

In this podcast I discuss the farm bill, which is a piece of omnibus legislation that passes through congressing approximately every 5 years. It impacts the prices of certain foods, crops are produced, SNAP (previously known as food stamps), soil conservation, forestry, and more. While it is often brushed aside as something only farmers need to care about, this bill is important to every person that eats, and is one of our oldest social welfare programs.

The first farm bill was enacted in 1933 titled the *Agricultural Adjustment Act*, it generally takes a new name each witch each cycle, the most recent being the 2018 *Agricultural Improvement Act*. The first bill was passed under the New Deal Era and played a major role in shifting how America went about social welfare. When initially passed, its main goals were to improve the buying power of farmers and address hunger. This was done through crop subsidies and programs such as food banks and food stamps. It also aimed to address the dust bowl soil damage, failing crops, hunger, and more- this is what made it the most ambitious social welfare program ever proposed to congress.

While the its roots in social welfare, like most things of the 1930s, its history is also one of discrimination and racism. The USDA focused their attention on promoting large-scale, technologically intensive farming. This excluded tenant farmers and sharecroppers, and also any farm laborers that were not the owners, from aid- disproportionately affecting black farmers. Recently, an adjunct to the farm bill was proposed, titled the 2023 *Justice for Black Farmers Act*, which aims to address this discriminatory history.

This podcast will give a brief history of the farm bill, focusing on its early development while also considering how it has harmed black farmers. This also highlights the 2023 bill as an opportunity for correcting some of the past wrongs; but, citizens need to show interest and support for the bill in order for that to be achieved.

Bibliography

Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, P.L 73-10 73rd Congress (1932-1933)

<https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/48/STATUTE-48-Pg31.pdf>

Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, P.L 75-430 75th Congress (1937-1938)

<https://govtrackus.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/52/STATUTE-52-Pg31.pdf>

Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, P.L115-334- 115th Congress (2017-2018)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2>

Justice for Black Farmers Act of 2020, S. 4929 116th Congress (2019-2020)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/4929/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22justice+for+black+farmers%22%5D%7D&r=4&s=2>

Agricultural adjustment act (1933, Reauthorized 1938). (n.d.). *Living New Deal*. Retrieved April 3, 2021, from

<https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/agricultural-adjustment-act-1933-re-authorized-1938-2/>

Daniel Imhoff, & Christina Badaracco. (2019). *The Farm Bill : A Citizen's Guide*. Island Press.

Charles C. Ludington, & Matthew Morse Booker. (2019). 8: U.S. Farm and Food Subsidies: A Short History of a Long Controversy. In *Food Fights : How History Matters to Contemporary Food Debates*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Reactions to the farm bill conference report. (2018). Retrieved March 13, 2021,

<https://www.morningagclips.com/reactions-to-the-farm-bill-conference-report/>

What is the farm bill? (n.d.). National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. Retrieved March 13, 2021, from

<https://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/campaigns/fbcampaign/what-is-the-farm-bill/>

PHILLIPS, S. T., POTTS, D., PETTY, A., SCHULTZ, M., STALCUP, S., & EFFLAND, A.

(2013). Reflections on One Hundred and Fifty Years of the United States Department of

Agriculture. *Agricultural History*, 87(3), 314–367. <https://doi.org/10.3098/ah.2013.87.3.314>

Audio:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ2-RGtTHNg>