agroforestry Centers

Authorizes at least three new regional agroforestry centers to complement the national center in Lincoln, Nebraska. Adds a new emphasis on soil health, climate change, and perennial production systems. Includes a technical assistance component with a goal of compiling and disseminating information to increase adoption of agroforestry. Allows the Secretary to provide grants for agroforestry demonstration farms. Increases the authorization for appropriations from $5 million per year to $25 million per year.

TITLE IV—FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND FARM VIABILITY

Sec. 401 - Local agriculture market program

Supports value-added marketing projects for crops or animals added to rotations for soil health, carbon sequestration, or GHG reduction purposes. Creates a new Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP) subprogram for farm viability and local climate resilience centers to enhance farm viability and to develop and expand markets for farm products that significantly improve soil health and carbon sequestration via assistance with business plans, feasibility studies, marketing strategies, enterprise development, financial recordkeeping, and succession planning. Increases total LAMP funding from $50 million to $150 million beginning in FY 2026.

Sec. 402 - Organic certification cost-share program

Increases the maximum annual organic certification cost share payment from $750 to $1500 per certification scope. Provides the program such sums as are necessary from the Commodity Credit Corporation to ensure program funding is adequate to meet increasing demand.

Sec. 403 - Farmland protection policy act

Strengthens the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) to minimize the conversion of farm and ranch land by federal agencies or by projects using federal funds to nonagricultural uses and prohibits the conversion of farm or ranch land that is permanently protected farmland, farmland of national significance, or farmland significant to a State.

Sec. 404 - Agriculture conservation easement program

Requires land receiving Agricultural Land Easement payments to have a conservation plan covering all applicable resource concerns including soil health and GHG emissions reduction, with the option of automatic enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program to help cover costs. Increases total ACEP funding from $450 million to $700 million beginning in FY 2026.

TITLE V—PASTURE-BASED LIVESTOCK

Sec. 501 - Animal raising claims

Amends the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to create a new subtitle for animal raising label claims for livestock and poultry, directing USDA to establish animal raising claim standards to govern the labeling of all meat and poultry products, with on-farm and supply chain auditing and verification procedures, including the option of third party certification. Claims include diet claims (e.g., grassfed), living and raising condition claims (e.g., pasture raised), antibiotic and hormone claims, source claims, age claims, animal welfare claims, breed claims, and environmental stewardship claims. Creates civil penalties for the misuse of labels.

Sec. 502 – Processing resilience grant program

Creates a new grant program for small or very small meat and poultry processors to increase resiliency and diversity. Authorizes $20 million annually.

Sec. 503 - Conservation of private grazing land

Amends the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative by including soil health and grazing system resilience, as well as transition from confinement-based systems to grazing, among its purposes and assistance measures. Creates a cooperative agreement program to support research, demonstration, education, workforce development, and planning and outreach projects and a technical assistance train-the-trainer program. Provides mandatory funding of $50 million per year beginning in FY 2026. Continues the current authorization for appropriations of $60 million per year.

Sec. 504 - Conservation reserve program - Grasslands 30 pilot program

Increases the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage cap from 27 to 32 million acres and creates a 5 million-acre pilot program through which grasslands at risk of conversion to cropping or development, grassland exiting the CRP or CRP Grassland Initiative, or grassland of prime ecological/habitat significance may enroll for 30 years and receive annual payments. Includes terms and conditions that promote sustainable grazing management, protect and enhance soil carbon levels, and are compatible with wildlife habitat conservation. Allows for delegation of technical assistance and/or contract administration to other federal, state, or local agencies or to conservation organizations.

Sec. 505 - Alternative manure management program

Creates a new Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) to support carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions reductions by implementing covered management measures. Prioritizes funds for small and mid-sized operations run by socially disadvantaged farmers. Provides 100 percent cost share (up to 50 percent in advance for needed equipment and materials), up to $750,000 in any 5-year period, with an option for cluster applications for centralized composting facilities. Provides mandatory funding of $1.5 billion per year beginning in FY 2026.

