

MAPPING A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE FOR THE 2012 FARM BILL

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Introduction

The nation's public health is affected by a wide variety of federal food and agriculture policies. Many of the sustainable agriculture movement's policy priorities—conservation assistance for improved soil health and pesticide use reduction, research into ecologically sustainable production systems, support for farmers markets and rebuilding local food infrastructure, accessible financing for crop diversification and value-added food enterprises, efforts to stop subsidies for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and decrease subtherapeutic antibiotic use in animal agriculture, to name just a few—result in improved public health. Put simply, sustainable agriculture is *healthy* agriculture.

This paper presents a summary of an effort to identify jointly shared priorities for the next Farm Bill reauthorization across two fields: sustainable agriculture and public health. It is divided into three parts:

- Part I is an introduction to the project, briefly defines sustainable agriculture and public health, and discusses general shared values between the two fields;
- Part II highlights key information about the Farm Bill itself, describes relevant Farm Bill stakeholders, and discusses the current political landscape; and
- Part III summarizes an array of possible areas of collaboration for sustainable agriculture and public health and briefly discusses what is needed to move such a collaboration forward.

This is a scoping paper, summarizing where the discussions are at this point and is intended to serve both as educational background information and as a jumping off point for continued dialogue between sustainable agriculture, public health, and other Farm Bill stakeholders.

PART I

Project Background

Sustainable agriculture and public health have different origins and priorities, yet they share certain core values and there are multiple points of intersection among their interests. For this project, sustainable agriculture perspectives were represented by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), the leading voice for sustainable agriculture in federal policy. It is important to note that this is a scoping paper, and that policy ideas contained here have not in all cases been thoroughly vetted nor have they been adopted by NSAC or by any other group. The possible policy prescriptions are, however, items under active consideration.

Public health perspectives were represented by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future (CLF) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). The project team members from CLF and IATP also lead the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Food and Environment Working Group, although they do not speak for the APHA.

This project was initiated in follow-up to the April 2009 Food Systems and Public Health Conference. It is based on the premise that a foundation and momentum exist for deeper engagement across these disciplines in advocacy work on the 2012 Farm Bill, and a joint effort can

help create a collective voice around issues of health and sustainability. The paper is the result of discussions among the team, presentations to and dialogue with members of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the American Public Health Association, and information/feedback gathered by team members at an APHA-hosted meeting for members on the Farm Bill in November 2010 and the NSAC Farm Bill Summit in January 2011.

Conceptual Background

The sustainable agriculture field has engaged in Farm Bill policy for decades, seeking to expand the portion of the Farm Bill's budget devoted to supporting more sustainable food production practices. Public health is a relative newcomer, with its first significant engagement in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Given the Farm Bill's substantial impact on the overall food supply and on how it is produced, there has been increasing interest in using farm policy to address public health concerns, both from within the public health field, and from the general public. At the same time, the Farm Bill's history and key content are predominantly about agriculture (notwithstanding the fact that over two thirds of Farm Bill spending now supports the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP, formerly food stamps] program).

The legislators with the most power to affect the Farm Bill's course are those focused on agricultural concerns and are members of House and Senate Agriculture committees. Legislators outside of those committees, however, also play a significant role as the Agriculture committees attempt to craft a bill with wide support to ensure ultimate passage. Both sets of legislators will have an interest in the public health outcomes of farm bill decisions, though their entry points into that discussion may be somewhat different.

Identifying synergies for shared legislative priorities between public health and agricultural interests in Farm Bill policy can support the interests of both communities and can build the constituency of voices for mutual priorities. While the focus of this project is the Farm Bill, there is potential for collaboration on a range of policy areas including child nutrition, transportation, food safety, antibiotic resistance, environmental regulation, and others. An intention of this project was to begin the trust-building process for continued collaboration.

Sustainable Agriculture and Public Health: Definitions and Commonalities

Before turning to discussions of relevant farm bill titles, the current political landscape and potential shared priorities for these two communities, it is valuable to describe some basic tenets of the two fields and their shared values and priorities, as well as relevant differences in their approaches.

Sustainable Agriculture:

As defined by federal statute, sustainable agriculture is “an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long-term—

- “Satisfy human food and fiber needs;
- “Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends;

- “Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- “Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- “Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.”¹

NSAC indicates that its “vision of agriculture is one where a safe, nutritious, ample, and affordable food supply is produced by a legion of family farmers who make a decent living pursuing their trade, while protecting the environment, and contributing to the strength and stability of their communities.” Overarching past priorities for NSAC have included:

- Protect environmental resources and enhance environmental health
- Reduce harmful chemicals in food including pesticides and antibiotics
- Promote social justice by protecting and supporting small and mid-size family farms and beginning and minority farmers
- Ensure food safety legislation protects small producers and local food systems
- Level the playing field for all agriculture and ensure fair competition
- Support rural and agricultural development and entrepreneurship

Public Health:

Public health, as defined by C.E.A. Winslow in 1920, is "the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals."²

Three distinguishing features of public health are its emphasis on prevention rather than medical treatment, its focus on populations rather than individuals, and its emphasis on addressing disparities.

In keeping with these focuses, the American Public Health Association declared in 2007 that it “recognizes the urgency of transforming our food system to promote environmental sustainability, improve nutritional health, and ensure social justice.” Past general priorities for public health around agriculture policy have included:

- Support a moratorium on new CAFO creation
- Support farm-to-school programs and support for local and regional food systems
- Ensure the passage of Food Safety legislation
- Increase funding for Food Stamp/SNAP nutrition education
- Increase of procurement of fresh fruits and vegetables, for example through the Department of Defense FRESH program and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program

While the public health community’s food system priorities have leaned toward nutrition issues in the past, there is a growing interest in the more wide-ranging health impacts of agriculture. One testament to this more expansive understanding is the recently developed and adopted, American Dietetic Association, American Nurses Association, American Planning Association, and American Public Health Association’s “Joint Principles for a Healthy, Sustainable Food System” which include not just health but sustainability, resilience, diversity, fairness, and economic opportunity.

¹ <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/agnic/susag.shtml>

² C.-E. A. Winslow, “The Untilled Fields of Public Health,” *Science*, n.s. 51 (1920), p. 23

Shared Values

In the context of agriculture and health, generally, the public health field and sustainable agriculture proponents could be said to share multiple over-arching values:

- Valuation of “good food,” meaning food that is healthy, sustainable (green), fair and affordable
- Valuation of environmental sustainability and taking a long-term view that sustainability positively impacts health, food security, environmental protection
- Rural and farm community economic viability
- Aiming to benefit the common good
- Emphasis on prevention in their respective domains, including support for the precautionary principle (meaning that in the face of scientifically uncertain but potentially significant risks, it is preferable to take action rather than waiting for certainty)
- Emphasis on social justice
- Commitment to healthy communities, including through improving community food security and local/regional food production

Based on these shared values, members of the two communities would likely support the following broad priority needs in farm policy:

- Increased production and improved distribution of healthful food
- Emphasis on social justice, including support for: fair and stable prices for producers and consumers; access to and affordability of food, water, land and health care; increased farming opportunities; widely-dispersed ownership and control of productive assets; occupational safety and health; social health of communities; and a high value placed on diversity, both racial and ethnic, as well as diversity of farm size and production diversity
- Concern for environmental health, including reducing use of potentially harmful products, minimizing community and work-related exposures, and safeguarding antibiotic effectiveness
- Environmental sustainability and resilience, including minimizing resource depletion and waste, and adapting to climate change and other ecological threats
- Nutritional health, including promotion of diverse diets
- Food security, both in the long and short term
- Food safety measures that protect public health and farmers’ livelihoods

When discussing the shared values and goals between public health and sustainable agriculture it is also important to keep in mind that there are some differences. Understanding points of synergy and divergence will help inform effective and clear communication between these communities.³ One key difference is that, generally speaking, agriculture produces tangible goods for sale, while the products of the public health field are intangible and more commonly reimbursed by governmental and private donors. In addition, practitioners of sustainable agriculture may be motivated most centrally by concern for ecology, with human health as a secondary concern; for public health this

³ Further discussion of similarities and differences between health groups and sustainable agriculture can be found in Prevention Institute’s, report “Cultivating Common Ground: Linking Health and Sustainable Agriculture.” This report focuses on health and health care more so than on public health. There are potentially more similarities between public health and sustainable agriculture in that they both take a systems perspective.

priority ordering is reversed. Third, sustainable agriculture proponents are more likely to have concerns about the economic structure of agriculture, such as the scale and ownership of food and agriculture businesses. It is clear that these two communities will not share all priorities, but overall, the potential for collaboration and mutual support is promising.

