



ADVOCACY
INFLUENCE. ACTION. IMPACT.

2023 August Recess INFORMATIONAL TOOLKIT

PLEASE NOTE:

Additional issues may be added prior to the August Congressional Recess period. AFBF staff are monitoring several key issues that could need Farm Bureau member engagement.

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Overview: AFBF August Recess In-District Plan

Farm Bureau has a long-standing commitment to actively working with lawmakers on the issues affecting our farms and rural communities. The August recess period is a prime opportunity for grassroots engagement as lawmakers return home to hear directly from the voters they represent.

Farmers and ranchers have an important perspective on issues that Congress is likely to consider in the Summer and Fall of 2023.

Every Farm Bureau voice is influential in explaining why these issues are essential to America's farmers and ranchers.

This toolkit supports grassroots engagement during the August recess and assists state Farm Bureaus in planning events throughout the fall.

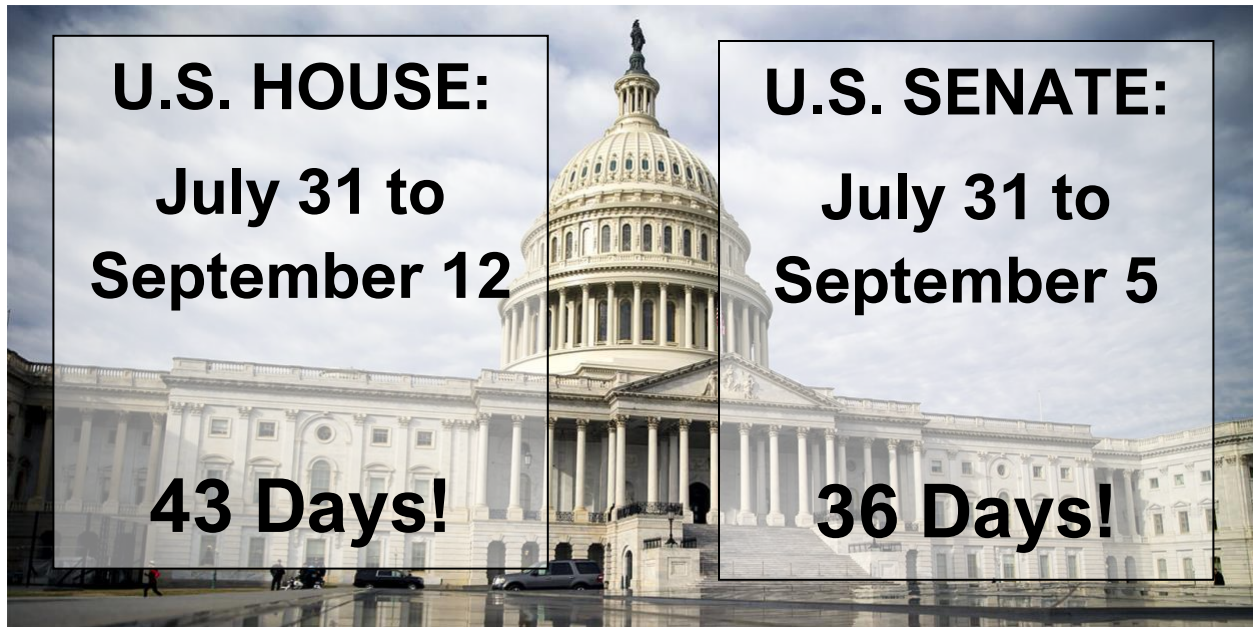
A brief history of the August recess

The August recess was established in 1970 as part of the Legislative Reorganization Act. Once the job of legislating went full-time, lawmakers were interested in designing a break in the legislative schedule.

Today, the August recess continues to be a regular feature of the legislative schedule and is a busy time for lawmakers to meet and hear from constituents about issues impacting their lives. These interactions can help to determine how they vote in the fall.

August recess is an ideal time for Farm Bureau engagement with the new administration and Members of Congress, especially those on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, the House Ways & Means Committee, and the Senate Finance Committee.

Dates for the 2023 August recess



August recess goals for Farm Bureau

- **Schedule a meeting** with your lawmakers. Invite them to attend a local event, tour a farm or ranch or visit the county fair to meet local farmers and ranchers.
- **Tell the story** of what you are doing so you can build a relationship with your legislators and show how policies impact you and your community.
- Share major talking points to help explain **priorities for all farmers and ranchers.**

The Tactics for August 2023

The following suggested tactics are intended to assist state Farm Bureaus in planning their August activities. AFBF will provide key messages, talking points, economic analysis, communications materials, and guidance to support state Farm Bureau activities, as requested.



Meet face-to-face with Lawmakers:

Attending or hosting meetings with lawmakers remains the most effective tactic for grassroots members. Research consistently shows the value of face-to-face, in-person meetings. Suggested activities:

- Attend town hall meetings.
- Host a farm or ranch tour.
- Extend an invitation to Farm Bureau meetings, other local events, festivals, and fairs.
- Visit a congressional district office.



Grassroots Activities:

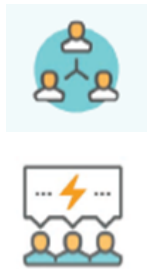
Phone calls and emails to congressional offices are also effective.



