



## EWG plans to launch revised farm subsidy database

Sara Wyant, Editor, Agri-Pulse

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The Environmental Working Group (EWG) plans to release an updated version of their farm subsidy database on June 12, providing the most comprehensive and transparent look to date at how farmers and landowners have structured themselves to maximize farm program payments.

**“It is the full Monte, so to speak,”** says EWG President Ken Cook. The EWG provided media outlets, like ours, the chance to explore the data for the last couple of weeks, although the exact information is embargoed until the official release date.

Utilizing USDA’s Section 1614 benefits tracking data, the group is able to show subsidy benefits as they pass through thousands of farm business entities, such as partnerships, and corporations, and assigned “benefits” to individuals. **“Whether or not they are getting cash, we don’t know,”** says Cook. **“But thousands of new names have been added to the list. There are farm businesses with 10-25 beneficiaries with many of them getting six figure benefits. It’s pretty eye-popping.”**

Cook believes the new data will raise questions about farm program payment requirements like “active engagement,” and add to the overall debate over the need to tighten farm program payments. “We get inquiries from congressional offices almost every day---from members representing both agricultural and non-agricultural districts,” he explains. To compare farm payments with other businesses and poverty rates in each area, EWG also publishes the average adjusted gross income in the zip code of the beneficiaries listed and the number of minor children who were below the poverty level in each county.

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