PART II

Farm Bill Overview

Having described the key synergies and differences between the fields of sustainable agriculture and public health, we turn to how these synergies manifest in current Farm Bill policy.

Before narrowing the conversation to the Farm Bill itself, it is important to note that there are areas of food and farm policy that are of interest to both public health and sustainable agriculture that are *not* part of the Farm Bill. This project was focused on the Farm Bill, however future work around other shared interests is suggested. Such areas include:

- Implementation of the new FDA food safety law, “The Food Safety Modernization Act”
- Food safety redefined to include chemical exposures
- Women, Infants, and Children feeding program issues
- EPA Clean Water Act regulations for confined animal feeding operations
- Antibiotics and arsenic feed additives
- Environmental and health effects from genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
- Child Nutrition Act and Farm-to-School programs, School lunch and school breakfast
- Influencing institutional food purchasing of healthy and regionally produced food.
- Anti-trust issues

Farm Bill Background

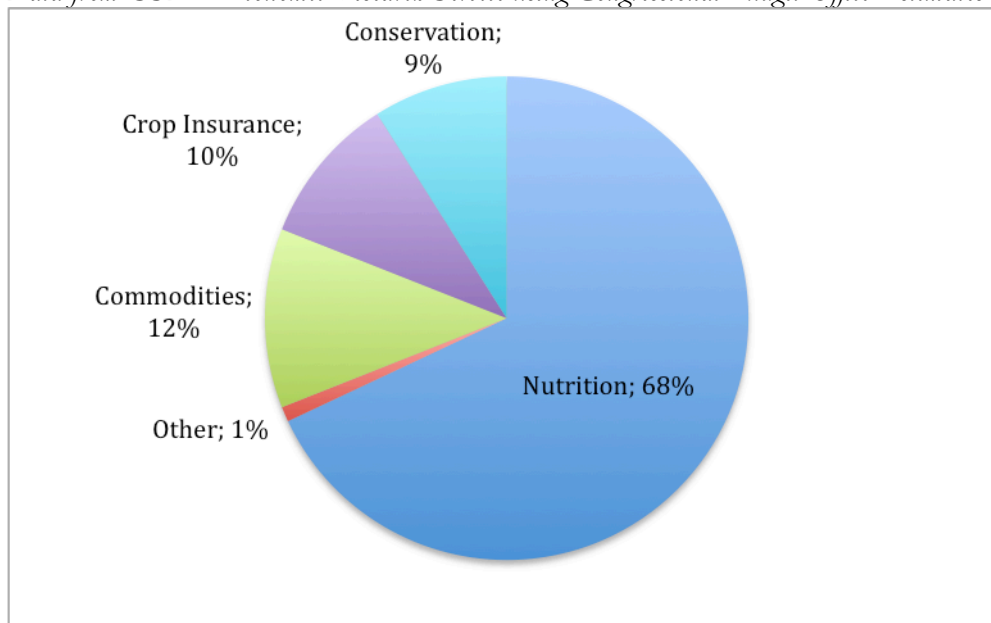
The Farm Bill is omnibus legislation reauthorized every four to seven years that governs portions of our national farm and food system. The 2008 Farm Bill, “The Food, Conservation and Energy Act,” was comprised of fifteen titles that established national goals and priorities for farm, conservation, nutrition, research, rural development, and a variety of other programs.

The 2008 Farm Bill authorized nearly \$300 billion in mandatory spending over five years, two-thirds of which funds nutrition and supplemental feeding programs. These programs are where public health has focused its efforts in the past, while NSAC worked primarily on other titles.

The chart below shows the division of farm bill spending at the time the 2008 Farm Bill passed. By the time Congress starts writing the next farm bill, the pie slices for nutrition, crop insurance, and conservation will have grown, while commodity spending will have shrunk relative to the total.

Chart 1: Percentages of Total Farm Bill Dollars Allocated to Major Titles

Data from USDA Economic Research Service using Congressional Budget Office Estimates



Income and price supports subsidizing commodity crop production such as corn, wheat, rice, cotton, and soy receive a sizable portion (about twelve percent) of Farm Bill entitlement spending, though with current relatively high commodity market prices, the funding levels are lower than they would be in low price years. Spending on subsidized crop insurance has sky-rocketed since 2000, and is now greater than the total spent on commodity payments. Under current estimates, the subsidies would reach as high as \$9 billion a year by the end of the next farm bill cycle. Mandatory funding for conservation programs increased in each of the last three Farm Bill re-authorizations and, absent any changes in the next farm bill, would reach \$6 billion a year during the next farm bill cycle. In the 2008 Farm Bill, mandatory support was also provided for beginning, socially disadvantaged and limited-resource farmers and ranchers, specialty crops, rural development, organic, and local/regional food systems, albeit at much lower funding levels than the bigger Farm Bill programs.

Farm Bill titles of particular relevance to NSAC and public health

Title I - Commodities: This title of the Farm Bill provides price and income support for farmers choosing to produce corn and other feed grains, peanuts, sugar, wheat and other food grains, rice, cotton, soy, oilseeds and dairy. Created in the wake of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, commodity programs were originally conceived as temporary buffers that used supply management tools, such as land set aside and grain reserves, to shield farm prices from volatile markets. Over time, the supply management function has receded, though has not completely disappeared, while the payment or subsidy aspect of the system has grown. The mechanisms for compensating farmers have evolved through the years; currently direct payments, countercyclical payments, and the marketing loan assistance program are the predominant forms of commodity farm subsidies. Pilot

programs were created in the 2008 Farm Bill, including a revenue-based countercyclical program called Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Payments. Since 1990, participation in the programs has required a conservation plan for highly erodible lands and has prohibited certain forms of wetland drainage and destruction.

This title is relevant to sustainable agriculture for a variety of reasons. During the 1990s, sustainable agriculture fought for and won the right of diversified sustainable and organic grain producers to not be penalized for having diversified crop rotations with fewer total years of commodity crops. Sustainable agriculture groups have led the charge on conservation compliance requirements to protect against soil loss and are part of a current campaign to stop subsidizing the destruction of native prairie. Sustainable agriculture has also fought, unsuccessfully, to better target the programs to stop subsidizing the consolidation of farms into fewer and fewer hands and to reduce barriers for new, beginning farmers.

Public health is concerned about the health effects of the environmental damage of the commodity system, including overuse of pesticides and water quality damage from chemical and soil run-off. Public health is also concerned about the potential impact of the subsidy programs on the widespread availability of low-cost, high-calorie, low-nutrient foods produced from these commodities.

