



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
& FORESTRY**

U.S. SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW, CHAIRWOMAN

Horticulture

The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act *keeps farmers farming, families fed, and rural communities strong* by improving the connection between local farms, local communities, and their local economy. It works to uplift specialty crop farmers and strengthen access to local produce, while also expanding market access and opportunities for organic agriculture, value-added products, and local and regional food systems.

Specialty Crops:

The bill **increases our investment** in the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, providing \$100 million a year in permanent mandatory funding. This program, which will now provide **\$1 billion over the next decade**, is critical to enhancing the competitiveness of American grown fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops.

The bill also strengthens the voice of specialty crop farmers when working with state departments of agriculture to set priorities for the program. These critical resources support engagement with consumers, efforts to protect specialty crops from pests and diseases, and opportunities to expand market access.

Local Foods and Regional Markets:

The bill continues \$50 million a year in permanent mandatory funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). LAMP invests in the connection between farmers and the community by cultivating regional food systems through public-private partnerships, promoting local agriculture, and supporting value-added production.

The bill makes the program more accessible by eliminating matching fund requirements and streamlining the application process.

The bill also includes new provisions that make regional food hubs eligible for program funding, and it increases annual authorized funding to \$30 million.

The bill authorizes the Local Food Purchase Cooperative Agreement Program, providing \$200 million to states and tribes to boost their purchasing power to better support farmers and expand access to locally grown foods.

Organic Agriculture:

The bill supports continued growth in the organic industry by increasing authorized funding for the National Organic Program (NOP), and it recognizes the importance of ensuring organic standards reflect consumer expectations in order to protect the integrity of the organic seal and benefit organic farmers.

The bill **increases direct support for organic farmers** through the Organic Certification Cost-Share Program, providing up to \$1,000 per year in assistance. It also authorizes the Organic Market Development Grant Program to support investments in the organic supply chain.

For the first time, the bill explicitly authorizes NOP to provide technical assistance for certified organic farmers and farmers who are transitioning to organic production, which will help organic farmers just getting started. The bill also continues support for the Organic Production and Market Data Initiative and for technology upgrades at NOP.