

House Agriculture Committee-

June 24, 2026

Farm Safety Net, Disaster, and Conservation Programs

Highlights:

The hearing on House Agriculture on the Farm Safety Net, Disaster, and Conservation Programs focused on oversight of USDA implementation of recent investments in the farm safety net, disaster assistance, and conservation programs—primarily those enacted through the Working Families Tax Cuts Act (H.R. 1). It featured testimony from USDA Under Secretary Richard Fordyce, who outlined efforts to modernize program delivery, expand risk management tools like crop insurance, and distribute significant new funding to producers through commodity programs, conservation initiatives, and disaster assistance programs.

Key Points:

- A central theme of the hearing was the importance of strengthening the “farm safety net” to provide financial stability for farmers facing volatile markets, rising input costs, and climate-related disasters.
 - Members discussed updates to programs such as Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC), crop insurance, and conservation programs like EQIP and CSP, highlighting both their expanded funding and ongoing demand.
 - The USDA emphasized efforts to improve efficiency and accessibility through modernization initiatives like “One Farmer One File,” digital acreage reporting, and streamlined program delivery.
- However, the hearing also revealed significant partisan disagreement over the broader policy impacts of H.R. 1.
 - Republican members largely framed the legislation as a historic and necessary investment in agriculture that strengthens risk management tools and supports rural economies.
 - Democratic members criticized the legislation for being funded through substantial cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), arguing that these reductions increase food insecurity and disproportionately harm vulnerable populations while providing insufficient support to fully address farmers’ economic challenges.
- Several policy issues were examined in detail, including staffing shortages at USDA agencies (FSA and NRCS), delays in program delivery, limited access to crop insurance for specialty crop producers, inequities in how assistance is distributed

(particularly between large and small farms), and the effectiveness of conservation programs.

- Members also raised concerns about broader economic pressures on agriculture—such as tariffs, trade disruptions, high input costs, and climate impacts—and questioned whether current programs provide adequate long-term stability or rely too heavily on ad hoc disaster assistance.
- Tribal issues were not a central focus of this hearing and were only minimally addressed.
 - The discussion of farm safety net programs, conservation funding, and USDA program delivery did not include substantive examination of Tribal-specific participation, Tribal set-asides, or Tribal consultation requirements.
 - While USDA conservation and farm programs generally apply to a broad range of producers—including those in Tribal communities—there were no detailed references to Tribes, Tribal governments, or Tribal producers in testimony or member questioning.