Alert the Media:




Using local media to share your story can help amplify your influence, urge readers to contact your lawmakers, and bring awareness about policy issues to farms and ranches in your area. Members of Congress follow local news outlets. Always thank your local, state, and federal legislators for taking time to meet and ask for their support on policy or legislation.

- Submit columns and op-eds from state and county leaders to local newspapers.
- Meet with editorial boards.
- Host an issue-specific media event.
- Call your local radio talk show host and offer to explain the issues of concern.



Use Social Media and Videos:

Coordinated messages over social media can create momentum and demonstrate the need for action. Each week state Farm Bureaus and members could utilize social media messages and distribute through your networks. (See content suggestions below.)

- Utilize social media to reach out to congressional offices and incorporate the #StillFarming hashtag when applicable.
- Record and post videos sharing your farm story on your social media accounts.
-  **LIKE**,  **SHARE** and  **COMMENT** on posts by legislators that support your issues. This positive feedback reinforces positive action and elevates the online discussion.
- Share related content from AFBF and state Farm Bureaus.
- Follow and tag AFBF and your state Farm Bureau social media channels and share posts.

Twitter, [@FarmBureau](#)

Facebook, [@FarmBureau](#)

TikTok, [@farmbureau](#)

Instagram, [@farmbureau](#)

Sample Social Media Messages on Farm Bill

Below are sample social media messages. Please feel free to use them as is, adapt them to your liking, or create your own entirely.

- The Farm Bill is the most significant piece of legislation that affects farmers and ranchers across the country. Here's why it matters. #StillFarming [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)
- Farmers and ranchers are proud to grow the food that helps supply more than 4 billion meals annually through nutrition programs offered through the farm bill. #StillFarming [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)
- Farmers and ranchers are #StillFarming—proudly growing and raising the safe, sustainable food, fiber and fuel we all rely on, and the farm bill gives them the tools they need to keep our farms and food supply secure in all seasons. [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)
- America's farmers and ranchers are #StillFarming thanks in large part to farm bill programs. Here's why it matters.
 - Risk Management
 - Nutrition
 - Conservation
 - Economic & Rural Development

Find out more at [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)

- Through the farm bill, farmers and ranchers have voluntarily enrolled 140 million acres in conservation programs—that's equal to the size of California and New York combined. [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)
- The farm bill gives farmers and ranchers the tools they need to grow and raise the safe, sustainable food, fiber and fuel we all rely on. #StillFarming
- Farmers and ranchers are #StillFarming—producing more with fewer resources. The farm bill ensures they are able

to provide the necessary amount of food, fiber and fuel.

[FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)

- The farm bill's investment in ag research and conservation programs is critical to ensuring the productivity and sustainability of our farms and domestic food supply. [FB.Org/FarmBill](https://fb.org/farmbill)

Promotional Materials

- Hashtag: #StillFarming
- Promotional Video:
 - Access this 60-second video meant for “Reels” to post on your state Farm Bureau’s social media accounts:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/mif5nhqdptddhos/FarmBill_PZD_323_9X16_Share.mp4?dl=0
- News Release: [AFBF Establishes 2023 Farm Bill Priorities](#)
- Market Intel: [The ‘Others’ of the Farm Bill – Titles Outside of the Big ‘4’](#)
- Market Intel: [Farm Bill Math Updated in New CBO Baseline](#)
- Market Intel: [Overview of Title II Conservation Programs in the Farm Bill](#)
- Market Intel: [Farm Bill Title I Commodity Programs – ARC, PLC and Marketing Assistance Loans](#)
- Market Intel: [Specialty Crop Considerations for the Farm Bill](#)
- Market Intel: [Livestock and the Farm Bill](#)
- Market Intel: [Revisiting Agricultural Trade and Food Assistance Programs in the Farm Bill \(fb.org\)](#)
- Market Intel: [Revisiting Disaster Programs in the Farm Bill \(fb.org\)](#)
- Market Intel: [Overview of Dairy Programs in the Farm Bill \(fb.org\)](#)
- Market Intel: [What is the \(Food and\) Farm Bill and Why Does It Matter? \(fb.org\)](#)

- Zipline: [Preparing for a New Farm Bill \(fb.org\)](https://fb.org)

Social Media Graphics

Access updated national and state-specific graphics here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4unai9rfn8g1hwb000tip/h?dl=0&rlkey=psq9rwnwbelc2iaqyzasiylbe>

The How-To's for August 2023

How to Contact Your Lawmakers

- Identify your members of Congress and appropriate staff.
- Use contact information from [GovTrack.us](https://govtrack.us) to identify them.
- Reach out and request a meeting at least three weeks in advance.
 - Call or email, suggesting specific times and dates for your meeting, and outline the issues and legislation important to you in your request.

How to Prepare for Meetings with Lawmakers

- Gather a small group of Farm Bureau members.
- Research the position of your lawmakers on issues.
- Plan who will say what and decide what you will ask your representatives to do.
- Be prepared to share photos and stories from your farm.
- Ask clarifying questions about their position and ask them to take a specific action.
- Please leave your contact information, get theirs, and follow up with an email.
- Be sure to thank them for taking time to meet with you.

