

Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy Report: Implications for Indian Country Agriculture

IFAI Analysis – October 2025

Summary: The ["Make America Healthy Again" \(MAHA\) Strategy Report](#), released by the White House in September 2025, outlines a comprehensive national initiative aimed at reducing rates of childhood chronic disease in the United States. The report identifies four primary areas of concern (poor diet, chemical exposure, lack of physical activity/chronic stress, and overmedicalization) and proposes targeted actions to reduce their impacts on childhood chronic disease.

These actions include reforms to food safety, healthcare practices, environmental policies, and scientific research, with an emphasis on utilizing artificial intelligence. The strategy also includes efforts to eliminate harmful substances, e.g., artificial dyes and preservatives, from the food supply and promote healthier dietary options through partnerships with the food industry.

This analysis focuses on the strategy's potential impacts to Tribally-owned agricultural operations. The strategy has not yet been implemented. If there are Tribal consultations scheduled on these items, IFAI will update this report to include that information.

MAKE AMERICA HEALTHY AGAIN Strategy Report		
MAHA Strategy Report Provision	Page Number	Potential Indian Country Agriculture Impact
Strategy: Advancing Critical Research to Drive Innovation		
Calls for Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to evaluate the risks of microplastics and synthetic fibers in common products like textiles and food packaging.	pg. 5	Any future limits on food packaging may add extra costs to Tribal producers/processors currently using food-grade plastic packaging. However, the strategy calls for evaluations only at this stage, not rule-making.
Calls for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and EPA to fund and prioritize precision agriculture technologies, like remote sensing and targeted pesticide use, to improve soil health and lower chemical exposure.	pg. 6	Increased federal investment in this area could enhance opportunities for Tribal producers to gain access to innovative tools and technologies. However, Tribes may wish to learn more about how this remote sensing will work from a data sovereignty perspective. Congress will likely need to appropriate additional funds for these actions.
Strategy: Realigning Incentives and Systems to Drive Health Outcomes Research to Drive Innovations		

Calls for USDA to allow states to restrict junk food purchases under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and distribute healthy “MAHA boxes” of food to participants.	pg. 11	Tribal leaders have frequently called for better access to healthy foods for their citizens in existing food assistance programs that already provide boxes of foods to participants, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). “MAHA boxes,” if implemented, could represent an additional institutional market opportunity for producers to sell healthy foods to USDA for distribution to those in need. The strategy does not include details about how such a program would operate or if Tribes would be able to administer such a program. Tribes cannot currently administer SNAP. Boxes distributed under SNAP could possibly be implemented by States alone, which might make it difficult for Tribal producers to participate. Congress will also likely need to appropriate funds for the creation of the MAHA boxes, and to provide USDA with the financial resources to purchase the foods for such boxes.
Calls for the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) and USDA to apply updated dietary guidelines in Head Start and provide funding for whole, healthy food.	pg. 11	The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) have not yet been released, so it is unclear what menu changes the new DGAs would bring for Tribal Head Start programs. The provision of more whole foods may represent a market opportunity for producers, depending on what the new DGAs specify. Without knowing what foods are to be included, it is unclear if current Head Start funding would cover this action or if Congress would need to appropriate additional funds for these whole, healthy foods. USDA and HHS are set to release the new DGAs before December 31, 2025.
Calls for ACF and USDA to promote healthier meals in early childhood care settings through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other programs.	pg. 11	CACFP meal and snack standards are based on the DGAs. Tribal sponsors of CACFP may see changes based on the release of the new DGAs, which is set to occur before the end of the year.

