



How important is the Federal Food Bill?

The farm bill is the primary piece of legislation responsible for agriculture and food policy in the US.

The current bill is set to expire on September 30, 2013. The last farm bill was passed in 2008. Nearly 29 million Americans do not have access to healthy food.

Congress is overdue in acting to modify outdated programs, reflect the realities facing people today, and to help move our nation towards a robust economic recovery. We are seeing more support from Congress in recognizing the value of creating and safeguarding innovative farm bill programs to better feed our nation and grow our economy.

This summer both the Senate and House included one such new program in their versions of the farm bill: the *Healthy Food Financing Initiative* (HFFI). HFFI improves access to healthy food, brings with it health benefits, and revitalizes communities by creating jobs, supporting small businesses, and serving as economic anchors. Dozens of cities nationwide are working on HFFI initiatives.

In New Mexico, Farm to Table has been working on this initiative by connecting farmers to retail food outlets, schools, and restaurants while working with partners to coordinate needed storage and distribution. In addition, Farm to Table is currently working with the community of El Morro to develop a grocery store that will serve many rural residents in Cibola County and Ramah Navajo communities.

Rural New Mexico communities pay \$85 for a bag of groceries that cost \$55 in urban areas. Some New Mexicans' drive as much as 140 round trip to a supermarket. Almost 23% of New Mexico children are considered obese by the age of 8. Programs like the HFFI will help to serve states like New Mexico in critical food issues.

The Senate passed their farm bill this summer. The House did not complete their job. Congress returns to DC in mid-September and has only a few short weeks to work together to pass a farm bill by September 30. Including HFFI in a final farm bill will help farmers, food retailers, our nation's economy and millions of Americans.

Please join us in thanking our New Mexico Congressional leadership who have supported programs such as the *Healthy Food Financing Initiative* as an important component in the farm bill.

Catch interviews, airing throughout New Mexico this month, with Pam Roy of Farm to Table-NM and Allison Hagey of PolicyLink.

Contact Pam Roy, Farm to Table-NM at www.farmtotablenm.org and PolicyLink www.policylink.org for more information.