Title II - Conservation: Originally created to address concerns about severe soil erosion, more recent conservation programs have expanded their scope to include protection and restoration of wildlife habitat, watershed restoration, renewable energy, greenhouse gas sequestration, preservation of open spaces, and improvement of water and air quality. In the 2008 Farm Bill, the Conservation Title received a net funding increase of \$5.3 billion over a ten-year period to expand both working lands programs, such as the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and conservation easement programs including the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. The largest conservation program, the land retirement program known as the Conservation Reserve Program, took a modest cut to help pay for some of the other increases. The 2008 Farm Bill also expanded conservation opportunities for specialty crop producers, farmers transitioning to organic systems, and beginning, socially disadvantaged and limited-resource farmers.

Overall, nine percent of 2008 Farm Bill funding was delegated to conservation. Protecting the environment is a major tenet of sustainable agriculture and has important implications for protecting public health.

Title IV - Nutrition: Although many associate the Farm Bill with agriculture, in fact, nutrition programs receive over two-thirds of all Farm Bill funds. The majority of this nutrition spending goes to the Food Stamp Program, re-named the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the 2008 Farm Bill. Other note-worthy programs include the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, a program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables in schools. The 2008 Farm Bill increased funding for each of these programs.

Public health highly values access to, and increased availability of, healthy food. There are also potential points of intersection between the nutrition title and sustainable agriculture, such as feeding program rules that could incentivize regional food production and purchase of fresh food, both of which could increase the market demand for products from sustainable farms.

Of important note, many nutrition programs relevant to both sustainable agriculture and public health, such as the school lunch and farm-to-school programs, are not authorized by the Farm Bill but rather by the Child Nutrition Act. The 5-year reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act was passed during the 2010 “lame duck” session of the 111th Congress and signed by President Obama on December 13, 2010. Child nutrition programs are not part of the Farm Bill because, while they fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate Agriculture Committee, they are not controlled by the House Agriculture Committee but rather by the House Education and Labor Committee.

Title V - Credit: This title authorizes lending policy for farm ownership and operating loans, conservation loans, and emergency loans. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans for farmers and ranchers. The 2008 Farm Bill expanded the scope of loan opportunities for beginning, socially disadvantaged and resource-limited farmers and ranchers and authorized a new Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account pilot program (not yet funded). The 2008 Farm Bill also creates a newly revised loan authority for the FSA to provide direct or guaranteed conservation loans to qualified borrowers. This title is of interest to both public health and sustainable agriculture because it can significantly influence what crops farmers choose to grow, having implications for farming methods and the types of crops made available for consumers.

Title VI - Rural Development: The Farm Bill authorizes loan and grant programs for rural development, promoting investment in rural infrastructure, economic development, and broadband/telecommunications modernization as well as renewable energy and local/regional food systems. The 2008 Farm Bill provisions include additional financial and technical assistance to rural businesses, including farmers, ranchers and non-profits, to improve their business and marketing skills through the Value-Added Producer Grant Program, the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program (including a set-aside for local and regional food enterprises), and the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP). Although they are not designed solely for this purpose, these programs can all be used to increase farmers’ share of the food and agricultural profits while increasing consumer access to healthy food grown by producers in their region.

Title VII - Research: The Farm Bill authorizes nutrition and agriculture research, education and extension services. The 2008 Farm Bill restructured one of the two major USDA research agencies to start the new National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The 2008 Farm Bill also provided mandatory funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), and created the newly renamed Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). Within AFRI, sustainable agriculture forces won inclusion of research priorities for renewable energy, domestic marketing strategies, rural entrepreneurship, and conventional (classical) plant and animal breeding. Despite all the changes and some significant improvements in organic research funding, the total investment in sustainable and organic agriculture and development is still a tiny fraction of the over \$2.5 billion annual federal investment in food and agriculture research.

Agriculture research and development strongly influence production methods and the types of foods produced, impacting both sustainable agriculture and public health over the long term. For example, public and private research facilitated lower corn production costs, which contributed to increased public and private investment into new uses for corn. Although difficult to quantify, the research title may very well have some of the most significant impacts on long-term food and agriculture trends.

Title IX - Energy: This title authorizes research and development and federal procurement for biofuel and cellulosic ethanol production. In support of farm and community renewable energy systems, the Farm Bill assists producers in production, refinement, distribution and marketing. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), which provides project-based financial assistance to encourage the production of renewable biomass energy crops, including perennial polycultures, which show promise as energy-efficient bioenergy or biofuels, including cellulosic ethanol. The program is designed to develop new crops and cropping systems that preserve natural resources. The new Farm Bill also created the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to make grants and loans available to farmers and businesses for energy conservation and production and provides grants and loans for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy systems. In addition to land-use issues and reducing the use of fossil fuels, the implication of the Energy title for either mitigating or contributing to climate change through its potential impact the types of fuel produced is another area of potential crossover for public health and sustainable agriculture.

Title X - Horticulture/ Organic: The 2008 Farm Bill takes significant steps to provide expanded assistance for organic producers and those who would like to transition to organic production. The bill increases funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program that funnels funds to state Agriculture Departments for investment in specialty crop research, infrastructure, marketing and promotion. The title also includes the Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and cost share assistance for organic farmers, both of which received mandatory funding in the 2008 bill. Specialty crops are of particular interest to Public Health professionals working to increase Americans' consumption of fruits and vegetables. Organic production does not use the pesticides that have been associated with cancers and birth defects.

Title XI - Livestock: This new farm bill title could address regulatory policy related to market competition, interstate trade, meat inspection, food safety concerns and livestock welfare issues. The 2008 Farm Bill provisions require livestock processors and packers to report marketing, pricing, and supply and demand conditions to USDA; expands producers' legal rights when entering contracts with processors; and directs USDA to issue regulations to enforce the "undue preference" provision of the Packers and Stockyards Act to make markets fairer for smaller producers. Further changes to existing laws governing livestock include a new provision that allows for the interstate shipment of meat and poultry and products from certain small state-inspected packing and processing establishments, as well as a modification to the country-of-origin labeling protocols for retailers. Proposed new rules for contract fairness and enforcing the prohibition against undue price preferences were issued in 2010 and USDA is currently working on the final rule, to be issued later in 2011. The livestock title has major implications for the future growth and stability of the emerging sustainable livestock production sector, which in turn has many implications for public health including potential health benefits of grass-based meat, the preservation of antibiotics, and the protection of natural resources.

Title XII - Crop Insurance and Disaster Assistance Programs: This title provides crop and revenue insurance at a variety of coverage levels for commodity and specialty crops. Although premiums and delivery costs are federally subsidized, crop and revenue insurance is sold and serviced through private insurance companies. Organic producers face a five percent surcharge on insurance premiums and are only reimbursed for the conventional prices of what they grow if they face a loss, though USDA is beginning to slowly make reforms in this area. The 2008 Farm Bill also creates the Supplemental Revenue Insurance (SURE) program, also known as the permanent

disaster program, that pre-pays for disaster assistance rather than solely relying on year-by-year supplemental appropriations bills to provide assistance in the case of weather disasters. Again, this title has significant influence over what crops producers choose to grow, and ultimately what is available for the public's consumption. A key issue is the current lack of any effective crop or revenue insurance product that works well for diversified sustainable or organic farms, including fruit and vegetable operations and mixed grain-livestock operations.

Title XIV - Miscellaneous: The current 2008 Miscellaneous Title includes provisions for animal welfare, homeland security, and assistance to socially disadvantaged and limited-resource producers, and generally serves as a catch-all for items that do not fall under one of the bill's primary titles.