TITLE VI—ON-FARM RENEWABLE ENERGY

Sec. 601 - Rural energy for America program

Establishes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as a primary purpose of the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and adds those goals to the selection criteria. Adds NGOs and producer co-ops as eligible for grants to do energy audits in addition to agencies, rural utilities, and colleges and universities. Adds agricultural processors to eligibility for energy efficiency grants. Increases the maximum grant award from 25 percent to 50 percent of project costs, and to 75 percent of project costs for producers who are beginning, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmers or ranchers. Creates a grant priority for projects that would result in the largest net decreases of greenhouse gas emissions. Provides for a streamlined application process for projects utilizing pre-approved products and technologies. Sets aside 5 percent of funds for on-farm demonstration projects and 15 percent of the funds for underutilized but proven technologies. Increases mandatory funding in stair steps from $50 million in FY25 to $400 million in FY 2029 and thereafter.

Sec. 602 – Agrivoltaic systems

Directs USDA to do a detailed study of agrivoltaic systems, plus a risk benefit analysis and a 5-year research and extension plan. Authorizes $15 million for a research and demonstration program run by USDA ARS.

Sec. 603 – AgSTAR

Moves the AgSTAR program (anaerobic digestion to reduce methane emissions) from EPA to USDA (NRCS) and includes a $5 million authorization for appropriations.

TITLE VII—FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

Subtitle A—Food Date Labeling

Sec. 701 – Definitions

Defines discard dates as dates voluntarily printed on food packaging to communicate the estimated last date a product should be consumed by (under specified storage conditions). Defines quality dates as dates voluntarily printed on food packaging to communicate the date after which the product may begin to deteriorate but remains wholesome (as defined by the Child Nutrition Act). Defines food labeler as the producer, manufacturer, distributor, or retailer that places a date label on food packaging.

Sec. 702 - Quality dates and discard dates

Establishes that quality dates should be conveyed with the uniform phrase “BEST If Used By” and discard dates should be conveyed with the uniform phrase “USE By.” It is the food labeler’s decision whether to include a quality date or discard date on the food packaging. Label location and format should be in easy-to-ready style; located in a conspicuous place on the package of the food; may be

on the label or elsewhere on the package; and stated in terms of day, month, and as appropriate, year. Abbreviations "BB" and "UB" are acceptable only if food packaging is too small for the complete phrase. Freeze By information may be included after the quality or discard date using the phrase "or Freeze By." Time Temperature Indicator Labels may be used in addition to or in lieu of a uniform quality date label phrase or a uniform discard date label phrase.

Sec. 703 – Misbranding

Amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; Poultry Products Inspection Act; Federal Meat Inspection Act; and the Egg Products Inspection Act to reflect these provisions.

Sec. 704 – Regulations

Directs the Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Health and Human Services to finalize regulations for carrying out these provisions within two years after enactment.

Sec. 705 - Delayed applicability

Applies these provisions to food labels that are labeled on or after the date that is two years later than the date on which regulations are finalized.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

Sec. 711 - Composting as conservation practice

Specifies that composting, not just compost facilities, shall be eligible for support under USDA's working lands conservation assistance programs. Directs USDA to establish a conservation practice standard for producing and utilizing compost on-farm.

Sec. 712 – Amendments to federal food donation act

Requires that all contracts entered into between a food contractor and an executive agency include a clause that requires the donation of excess food and the annual submission of a report that details the weight of food that was donated, composted, and discarded. Provides authorization for appropriations of $10 million per year beginning in FY 2026.

Sec. 713 - Grants for composting and anaerobic digestion food waste-to-energy projects

Creates a new grant program administered by USDA that supports States and Tribes with the construction of large-scale composting or anaerobic digestion food waste-to-energy projects, if the State or Tribe has a plan to limit the quantity of food waste that may be disposed of in landfills. Provides authorization for appropriations of $100 million per year.

Sec. 714 - School food waste reduction grant program

Creates a new grant program administered by USDA that supports schools in carrying out food waste measurement and reporting, prevention, education, and reduction projects.

Sec. 715 – National food waste reduction campaigns

Authorizes such sums as necessary for the USDA Secretary to support National Media Campaigns to decrease instances of food waste.

Sec. 716 - Food Waste Research Program

Directs USDA Food Waste Liaison to establish a partnership with 5 regional partner institutions to carry out a Food Waste Research Program.