


## Statement by the President on the Farm Bill

The Congress has agreed on legislation to extend current farm programs to April 18, 2008. I will sign this  [White House News](#) legislation to avoid serious disruptions that might result if the current law is allowed to expire without a responsible farm bill enacted in its place. Farmers and ranchers deserve to know the structure of policies that affect their day-to-day business activities, and right now they face uncertainty.

Throughout this process, my goal has been, and remains, to sign a good farm bill. Over one year ago, following listening sessions across the Nation, the Department of Agriculture unveiled a reform-minded and fiscally responsible approach to supporting America's farmers and ranchers. My proposal would provide agriculture producers with a safety net that better targets benefits and provides funding for emerging priorities. Today's farm economy is very strong, and Congress should not miss this opportunity to reform current farm programs.

My Administration has been eager to work with Congress. We have offered legislative language and a list of potential spending offsets to ensure Congress does not increase taxes, and while insisting on significant program reforms, we have demonstrated flexibility on how to achieve real reform. I have also made it clear that any final farm bill that includes a tax increase or does not include reform will be met with a veto. These negotiations have taken place in good faith with the goal of reaching a final agreement that meets the needs of farmers and enjoys the support of America's taxpayers.

This legislation to extend current farm programs will provide more time for Congress to reach an agreement. If a final agreement is not reached by April 18, I call on Congress to extend current law for at least one year. While long-term extension of current law is not the desired outcome, I believe the government has a responsibility to provide America's farmers and ranchers with a timely and predictable farm program -- not multiple short-term extensions of current law. Without a predictable policy, agriculture producers will be unable to make sound business decisions with respect to this year's crop.

I am eager to sign a farm bill that provides a safety net for farmers, includes significant farm program reform similar to the Administration's farm bill proposal, and does not include tax increases. I have made clear the framework of an agreement that will garner my signature and urge Congress to pass a bill that meets these criteria.