Stakeholders and Current Political Landscape

Sustainable Agriculture

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities. NSAC's forty represented member groups advance common positions to support small and mid-sized family farms, protect natural resources, promote healthy rural communities, and ensure access to healthy, nutritious foods by everyone. Its policy priorities and positions are determined democratically by voting representatives from each member organization. NSAC's work is clustered in four major areas—Conservation, Energy, and Environment; Marketing, Food Systems, and Rural Development; Research, Extension, and Education; and Farming Opportunities and Fair Competition. NSAC has worked extensively on each of the last four omnibus Farm Bills (1990, 1996, 2002, and 2008) as well as on detailed Farm Bill implementation work. NSAC also conducts an annual campaign around a selected set of priorities for the annual agricultural appropriations bill.

On particular issues where there are common objectives, NSAC works in alliance with family farm organizations, including National Farmers Union and the National Family Farm Coalition; organic farming groups, including National Organic Coalition and Organic Trade Association; minority farmer groups, including Rural Coalition and National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association; conservation groups, including National Wildlife Federation and Izaak Walton League of America; environmental groups, including Environmental Defense Fund and Natural Resource Defense Council; consumer groups, including The Pew Charitable Trusts and Food and Water Watch; faith-based groups, including Bread for the World and US Conference of Catholic Bishops; anti-hunger groups, including Food Research Action Center; and Community Food Security groups, such as the Community Food Security Coalition.

Public Health/Health Professionals

The health community is not homogenous, including with respect to the Farm Bill. One must differentiate between health organizations in two ways. First, there is a critical difference between public health organizations that focus on population-based interventions and healthcare organizations that see their mission primarily as involving service to individuals. In the former category, there are prominent organizations such as the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Association of State and Territorial Health Offices, the National Association of City

and County Health Officials and the American Nurses Association (ANA)—all of which seek to improve the health of entire populations. Examples of organizations that tend to focus on care for individuals include the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dietetic Association (ADA), and most of the other organizations of health professionals and of health-affected patient groups.

Historically, this orientation between population health vs. individual health has flavored the general receptivity of those organizations to thinking about the food *system*, as well as their willingness to advocate for broad policy change at the population level. For example, APHA and other health organizations with more of a public health focus have for the last fifteen years increasingly advocated around policy issues concerning environmental health, and more recently have proven receptive to the idea of the food system as another example of an environmental health issue requiring policy change.

On the other hand, the more individual-focused health organizations seem to require a change in orientation both in terms of thinking more along the lines of population health and moving away from their previous assumption that environmental health issues (including the food system) were somehow marginal to their central missions and peripheral to their members' chief priorities. As a result, these individual-focused organizations may be more likely to target limited health outcomes of a dysfunctional food system—like obesity—rather than focusing on food and agriculture and their myriad health impacts as a more holistic problem.

Recent developments, however, indicate that some of these groups are beginning to adopt a more holistic perspective. The newly released “Principles for a Healthy, Sustainable Food System” by ADA, ANA, APA, and APHA is an example of this. Organizations like the AMA have already begun to shift their orientation; the AMA since 2009 has had a sustainable food policy, as does the ADA, and the APHA. However, often times these policy statements reflect more the interests and passions of staff or committed members rather than the sense of the membership of the entire organization as a whole. This indicates that building the broader health tent around a sustainable, healthy Farm Bill likely will require not only mobilizing a set of organizations, but also doing more organizing and education of individual members within those organizations.

The political might of the AMA, the ADA and other traditionally individual-care-oriented organizations is great. They are important allies for efforts around the Farm Bill and other food and agriculture policy issues.

Other Important Potential Allies

It was beyond the scope of this project to engage with other constituencies. The project team strongly recommends that other key groups be included as the conversation moves forward. The following groups have the potential to both be strong allies and potentially have top priorities that might be in contrast to those that come forward as shared priorities for public health and sustainable agriculture. It will be important to seek agreement and support wherever possible. Just as public health and sustainable agriculture are diverse within their groups, so are anti-hunger, conservation, consumer, and specialty crop groups. The following are very brief summaries of possible places of connection and potential rubs.

Anti-Hunger

The Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill absorbs about seventy percent of total Farm Bill spending and for many years several groups have held powerful sway over what it included. The leading organizations, including Food Research Action Center (FRAC), Feeding America (formerly Second Harvest Food Banks), and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, believe the SNAP (formerly Food Stamp) program is the crucial frontline program fighting hunger in America, and increasing funding for it is always their primary Farm Bill goal. These groups and their members deal with the horror of widespread hunger every day and their mission is to get food (calories) to people in immediate need as effectively and efficiently as possible. Historically, they have been less concerned about where funds to increase SNAP came from, which has created tension with progressive agriculture, environmental and rural development advocates.

Food Stamps were never designed to provide a complete food budget and continued high rates of poverty have meant that benefit levels have consistently been inadequate. Anti-hunger advocates have fought over the years to preserve and expand this core assistance program and are resistant to anything that might dilute it—including discussions of food quality.

Conventional agriculture groups have been good allies to the anti-hunger lobby. The powerful conventional agriculture lobby supports the changes in the nutrition title that the anti-hunger groups offer. More importantly, from a strategic point of view, getting small but not insignificant gains for food programs by cutting deals to support *status quo* agriculture policies will have a higher return on investment than seeking bigger gains in alliance with other public interest groups working on the Farm Bill.

A big question as the next Farm Bill develops is whether the anti-hunger community will continue its alliance with the conventional farm lobby or whether it might once again, as it has at times in the past, join forces with other public interest coalitions working on environmental, consumer, family farm, public health and other Farm Bill considerations. As one of the most important political forces in any Farm Bill debate, the positioning of the anti-hunger advocacy community will play a big role in how far a public health-sustainable agriculture agenda would advance.

Conservation and Environment

The conservation title of the Farm Bill launched into a dominant role within Farm Bill debates in 1985 and the title has continued to grow in each Farm Bill thereafter. In the next Farm Bill cycle, the current funding baseline for conservation programs is as large as the commodity subsidies, for the first time ever in history.

Given the prominence of environmental health issues within the public health community, clearly the conservation issues in the farm bill have considerable importance. Certain environmental groups, and a small handful of conservation organizations, have provided some support to healthy food initiatives, particularly during debate over the 2008 Farm Bill.

Sustainable agriculture groups, including NSAC prominently, have also been extremely engaged in the conservation title and played the lead role in establishing such initiatives as the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Conservation Buffer Initiative, and the Conservation Stewardship Program. Often sustainable agriculture and conservation groups, and sustainable agriculture and environmental groups, are on the same page and work closely together. Sometimes, however, they do not line up together. For example, some conservation organizations put a greater priority on land retirement

programs than working lands conservation programs, with sustainable agriculture placing the emphasis the opposite way. Some environmental organizations have strongly backed increasing conservation financial assistance to CAFOs, a move strongly opposed by NSAC.

The Conservation Coalition, in existence since 1986, is an informal network of many of the conservation, environmental, and sustainable and organic agriculture organizations. The Coalition meets regularly and serves as both as a sounding board for proposals and as a place to develop joint strategies on shared interests. It will remain a very important instrument for testing the waters on proposals for the 2012 Farm Bill, including for public health issues and interests in the conservation title.

Consumer

Consumer advocacy groups are another constituency for potential partnership on agriculture and food policy issues. In recent years, the consumer community has shown growing interest and involvement in these issues and their agenda at times strongly intersects with the public health agenda. Many of them have large grassroots constituencies that will be mobilizing on farm and food policy between now and the next Farm Bill.

The main consumer advocacy group working on the 2008 Farm Bill was Food & Water Watch, whose focus on CAFOs, antibiotic use in animal agriculture, and increasing consumers' access to safe, healthy and sustainable food meshes well with the public health community's agenda. FWW also works closely with family farm and ranch groups and organizes around boosting the economic viability of small and midsized farms, which in turn increases consumer access to their products. Their work, along with the work of coalition partners, led to the creation of the first-ever Livestock Title in the 2008 Farm Bill. The title prohibits some of the most exploitative practices by meatpackers against livestock producers, including discriminatory treatment that shuts smaller producers out of local markets. FWW will also be working on local and regional food system infrastructure, which can help improve consumer access to sustainable and healthy food in what are currently food deserts.

