



## Farm bill funding: A billion here, a billion there

By Sara Wyant

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The only “additional” farm bill dollars we’ve heard about lately have come about as a result of a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scoring error. It’s not chump change, either.

Our sources say that the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) proposal, advanced by the National Corn Growers Association and others, **could actually save about \$1.5 billion over 10 years, rather than the \$400 million in savings** that was estimated in the most recent funding framework.

Conceivably, that new amount could cover the expected \$730 million in direct payment cuts or make sure that there is enough funding to rebalance loan rates and target prices. Or it could reduce the 30% cut in direct payments that corn growers who agree to opt into the ACRE program would have to take. But it could also be applied to numerous other areas like rural development, specialty crops or nutrition. Senator Saxby Chambliss says **nothing has been finalized about direct payments or loan rates at this time.**

Just like a farmer who gets a windfall profit one year, you need to make those kinds of tough decisions about how to spend the money, according to a staff source. “Do you buy new machinery or pay down debt? Do you get a new roof on the house? **Its’ far too early to tell how those dollars might be divvied up.**”

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