

Indian Country Priorities and Opportunities for the 2023 Farm Bill

Title I: Commodities

Key Points and Recommendations

- Indian Country is heavily invested in commodity food production, especially livestock which makes up nearly \$2 billion of agriculture income for tribal producers.
- Ensure tribal producer eligibility for all disaster assistance programs in Title I, and increase payments to 90 percent of value to acknowledge their unique land and market issues.
- Create parity for tribal producers in Farm Service Agency Committees and decision-making.

Background Information and Context

More than half of all agricultural income in Indian Country comes from livestock production and commodity crops. As of 2017, Indian Country had 24,744 Native-operated beef cattle ranches, accounting for more than 75% of total Native farms and ranches. Oilseed, grain, and other commodity crop production makes up an additional 17% of all Native-operated farms today. This makes the Commodity Title's Livestock Indemnity and other disaster programs very important to Indian Country farms and ranches. In addition to Indian Country's own commodity production, Tribal lands are also frequently leased to non-Native farmers and ranchers who are also growing or raising agricultural products that fall under Commodity Title programs, tying their success to continued timely lease payments for Tribal Nations.

Opportunities for Indian Country in the Commodities Title

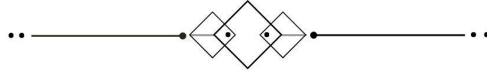
Livestock Indemnity Payments

- Allow for 90% loss rate coverage for Tribal-owned livestock to address the lack of land equity that exists for Tribal producers, except for allotted lands.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program

- Under this program, "eligible livestock producer" may not cover all possible circumstance Tribal producers engage in livestock ownership or land leasing per the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Include an additional section in the program that covers all Tribal producers who remain or become eligible to participate in the Forage Disaster Loss Program.
- Due to the unique challenges facing Tribal livestock and forage producers, all other provisions of the program shall ensure that payment rates are set at 90% levels (as opposed to any lower rates identified in the law for non-Tribal producers).

Farm Service Agency County Committee



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- Require FSA to use Census data and Census of Agriculture data to determine the population makeup of the county. FSA should create plans, in consultation with Tribal governments, to ensure that Tribal members are effectively and efficiently notified of county committee nomination opportunities. Committees in predominantly Tribal population areas and/or Tribal land base areas should include predominantly Native membership.

Trees

- The 2014 Farm Bill created additional assistance for tree owners which is included in 7 U.S.C. Section 9081(e). Under this provision, Tribal producers should be made eligible for 80-90% of the cost of replacement, salvage, pruning, removal, or preparing the land or replanting to ensure that the higher cost of providing these remediation activities on Tribal lands is accommodated within the limitations of the program and Tribal business entities organized under Tribal law and Tribal producers should all be recognized as “legal entities” and “persons” allowed to participate in the program.

Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

- 7 U.S.C. Section 8792 should be amended to ensure that Tribal governments, Tribal entities, and Tribal producers are recognized as farmers or ranchers eligible to participate in the program.

Base Acres

- Ensure that the base acre regulations do not adversely affect Tribal producers through Farm Service Agency consultation with elected Tribal officials.