Other consumer groups, including Consumers Union, also work on antibiotic issues in livestock production as it affects consumers exposed to resistant bacteria on meat. CU, FWW, Consumer Federation of America, National Consumers League and Safe Tables Our Priority (STOP) also work on food safety issues. One area of tension in this community has been around scale-diverse vs. scale-neutral policies. The majority of these groups opposed language in the Food Safety Modernization Act that treated small farms and local food systems differently from large-scale operations. FWW broke from the consumer community on this issue and supported the small farm language. This language was also supported by NSAC.

Specialty Crop Trade Associations

Given the public health community's interest in expanding access to fresh fruit and vegetables and the sustainable agriculture community's interest in serving sustainable and organic farmers in the produce business, the intersection with the major specialty crop trade associations is also a very important consideration. In the lead up to the 2008 Farm Bill, the major groups, including United Fresh, Western Growers Association, and Produce Marketing Association, formed for the first time the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance. They were quite successful in achieving the first ever Horticulture title to the farm bill and in securing some mandatory Farm Bill funding for Specialty

Crop Block Grants, Specialty Crop Research Initiative, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable school feeding program add-on.

The public health community worked closely with United Fresh during the 2008 Farm Bill and supported many of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance's priorities. There is likely to be crossover for the next Farm Bill; however, public health concerns for the Farm Bill go beyond specialty crops and could include issues that the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance might not support, such as targeted protections and provisions for small and mid-sized farms and farms using sustainable production practices.

Sustainable agriculture and specialty crop associations have worked together on policies such as the Farm-to-School program funded as part of the child nutrition reauthorization in 2010 and on procurement reform in the 2008 Farm Bill. However, there have also been times when the two communities have squared off, as, for instance, over sustainability language in the Specialty Crop Research Initiative in 2008 or more recently over a variety of small farm and local-regional food system amendments to the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2010. These tensions over conventional versus alternative agriculture and over mega farms versus small and mid-scale family farms are likely to remain and may crop up here and there during the next Farm Bill debate.

Top Tier Congressional Targets

Equally important to seeking common ground among the above groups is securing support for priorities from legislators on Capitol Hill. The following is a brief overview of current top tier Congressional targets for Farm Bill legislation.

In both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Agriculture Committees hold primary responsibility for authorizing the Farm Bill. In the House, the new Agriculture Committee chair is Frank Lucas (R-OK) and in the Senate the new chair of the Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee is Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). Lucas has long served as the Ranking Member for the subcommittee that handles conservation, energy, and credit issues. Stabenow is best known for her work on Farm Bill provisions for fruits and vegetables and for the lead role she played on climate change provisions for agriculture.

Beyond the Agriculture Committee, the Budget Committees in both houses play an important role in the Farm Bill process by setting the broad parameters for Farm Bill funding in the budget resolution. The Congressional Budget Committees determine levels of revenue and spending for each agency, and therefore play a large role in establishing the USDA's overall budget, or the "baseline" spending that will be the starting point for the Agriculture Committees' deliberations.

This is a particularly important role when, as was the case in each of the last two Farm Bills, the budget resolution provided a means for Farm Bill funding increases. However, the more likely scenario for the next Farm Bill will either be level funding or an overall cut rather than an increase (see budget reconciliation discussion below). Paul Ryan (R-WI) is the new chair of the House Budget Committee and Kent Conrad (D-ND) is the chair on the Senate side, with Conrad, who will retire after 2012, also playing key roles on the Agriculture and Finance Committees. Both Ryan and Conrad are strong deficit hawks and are both likely to support budget reconciliation and entitlement reform, though whether and to what degree they include agriculture in that mix remains to be seen.

In the last Farm Bill, though not typically, the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee played major roles, providing offsets for Farm Bill spending increases (especially for food stamps) and also including a wide variety of tax provisions in the Farm Bill itself. It is unclear at this early point in the process whether there would be a repeat performance, though most expert commentators are dubious.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees' Agriculture Subcommittees also play an indirect role in Farm Bills. The majority of the mandatory spending authorized through the Farm Bill funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), although many commodity, crop insurance, and conservation programs also receive mandatory funding, as do a smattering of programs in other titles. However, most other programs authorized by the Farm Bill do not receive mandatory funding. About 20% of the USDA budget is subject to discretionary funding and the annual agricultural appropriations bill weighs in at about \$23 billion.

The Congressional Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture determine the fate of these discretionary Farm Bill programs. If a program authorized by the Farm Bill does not receive appropriations through the subcommittee, the program dies. The appropriations bills also sometimes place limitations on mandatory Farm Bill spending. These backdoor Farm Bill cuts are fought out each year, with the Agriculture Committees sometimes coming to the rescue of their programs, and sometimes not.

Jack Kingston (R-GA) is the new chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Herb Kohl (D-WI) continues as chair on the Senate side. Sam Farr (D-CA) is the new ranking member on the House subcommittee, while Thad Cochran (R-MS) takes over that role for the Senate subcommittee.

In the Senate Agriculture Committee, subcommittees are not often all that important. But in the House, where there are often subcommittee markups prior to full committee markups, the subcommittees can be very important. The current subcommittee chairs are Conservation, Energy & Forestry (Chair: Glenn Thompson, R-PA), Nutrition & Horticulture (Chair: Jean Schmidt, R-OH), Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture (Chair: Timothy Johnson, R-IL), General Farm Commodities and Risk Management (Chair: Michael Conaway, R-TX), Livestock, Dairy and Poultry (Chair: Tom Rooney, R-FL), and Department Operations, Oversight, and Credit (Chair: Jeff Fortenberry, R-NE). The ranking members are, respectively, Tim Holden (D-PA), Joe Baca (D-CA), Jim Costa (D-CA), Leonard Boswell (D-IA), Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), and Marcia Fudge (D-OH).

Obvious top-tier targets include the chairs and ranking members of the full committees and the subcommittees (see charts below). In addition, however, it is important to consider some of the rank and file members as potential champions and co-sponsors of Farm Bill legislation. Trying to find just the right combination of sponsors for bills and amendments is a bit of an art form, but the right champion, even if not joined by a deep bench, can often win major provisions when backed by a strong set of proposals and a support campaign.

