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Farm Bill Now Coalition Unites Nation's Farm Groups in Push for New Farm Bill

New website, planned events in Iowa, D.C., highlight effort to provide American farmers with certainty, security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Canola Association has joined a coalition of 39 of the nation's foremost agricultural organizations in an effort to raise public awareness of the need for Congress to pass a new, comprehensive, five-year farm bill before current farm programs expire in September.

The coalition, called Farm Bill Now, comprises associations and coalitions representing commodity crops, livestock, dairy, specialty crops, state and local governments, minor crops, energy and biobased product groups, farm cooperatives and financial groups, as well as the nation's two largest farm groups, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union. Each organization has strong and distinct policy priorities, yet all 39 are committed to passing a new, comprehensive bill this year.

Today, the group issues the following statement, titled "Why We Need a Farm Bill", on the importance of new farm legislation for America's farmers:

"Calling the farm bill the 'farm bill' suggests its impact is limited only to farms and to the rural areas to which they are so closely tied. It's really a jobs bill. A food bill. A conservation bill. A research bill. An energy bill. A trade bill. In other words, it's a bill that affects every American.

"The farm bill affects our nation's ability to provide the necessities of life for a global population projected to pass 9 billion by 2050. Here at home, it affects an industry that provides 23 million—or 1 in every 12—American jobs.

"The farm bill has broad impact on our citizens and our economy. It provides healthy foods to millions of schoolchildren and nutritious options to families in need. It develops and expands trade with valuable foreign markets. By reducing spending significantly compared to prior farm bills, the proposals pending right now in Congress address the need to get our nation's fiscal house in order.

"And yes, it benefits American farms—98 percent of which are owned and operated by families. It helps big farms and small farms, major crops and specialty crops, organic farmers and conventional farmers, cattle ranchers and cotton ginners, farmers markets and national suppliers, and the vast range of other pursuits that make up American agriculture. This year, it would help farmers tackle the challenges posed by the worst drought in a generation.

"While Congress waits to finish the farm bill, we are united in asking all Americans to encourage legislators—home for summer town hall meetings and speeches—to finish this vital legislation before the current farm and food law expires in September. After all, it's your bill too."

In addition to today's statement, Farm Bill Now launched an interactive web portal at www.FarmBillNow.com, through which visitors to the site can connect to their members of Congress and show their support for a new five-year farm bill. Using messages to Congress via social media, event locations and times, and an online petition, FarmBillNow.com gives both farmers and consumers the

resources they need to make their voices heard, telling Congress that the farm bill needs to be completed before the current farm food law expires in September.

In the coming weeks, Farm Bill Now will hold events in Iowa and on Capitol Hill to underscore the message as well.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, Aug. 28, farmers representing multiple groups within the coalition will discuss the Farm Bill Now effort at the annual Farm Progress Show in Boone, Iowa, the nation's largest outdoor farm show.

Wednesday morning Sept. 12, representatives of many of the groups uniting today will gather on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol to encourage Congress to pass the bill before programs expire at the end of the month.

For more information on Farm Bill Now and to get involved in ensuring that American agriculture has the security and certainty that it needs, please visit FarmBillNow.com.

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Farm Bill Now is a coalition of 39 agricultural groups, each with strong and varied policy priorities, yet all committed to passing a farm bill this year. Learn more at www.FarmBillNow.com.

*25x25 Alliance
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Beekeeping Federation
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Pulse Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Biobased Products Coalition
Council of State Governments East
Council of State Governments Midwest
Farm Credit Council*

*National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
Northharvest Bean Growers Association
Northeast State Association for
Agricultural Stewardship*

*Produce Marketing Association
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance
State Agriculture and Rural Leaders
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Fresh Produce Association
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Dry Bean Council
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
USA Rice Federation
Western Growers Association
Western Peanut Growers Association*