How to Follow up with Lawmakers

- Send a personal thank you note/email
- Signup to receive legislators' e-newsletter
- Send a letter to the local paper
- Post a thank you picture on Facebook & Twitter
- Attend town hall meetings
- Be proactive – send articles, information, etc.

How to Create Compelling Videos

Capturing video testimonials is now a common practice ... and an influential one.

- Record video messages on your farm and ranch showcasing animals, equipment, successes, and challenges.
 - These videos can then be sent to lawmakers, shared on social media, or held for future use.
 - Share these videos with state Farm Bureaus and AFBF.
- Keep it short – less than 2 minutes.
- Please keep it simple. Videos should be clear enough that the content is quickly understandable to a non-agricultural audience.

How to Use a Geofence at State or County Fairs

- Sets up a preprogrammed action that is automatically triggered when a mobile device enters or exits the geofence virtual boundary.
- A virtual boundary can be created around a geographical location such as the state or county fairs and as large as a ZIP code.
- The preprogrammed messages can be:
 - An issue update,
 - Action alert,
 - Notification, and/or
 - Farm Bureau membership marketing to visitors to state and county fairs.
- Geofencing enables state Farm Bureaus to target attendees with messages and information. This type of targeted advertising improves engagement numbers and ad spend effectiveness.
- Geofencing costs and pricing can vary depending on the use case.

What is GEOFENCING?

Geofencing is a type of location-based marketing and advertising. A mobile app or software uses cellular data to define a virtual geographical boundary and trigger a targeted marketing action when a device enters or exits that boundary. This boundary is known as a geofence.

The Issues for August Recess 2023

PASSAGE OF THE 2023 FARM BILL

ABOUT THE ISSUE

The farm bill is a critical tool to ensure a secure food supply and provide important resources for farm and ranch families through crop insurance, improved risk management programs, and support for low-income families while also bringing much-needed funding to trade, rural development and agriculture research.

Farm bill programs, not just the nutrition programs, benefit all families, from those living in our biggest cities to our smallest townships and rural communities by supporting the ability of farmers to stock America's pantries.

Preparations for the 2023 farm bill started in Congress this year with field hearings. At AFBF, we began our work last year to analyze and discuss what's working under the 2018 farm bill, what's not working or missing, and how programs could be improved.

REQUEST

As you meet with lawmakers this August, it is critical to advocate for a farm bill that addresses the challenges we face today and those we will undoubtedly face in the future. It is our responsibility to engage with members of Congress from urban districts, too.

The makeup of the current Congress includes **260 Senators and Representatives who have not voted on a farm bill which means they may not understand the benefits the farm bill provides to their constituents.**

Our ability to share the benefits of the farm bill now will help secure passage of the farm bill in 2023.

MAIN MESSAGES

We support the following principles to guide development of programs in the next farm bill:

- Increase baseline funding commitments to farm programs;
- Maintain a unified farm bill which includes nutrition programs and farm programs together; and
- Prioritize funding for risk management tools which include both federal crop insurance and commodity programs.

How Does the Farm Bill Matter for Everyone?

Food Security: America's public investment in agriculture through farm bill programs helps secure our domestic food supply and keep our country strong while consumers get the benefits of high-quality, affordable food.

Jobs: The food and agriculture industry supports nearly 46.2 million U.S. jobs and contributes more than \$1 trillion to U.S. gross domestic product.

Conservation: The farm bill's investment in ag research and voluntary conservation programs are critical to ensuring the productivity and sustainability in our farms and domestic food supply.

Risk Management: We all depend on the success of American agriculture so it's important for America's farmers and ranchers to be supported by strong farm programs as they face down weather disasters, high supply costs and inflationary pressures. Managing risk is critical to keep food on our tables.

Addressing Hunger: The farm bill includes nutrition programs intended to ensure the most vulnerable among us have access to healthy, affordable food.

RESOURCES

- [AFBF Farm Bill Issues Page](#)
- [AFBF communications: Farm Bill: From News Coverage to Market Intel](#)
- [2023 Farm Bill Policy Priorities](#)

Supporting Graphics for August Recess 2023

Access to updated national graphics can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/5sngbw8md30egosld0xw4/h?dl=0&rlkey=p6yzh3iv4mkm31mpzmamuus0>

See samples below:



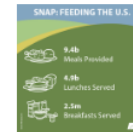
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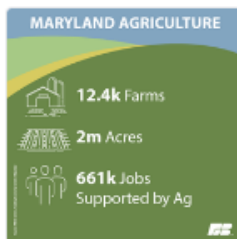


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Bill_720x7207.png
National

Access to updated state-specific graphics can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/hs5rctgi2s87g2k5yv1a/h?dl=0&rlkey=symulatz99rygm81foo0evz58>

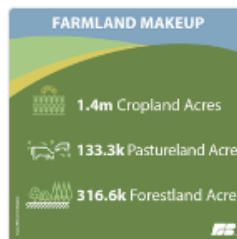
See samples from Maryland below:



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7203.png



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7204.png

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