Congressional caucuses are also important to consider when looking at the political landscape. Representatives from both the House and the Senate comprise caucuses as a forum for discussion of similar political interest. Caucuses of relevance to the Farm Bill include:

- New Democrat Caucus
- Progressive Caucus
- Black Caucus
- Hispanic Caucus
- Asian-Pacific Caucus
- Congressional Hunger Caucus
- Organic Caucus
- Rural Caucus

Chart 2: Top Tier Targets in the House of Representatives

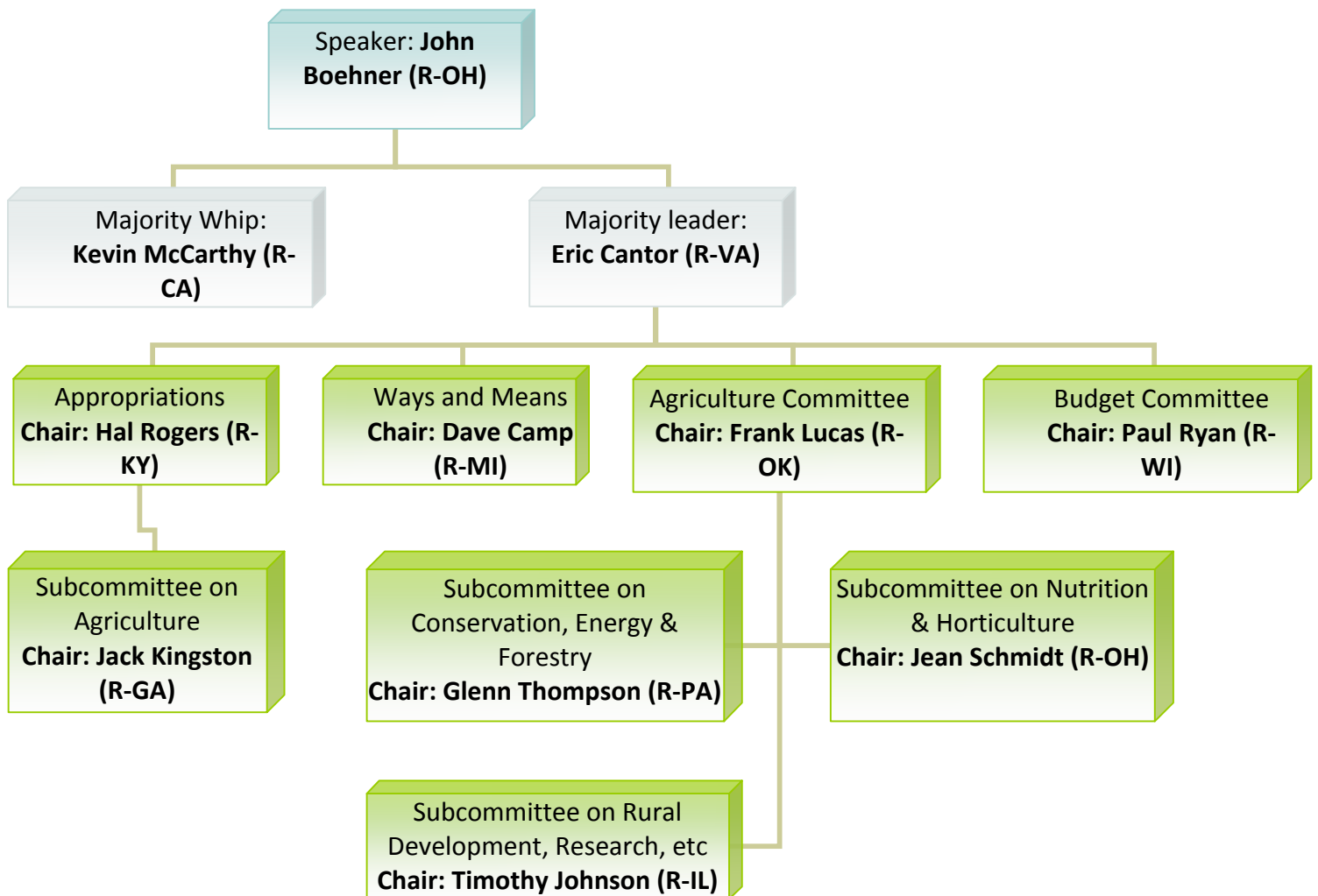
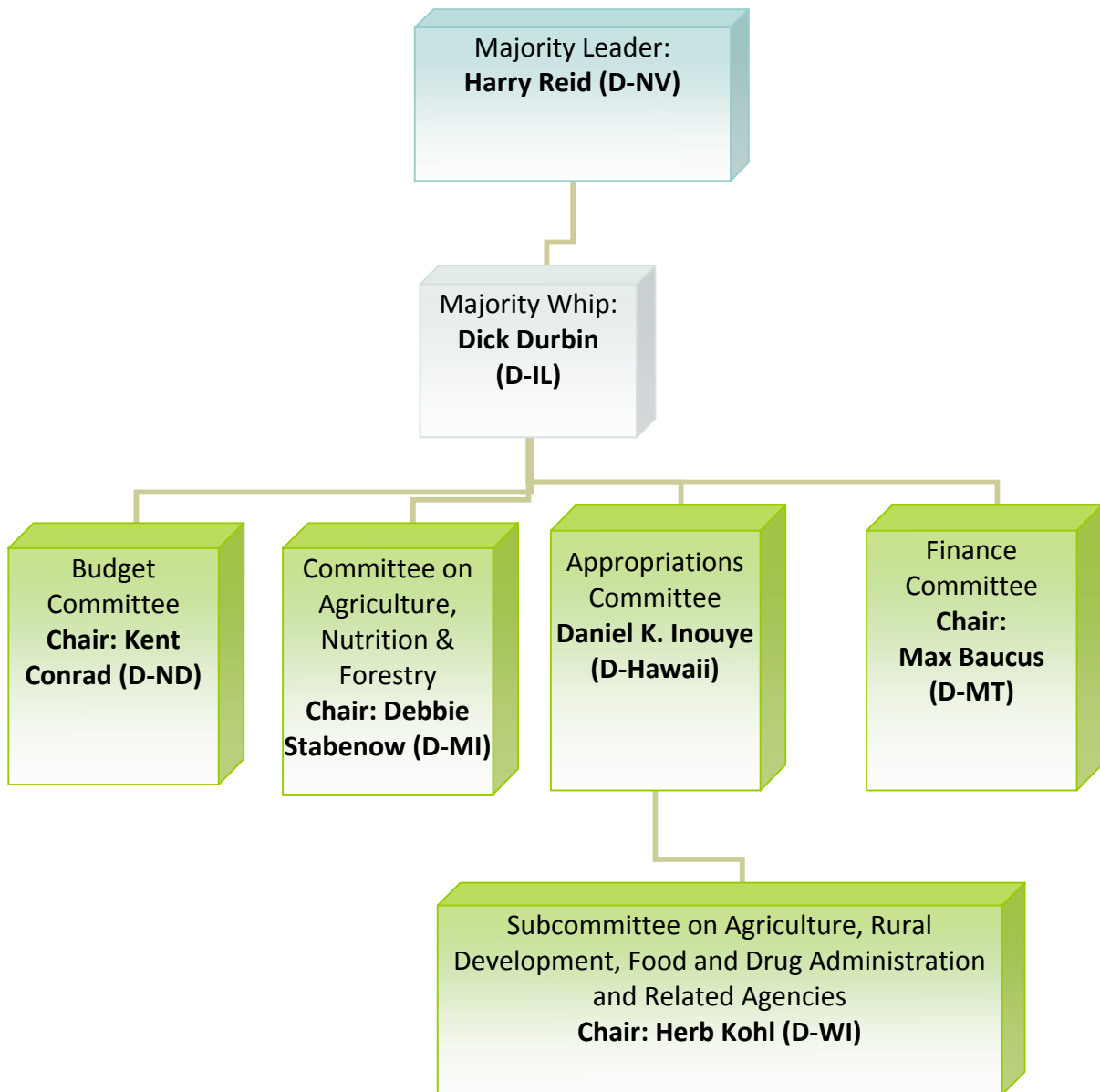


Chart 3: Top Tier Targets in The Senate



Political/Financial Repercussions of Budget Reconciliation

Perhaps as equally influential on Farm Bill legislative outcomes as the Senators and Representatives involved is the current fiscal climate. There is a strong possibility there will be a budget resolution in the near future. In the budget resolution, during times of concern about the size of the federal deficit, the House and Senate Budget Committees sometimes include reconciliation directives, which instruct certain authorizing committees to achieve a specified amount of savings from mandatory spending, including entitlements. Should the Agriculture Committees receive such a request, the Farm Bill will likely undergo a transformation, the significance of which would be subject to the size of the spending cuts authorized in the budget resolution. Authorizing committees have full

discretion to determine their own policies; in the case of the Agriculture Committees, the committee may cut spending for one program of the Farm Bill significantly or make minor cuts to several different programs, as long as they achieve the savings stipulated in the directive.

