

SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURE REAUTHORIZATIONS ACT OF 2015

The Agriculture Reauthorization Act of 2015 (ARA) passed the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on September 17 by voice vote. The ARA consists of three titles, including *H.R. 2051* – the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 2015, *H.R. 2394* - National Forest Foundation Act Reauthorization, and *H.R. 2088* – U.S. Grain Standards Act Reauthorization. Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives approved these bills by voice vote on the suspension calendar. The ARA modifies each bill to reflect bipartisan and bicameral agreements and packages them into one legislative vehicle. The Congressional Budget Office reviewed the ARA and determined it has no impact on direct spending or revenue.

TITLE I – LIVESTOCK MANDATORY PRICE REPORTING REAUTHORIZATION

The Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting Act (MPR) requires meat packers to report to USDA the prices they pay for cattle, hogs, and sheep purchased from farmers and ranchers for slaughter, as well as the prices they receive for the sale of wholesale beef, pork, and lamb. MPR requires USDA to issue daily, weekly, and monthly reports that detail the various transactions occurring in livestock and meat markets. This information provides producers and entities in the livestock industry a more transparent view of market conditions, allowing them to make informed decisions when negotiating the sale of their livestock. The authorization for MPR is set to expire on September 30, 2015.

TITLE II – NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

The National Forest Foundation, originally chartered by Congress in 1992, serves as a non-profit partner of the U.S. Forest Service to leverage public and private funding to restore and enhance the nation's National Forests and Grasslands. The National Forest Foundation has been funded through the annual appropriations process despite its authority expiring in 1997. The bill extends the National Forest Foundation authority through Fiscal Year 2018 with discretionary funding at three million dollars per year, which is consistent with recent annual appropriations funding levels.

TITLE III – U.S. GRAIN STANDARDS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

The Act reauthorizes the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA) through 2020. USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) is responsible for establishing official marketing standards for U.S. grains and oilseeds and managing inspection. Included in this reauthorization is language that improves predictability and transparency for U.S. commodity producers, exporters, and trading partners through increased reporting and certification requirements. USGSA was last reauthorized in 2005, and it is set to expire on September 30, 2015.