Calls for USDA to expand and simplify Farm-to-School grants to connect local farmers with school nutrition programs.	pg. 12	Tribes are eligible applicants for the existing Farm-to-School grant program. This program represents an opportunity to give Tribal producers additional markets for their products and support children's access to local, healthy foods, including traditional foods. The strategy does not specify how USDA might simplify the program, but Tribes and other stakeholders have asked for simplified applications in the past to make the application process easier and more efficient. Any expansion of the program in terms of the number of grants made or the size of the grant awards would likely require Congress to appropriate additional funds for these grants.
Calls for USDA to deregulate across a number of subject matter areas including but not limited to streamlining organic certification, expanding credit and land access, reducing bureaucratic barriers to direct sales, increasing market access and access to risk management products, and more.	pg. 12-13	The strategy lists many broad categories for deregulation. Some of the goals of this broad language align with requests from Tribal leaders and producers, especially regarding increased access to land, capital, and markets. However, in order to truly eliminate these barriers for Tribal producers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) must also be involved. It is unclear what the timeline for these deregulatory actions might be, or if there will be Tribal consultation on each/all of the actions. Some deregulatory actions may also require statutory changes that necessitate Congressional action through a Farm Bill or other legislative vehicle.
Calls for USDA, FDA, and HHS to support very small meat processors by issuing additional guidance on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans, and to support mobile slaughter units.	pg. 13	May support Tribal producers seeking access to local, on-reservation markets. Sales in interstate commerce may still be challenging. Depending on the type of support to be provided to mobile processors, Congress may need to appropriate additional funds for these actions.
Calls for EPA to make a series of process improvements involving regulation of on-farm activities under various federal statutes, including reducing any permitting requirements for farms handling manure and	pg. 14	Many of the process improvements here are designed to reduce regulatory burdens for very large agricultural operations. Only 9% of AI/AN farms are over 1,000 acres in size, so these deregulatory actions may be of limited benefit to Tribal producers overall. The strategy calls for

process water, defining post-harvest rinse and wash water as non-hazardous, reforming the approval process for chemical and biological agents used in pest control and disease management on-farm, and working with states to fast-track approvals for permitting that strengthens regional meat processing infrastructure.		designation of post-harvest rinse and wash-water as non-hazardous under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq. (1976), and calls for reducing regulatory burdens on producers handling manure, but even if EPA takes those actions, producers who are subject to the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act's Produce Safety Rule will still need to comply with those requirements if they are using manure as a biological soil amendment, or electing to use post-harvest rinse or wash water on covered produce. Regarding meat processing infrastructure, the strategy only contemplates working with states, but many of the statutory authorities administered by EPA contain provisions enabling the agency to treat Tribal Nations as states (TAS), or to enter into cooperative agreements with Tribes to carry out certain statutes. Tribes are best-positioned to steward Tribal resources within their jurisdictions and to understand the needs of their citizens, and with Tribally produced meat products generating \$1.4 billion annually, meat-processing is of great importance to Tribal producers. Including Tribes in conversations or partnerships regarding meat-processing would better ensure the success of this piece of the strategy.
Strategy: Fostering Private Sector Collaboration		
Calls for USDA to expand conservation incentive programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).	pg. 18-19	Both of these programs are important resources for Tribal producers and Tribal governments as they engage in land stewardship activities on their lands. However, common Tribal barriers to these programs, like issues with land control/ownership for fractionated land, program design limits that restrict certain programs/projects, and cost sharing requirements, can limit access. Pairing the expansion with reforms that increase Tribal flexibility,

		reduce financial burdens, and support capacity building would likely increase Tribal participation in these programs. Congress may need to appropriate additional funds to support changes to either program.
Calls for USDA and EPA to partner with private companies to expand access to advanced agriculture technologies like drones and robotic crop monitoring.	pg. 19	May support Tribal producers in accessing advanced technologies to improve farm efficiency, although drone usage and robotic monitoring may raise data sovereignty concerns and concerns over sacred sites. Aside from these potential areas of concern, very rural and remote producers may also need improved access to broadband or cell service to fully realize the benefit of such precision agriculture technologies. Congress may need to appropriate additional funds for these activities. The Farm Bill would be one of the most likely vehicles for this. The 2018 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2025.