Differences almost always exist between House and Senate reconciliation measures, in which case the usual procedure to attain a single reconciliation bill involves a conference committee between the House and Senate. Once conferees reach an agreement, Congress enrolls the bill and sends it for presidential approval. Thus, the Farm Bill may be affected in a number of ways contingent first upon the discussions of the Agriculture Committees and subsequently upon the exchanges of House and Senate conferees. The result would be a net reduction in spending on Farm Bill programs.

At times, budget reconciliation with agricultural instructions will occur at the same time that Congress is reauthorizing the Farm Bill. In those cases, the two bills—reconciliation and the Farm Bill—may run along parallel tracks, with one bill cutting spending and the other maintaining the remaining Farm Bill baseline, or may be combined into a single measure.

Farm Bill funding cuts via budget reconciliation were made in 1982, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1996, and 2005. Both the 1990 and 1996 bills happened in conjunction with the Farm Bills of the same years. The first five of the reconciliation bills cut commodity program expenditures, whereas the last two cut food stamps and conservation, research, and energy programs, respectively.

A preview of what could potentially happen in a Budget Reconciliation bill relative to Farm Bill spending was witnessed in 2010 during consideration of the Child Nutrition Act reauthorization. To comply with budget rules and offset the proposed increase in spending on school meals, the Senate Agriculture Committee first tried cutting farm bill conservation programs and then, after a storm of protest, switched to cutting food stamps, which, despite a second storm of protest, became part of the final measure signed into law.

PART III

Issue Areas and Ideas for Potential Collaboration

Given the diverse number of stakeholders who will be part of the next Farm Bill reauthorization, a strong alliance between—and consistent messaging from—groups with shared goals will be essential to ensure such goals are heard and championed on Capitol Hill. To begin the exploration of how sustainable agriculture and public health might come together around some issues for the next Farm Bill, the project team held in-person and phone-based team meetings and made presentations to National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition members, the Community Food Security Coalition, and at the America Public Health Association meeting. Ideas were both broad and specific depending on the particular issue.

In general, there seems to be mutual support for the following issue areas:

- Local and Regional Food Systems, including supporting small and midsized farms, diversified production, and removing barriers for new and disadvantaged farmers
- Eliminating Food Deserts
- Supporting and building on programs passed in the 2008 Farm Bill, such as Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development, Community Food Projects, and Farmers Market Nutrition

and Promotion Programs, as well as general support for programs and policies that would support the production of diversified fruits, vegetables and other healthy food

- Healthy Food Financing Initiative
- More equal access to USDA farm and research grants and support for more research around relevant issue areas in general
- Farm-to-Institution Programs and Policy
- Environmental health
- Native and culturally appropriate foods
- Farmworker health
- Building broader coalitions for this work

More specifically, the team discussed several broad based new ideas, as well as Farm-Bill-title-specific ideas. Some of the broader ideas included:

Research

Both groups supported language that would require a study of effects of the Farm Bill, or a subset of Farm Bill policies and programs, on human and economic health as either part of a new public health title, or part of the research title (see further discussion of a public health title below). There was also support for a study on the health impacts of local and regional food systems. It was suggested to create grants that would establish food systems research centers at various universities. In terms of specific research areas, there was interest in a public seed-breeding program, research that would support the production and distribution of healthy foods, and research improving sustainable and organic food production.

Food System Grant Program

Making healthy food available to consumers and markets available to producers of such food requires the community infrastructure to facilitate this. As such, the idea of expanding existing programs such as the Hunger-Free Communities Grant Program (within the Food and Nutrition Service) or Community Food Projects Grant Program (within NIFA) to encompass more of a food systems approach was discussed, as was the idea of creating a new grant program specifically tailored to this interest. One concept is to provide grants to localities that would support the long-term sustainability and adaptability of the food system through local or regional food policy councils.

New Nutrition Program-Related Markets for Local Foods from Sustainable Farms

Increasing sustainable producers' access to markets and thus consumers' access to their products is a mutually supported goal. Some shared ideas for how to advance this goal were:

- Expand funding for SNAP at Farmers Markets, including providing EBT machines to all markets and incentive programs for using SNAP dollars for healthy food purchases
- Add language in the Fruit and Vegetable Snack program to encourage regional sourcing
- Remove barriers to organics in the WIC program, while maintaining fair prices for farmers
- Remove barriers for the use of the WIC programs new cash value vouchers at farmers markets nationwide
- Support more funding for the development of regional food hubs and value-chains through school meal and government institutional meal programs.
- Encourage schools to use geographic preference to source food locally and regionally

Whole Farm Revenue Insurance

The lack of effective and nationally available revenue insurance products for all types of diversified, sustainable farms, including fruit and vegetable operations and mixed grain-livestock operations, is a significant barrier facing farms trying to adopt more sustainable systems. Crop insurance has now become the dominant public subsidy related to agricultural production and most agricultural lenders now require farmers to have insurance before they will make annual operating loans. Not only are diversified producers without effective insurance options, but the same holds true for farmers who are either selling into direct or alternative markets or are creating substantial value-added to the crops and livestock before it leaves the farm.

Public health interests in diversity and in the availability of healthy options would be well served by creation of an effective whole farm revenue insurance product. However, while the concept is clear, the specifics of such a program and the political barriers to its adoption are high. The details will also be difficult for much of the public health and even sustainable agriculture communities to understand or be motivated to pay attention to. These types of important, but somewhat arcane farm program issues will bear careful strategic consideration in any public health/sustainable agriculture Farm Bill campaign that might move forward.

Illustrative Examples by Farm Bill Title

NSAC's Policy Director provided title-by-title examples of issues that have been of interest to the sustainable agriculture community that might possibly be of interest to the public health community at the 2010 APHA Annual Meeting. This list was also provided to the NSAC-sponsored Farm Bill Summit in January 2011.

Title I: Commodity Programs

- **Fuller Planting Flexibility** – increase availability of fresh⁴ local produce by expanding planting flexibility to allow for fruit and vegetable production for the fresh, local/regional market on commodity program base acreage up to a specified acreage with no commodity loan or payments on those 'flexed' acres.
- **Strengthened Conservation Compliance** – Strengthen existing conservation eligibility ("compliance") requirements for receipt of commodity subsidies and expand compliance to include water quality and drinking water protections.

Title II: Conservation

- **Conservation Stewardship Program** – Protect and grow the Conservation Stewardship Program to encourage comprehensive conservation and biodiversity and provide support to farmers and ranchers nationwide who meet the pressing resource concerns in their watershed/region and high standards for environmental performance.

⁴ It is important to note while many in the public health community promote only fresh food, most public health nutritionists promote fresh, frozen and canned. Fresh food is less likely to be available year-round and likely less to be affordable. Improving supply chains and supporting regional and mid-scale agriculture could have a positive impact on improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and in general, is a key part of reforming the food system to be more healthy and sustainable.

- **Organic Conversion Assistance** – Continue and improve conservation financial assistance to help farmers and ranchers make the multi-year transition to certified organic farming systems.
- **Targeted Nutrient and Pest Management Projects** – Provide for increased targeted, landscape-scale, project-based conservation assistance through partnership projects to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and install a wide variety of conservation buffers.
- **CAFO Waste Storage, Treatment and Transport** – Stop using conservation assistance dollars to help new or expanding industrial livestock facilities pay for their basic infrastructure requirements under Clean Water Act.
- **Conservation Support for Reductions in Antibiotic Usage and Pollution** – Provide conservation cost-share and conservation enhancement assistance for practices and system conversions to help reduce or eliminate the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics and related pollution of water bodies.

