

**Farm Bill  
Backgrounder  
July 2018**

**Why the Farm Bill is important to the apple industry:**

Today's apple industry faces increased production costs, ever increasing regulations and the constant threat of labor shortages. Without appropriate federal policy, U.S. production will relocate to foreign growing areas with far fewer regulations, abundant labor, and lower production costs. The U.S. apple industry believes federal agricultural policy should encourage competitiveness through private investment, opportunities to increase profitability in the marketplace, and incentives for growers who are committed to better serving consumer needs. This market-oriented philosophy is reflected in the specialty crop provisions included first in 2008 and expanded under the current Farm Bill.

**Specialty Crop Title:**

Under the Farm Bill, apples are considered a specialty crop. As a founding member of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA), USApple continues to work with the Senate and House Agriculture Committees during the Farm Bill process to enhance nutrition programs, continue support for the Specialty Crop Block Grant program, combat invasive pests and diseases and support trade and research funding.

**USApple Position:**

As Congress debates the 2018 Farm Bill, USApple strongly supports maintaining and expanding key Farm Bill programs including:

- Research – Specialty Crop Research Initiative which funds important apple priorities including combating pests and diseases, and the development of automation technology.
- International Trade – Market Access Program and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crop (TASC). Creation of a new Under Secretary for Trade at USDA as dictated in 2014 Farm Bill.
- State Block Grants – Specialty Crop Block Grants which are targeted to local needs and can be used on variety of priorities including marketing, food safety and nutrition initiatives.
- Nutrition Programs – Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program in targeted schools in all 50 states, increased commodity purchases and innovative incentive programs.
- Plant Pest & Disease Prevention – The prevention of plant pests and diseases is critical for the future health of the apple industry.
- Clean Plant Network – Establishing a network of clean plant centers to ensure nurseries can continue to provide safe, virus-free plant materials for orchards, vineyards and other growers.

USApple supports full funding of these important programs in the FY18 appropriations process and will strongly oppose any proposed cuts or changes.