



Press Release

Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

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Bipartisan Praise for the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (the 2012 Farm Bill)

Washington, DC – Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, led the Committee in considering and approving the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, last Thursday with broad bipartisan support. The bill reforms food and agricultural policy by eliminating direct payments, consolidating programs and ending duplication, and cracking down on abuse in food assistance programs. This new Farm Bill saves \$23 billion while strengthening crop insurance and other initiatives that help create American agricultural jobs (*a summary of the bill can be found [here](#)*).

Following are statements from Committee members from both sides of the aisle, praising the bill for its major reforms, and for the collaborative, inclusive and exceptionally bipartisan process of drafting it:

Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI):

“This committee is unique. Our hearing room doesn’t have a raised dais; instead we sit together around a table, not unlike the tables that America’s farmers sit around after a long day’s work. We examined every program in the Farm Bill, and we reformed, streamlined, and consolidated to get perhaps the most significant reforms in agricultural policy of any Farm Bill in recent memory. I don’t know another Committee that has worked together, on a bipartisan basis, to pass not only the major reforms in this bill, but also over \$23 billion in deficit reduction.”

Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS):

“We have performed our duty to tax payers by cutting deficit spending while at the same time strengthening and preserving the programs so important to agriculture and rural America. And we’ve done it again Madam Chairman in a bipartisan fashion. Thank you for bringing us to this point...” “This is the best Farm Bill I have seen to date... I have to give an awful lot of credit to the Chairwoman for that. She was tireless, and courageous—she persevered...” “This is truly a reform bill. The number of programs we consolidated and streamlined is rather incredible.”

Senator Michael Bennett (D-CO):

“...When people tell me, ‘What is wrong with you people? Why can’t you work together?’ I have the opportunity to point to the bipartisan work of this committee as an example of how we should be approaching our work in the U.S. Senate.”

Senator Mike Johanns (R-NE):

“...we all recognize, including our farmers and ranchers, that our nation’s budget situation is more daunting than ever... This Farm Bill, though, like no other committee that I am aware of, has taken on the responsibility of providing deficit reduction... You can only imagine if other committees would accept the same responsibility, how big a step we would take in dealing with our deficit issues.”

Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND):

“... Thank you, Chairwoman, for your extraordinary effort on this bill. You have been fully engaged, fully committed and very effective and all of us owe you a debt of gratitude. I don’t think I have ever seen anybody dig in as completely as you did at a very difficult time with the special committee looming. You seized the reins of responsibility and all of us are in your debt.”

Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA):

“... I do want to say to the Chairwoman and Ranking Member you have been diligent, you have worked hard, you have been open; you have been willing to dialogue even when we couldn’t agree. You would at least hear our concerns and this committee continues its stellar reputation in my opinion of being the most bipartisan committee in the United States Senate, and under your leadership I think that has only been strengthened ... Thanks to both of you all for the work you have done.”

Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE):

“I have never known in a committee structure a Chairperson who reaches out as you have in this effort. We put together a bipartisan budget savings bill, and if others across our government followed this example and made similar cuts, we would be able to achieve the goal that we all have of reducing the deficit and getting it under control. As I’ve said in the past, this bill will permit people in agriculture to establish their own risk management tools, rather than having to rely on the good will of the government to bail them out”

Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA):

“Thank you madam Chairman for your cooperation on that issue, it is the most cooperation I have seen in the 10 or 15 years that I have been working on this issue on trying to bring some reform ... I also appreciate madam Chairman the work, and the work Ranking Member Roberts, have put into this farm bill and while we still have ways to go through long process we’re surely getting started at the right time and the right direction....”

Senator Max Baucus (D-MT):

“You have worked so hard to get us here; the numerous telephone calls we have received from you we deeply appreciate it. ... I don’t know anyone else who works harder than you, you have been very receptive.”

Senator John Hoeven (R-ND):

“Thank you madam Chairman, I truly appreciate your work and your willingness to work with us and also to Ranking Member Roberts. Thank you Senator for your work and perseverance... I know everyone already said it but I do have to commend the both of you for diligently working though this process...”

Senator Bob Casey (D-PA):

“I want to thank you for your hard work and working with me and our office so closely and your Ranking Member Senator Roberts; we’re grateful. It is a significant example of bipartisanship at a time when you don’t see enough of it.”

A copy of the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 is available for download on the Committee’s website, as well as a summary of the bill, at <http://ag.senate.gov>. An archived webcast of today’s mark-up of the bill is available as well.