Title IV: Nutrition

- **Community Food and Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Grants** – Increase funding for community food grants and healthy food enterprise grants.
- **EBT for Farmers Markets and Community Supported Agriculture** – Expand SNAP participant access to healthy local food by providing EBT technology to farmers markets and CSAs.
- **Healthy Food Incentives** – Increase SNAP benefit levels in general to support an adequate and healthy diet and target support for better nutrition and improved health outcomes through SNAP bonus incentives for healthy food choices.
- **Healthy Food Financing Initiative** – Provide creative financing for new food retail in urban, rural, and tribal food deserts.

Title V: Credit

- **Beginning Farmer Credit** – Expand financing options for new and beginning farmers to help a new, diverse generation of local and regional food entrepreneurs gain access to land and other productive assets.
- **Credit for Alternative Crops, Enterprises, and Markets** – Mandate the development of effective, practical options for direct and guaranteed lending to currently underserved farmers and ranchers engaged in diversified food production, alternative or non-conventional (in a given region) crops or livestock, and direct-to-consumer, institutional, or value-added markets.
- **Suspend Loans to Saturated Industrial Food Markets** – Terminate government-assisted lending to industrial livestock and poultry confinement operations controlled by contracts with corporate packers and integrators in markets that are already in oversupply.

Title VI: Rural Development

- **Local and Regional Food System Enterprise Grant and Loan Programs** – Modify the terms and conditions of existing rural business and cooperative development programs to boost the availability of grants and loans for building on-farm and off-farm jobs by rebuilding the infrastructure and creating the value chains needed for a comprehensive healthy food network.
- **Fund for Rural Innovation and Prosperity** – Create a special rural development fund for USDA to use as Farm Bill matching dollars for existing rural business, community facility, and rural infrastructure programs to support competitive, regional innovation initiatives in high growth sectors, including good food systems.

Title VII: Research

- **Food Safety Training Grants** – Provide Farm Bill competitive grant funding for the farmer and small local processor food safety training program established under the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2010 to help farm and other non-governmental organizations, Extension, and others providing GAP and related training.
- **Public Plant and Animal Breeding** – Create a nationwide initiative through competitive grants as well as government research to develop new or improved locally-adapted varieties through conventional breeding research and development projects for sustainable farming systems and improved food quality and nutrition.
- **Antibiotic Resistance Research** – Provide farm bill funding for the Antibiotics Resistance Research Program created by the 2008 Farm Bill to improve the state of knowledge on: methods and practices of animal husbandry to ensure the judicious use of antibiotics; transport of antibiotic resistant bacteria into groundwater; and conditions that affect antibiotic use on farms.

Title X: Horticulture & Organic

- **Specialty Crop Block Grants** – Expand Specialty Crop Block Grants to the states in order to include projects aimed specifically at measurable public health outcomes and improved food access in high need areas.
- **National Organic Certification Cost Share** – Renew funding for the organic certification cost-share program to share the increased cost of certification under the national program with all organic producers who wish to participate.
- **Farmers Market Promotion Program** – Renew and increase funding for FMPP to promote expanding opportunities for farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and all other forms of direct farmer-to-consumer marketing, and to add a technical assistance component to the program.

Title XI: Livestock

- **Market Competition and Contract Reform** – Build upon the unprecedented livestock competition title of the 2008 Farm Bill to further grow niche sustainably-raised humane

livestock and poultry markets and protect the producers filling those growing markets from unfair packer and integrator practices, and improve contract fairness such that producers have more control and are not required to use feed containing antibiotics.

Title XII: Crop Insurance

- **Whole Farm Revenue Insurance for Diversified Farms** – Mandate establishment of a whole farm revenue insurance product available nationwide for all crop and livestock enterprises to provide an effective insurance option for diversified farms including fruit and vegetable operations, diversified grain and livestock farms, organic farms, and farms which rely on direct or value-added markets.
- **Crop Insurance for Organic Farms** – Eliminate the current insurance premium surcharge for organic producers and accelerate the collection of organic price series to enable crop insurance payments at organic prices rather than convention prices.
- **Conservation Compliance** – Re-attach conservation compliance as an eligibility requirement for receipt of publicly subsidized insurance, and expand compliance to include water quality and drinking water protections.

Title XIV: Miscellaneous

- **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program** – Renew and increase funding for the new BFRDP program to help create the training infrastructure and support needed to increase new good food farmers by 100,000 or more during the coming Farm Bill cycle.
- **Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers** – Renew and increase funding for the minority farmer outreach and assistance program to support the minority and indigenous farming community.

Title ???: A New Public Health Title

Consider creation of a new “public health” title of the Farm Bill that might include:

- A Congressional Statement of Policy in support of linking public policy and support for food, agriculture, conservation, and rural development to specific public health outcomes.
- A biennial “status report” to Congress on progress in achieving public health outcomes through food and agricultural policies and programs.
- A regulatory impact statement requirement on any USDA regulation deemed to have a significant potential impact on public health.
- A policy advisory committee to the Secretary made up of stakeholder and professional representatives of the public health community.
- Other similar types of research, evaluative, oversight, or guidance activities or requirements.

The concept of creating a public health title for the next Farm Bill was well-received by both constituencies. As noted above, the public health title would not necessarily consist of new programs nor would it move programs from other titles. Instead, it would be a short title or perhaps

integrated into the Farm Bill preamble, expressing Congressional support for a healthy, sustainable, resilient food system. Because the links between Farm Bill policy and health are not always immediately apparent to the majority of public health practitioners, this new title would be a way to raise the interest and engagement of the health community in Farm Bill policymaking and implementation. Many NSAC members support this idea because they value the power the health voice brings to the table and see this title as a way to increase the size of the collective voice in support of sustainable agriculture. Once more of the public health community is engaged, they could be educated to advocate for other priorities that would serve both health and sustainable agriculture, such as whole farm revenue insurance.

There is some concern, however, that creating a public health title could co-opt the health concept, or limit the potential for Congress to support health more broadly in agriculture policy and generally into the future because it could be believed that health has already been “addressed” by the title. Instead, some suggest making an overt effort to apply a public health lens to all titles. Either way, it is clear that much value can come from emphasizing the health angles and impacts.

Next Steps

The project team presents these ideas as a basis for further discussion and work. Not only are more internal conversations necessary among public health and NSAC, but also with key partners from other interest groups. It will be important to include key Legislators in the conversation as priorities are determined in order to ensure there are champions in Congress for final priorities.

Due to the new House Agriculture Committee Chair’s timeline, there is slightly more time than previously thought to determine priorities for the next Farm Bill. Still, these priorities should be decided as swiftly as possible, and funding sources identified to support both the priority setting and the implementation processes. Because such joint work is out of the traditional purview of both public health and NSAC, it will be necessary to secure funding from new and diverse sources to continue this work. Neither constituency currently has funding that can be directed toward this important shared work.

Conclusion

While there may be limited opportunity for new programs in the 2012 Farm Bill because of budget constraints and the need to protect baseline Farm Bill programs, there is a lot of energy and creativity between these two communities and much potential for a combined effort to ensure a healthy, sustainable food system for all Americans into the future.

Moving forward with this work will require funding, continuous communication and dialogue between and among the sustainable agriculture and public health communities, as well as with colleagues from other fields. This work should continue not just at times of Farm Bill reauthorization, but also during appropriations, for regulatory matters and for legislation outside of the Farm Bill that impacts both sustainable agriculture and public health. There is much to be gained toward supporting America’s farmers and Americans’ health through this collaboration.