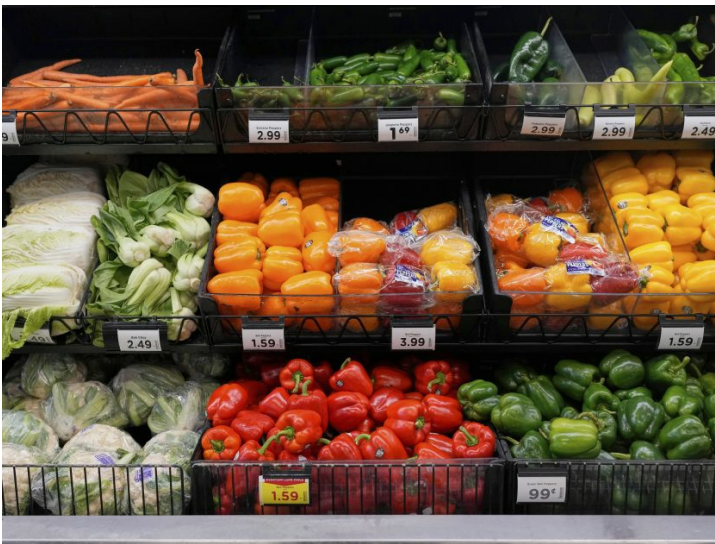


## SNAP cost shift fight threatens Senate farm bill 2.0

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Kim Chipman



- **The Senate Ag Committee aims to sidestep partisan divisions, though a SNAP fight may be unavoidable.**
- **A possible compromise over SNAP cost shifts to states is the focus of increasing speculation.**
- **Both Democratic and Republican states face SNAP costs due to error rates.**

Senate Agriculture Chair John Boozman wants to move a farm bill out of his committee by the end of June. He has 17 legislative days left to do so.

The Arkansas Republican has made it clear there's no room for items that would trigger major partisan headaches, such as streamlining pesticide-labeling laws or nullifying livestock welfare regulations, like California's Proposition 12. Year-round sales of higher ethanol-fuel blends,

Produce, which is covered by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is displayed for sale at a grocery store Friday, Oct. 31, 2025, in Nashville, Tennessee. (AP photo/George Walker IV)

known as E15, and other contentious issues remain wild cards.

Amid all the opposing views, one point of general agreement stands out: The biggest threat to getting a farm bill through the Senate is disagreement around the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

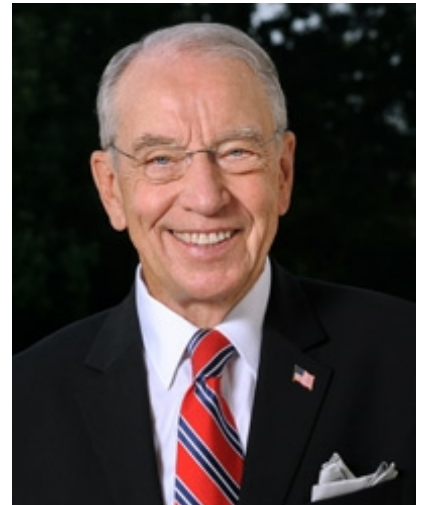
The hurdle is around a new law requiring states to begin paying a share of the program's cost, based on their SNAP error rates. States with an error rate below 6% annually would continue to have food benefits fully funded by the federal government. "Fewer than 10 states, most of them with low populations, would have met this threshold to avoid a cost shift in 2024," according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research group.

When asked what the biggest obstacle is to getting a Senate farm bill passed this year, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, didn't hesitate in his reply.

"Democrats wanting us to delay anti-fraud provisions that we put in last year's tax bill," Grassley told reporters on Tuesday. "A delay of two years would cost \$18 billion."

"You just can't tolerate big error rates in states," Grassley said. "We got some states that are 20%, and getting it down to 6% would be quite an accomplishment. Even going lower would be better, but let's get our first victory before we move on."

Last year's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), President Donald Trump's signature tax law fast-tracked through Congress last year by Republican leaders, slashed \$187 billion in SNAP funding. It also called for states to cover 75% of the program's administrative costs starting in fiscal 2027, up from 50% now, and to begin by the following year paying for SNAP benefits based on their [payment error rates](#), "a volatile and often misleading performance metric," according to the Food Research & Action Center, a nutrition advocacy group.



*Sen. Chuck Grassley (official photo)*

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the Agriculture Committee's ranking member, is among Democratic lawmakers as well as state and local officials fighting to postpone the changes.

"My colleagues and I remain committed to a bipartisan farm bill to support farmers and ranchers in a difficult farm economy caused in part by trade chaos and rising input costs. We are committed to fixing the unfairness of the SNAP cost shift to states, which penalizes states working to reduce program errors while rewarding those states with the highest error rates," Klobuchar said in a statement to *Agri-Pulse*.

"The SNAP cost shift, for the first time ever, will force state and local governments to choose between providing food assistance to American families, reducing other critical services like law enforcement or health care, or raising property taxes," she said. "Democratic and Republican governors, state legislators,

and county commissioners are asking Congress for a delay of certain shifts that are approximately 10 percent of total nutrition cuts over the ten years – to ensure all states are treated fairly."

### **SNAP compromise ahead?**

States with payment error rates above 6% will be responsible for between 5% to 15% of SNAP benefit costs, representing an average \$218 million a state a year, ranging from about \$5.5 million in North Dakota and \$37 million in Hawaii to \$991 million in Florida and [\\$1.8 billion](#) in California, a coalition that includes the National Governors Association said in January, citing fiscal 2024 data.

The cost shift should be put on hold until fiscal 2030 to allow states and counties "adequate time to reduce payment error rates, and preserve investments in staffing, training and systems essential to program integrity," the coalition told congressional leaders earlier this year.

Boozman so far has been firm in his stance that the change needs to go forward as intended, citing a flawed system that needs to be fixed.

Still, there's been recent chatter that a bipartisan deal on SNAP could materialize.

Further, some GOP lawmakers whose states are on the hook may quietly want the postponement as well, according to policy watchers.

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., told *Agri-Pulse* Newsmakers last month that Republicans are taking colleagues' concerns seriously. "We'll see if we can work that out," she said.

Klobuchar on Tuesday said "discussions are ongoing and productive. Sen. Boozman and I have an excellent working relationship."

### **Farm bill and voters**

Cuts to federal government anti-hunger initiatives are also up for debate outside of Capitol Hill.

"Food bank usage [has surged](#) since the Trump administration's [cuts to food assistance programs](#), including SNAP, took effect," according to Brookings Institution's Keon Gilbert, director of the Race, Prosperity, and Inclusion Initiative at the nonprofit Washington think tank.

Democrats trying to win back control of Congress next year are hammering a message of unaffordability under GOP leadership ahead of the November midterm elections.

"Latino and Black voters who shifted toward Trump in 2024 over economic concerns are now among the most likely to reconsider their support ahead of the midterms," Gilbert said in an [online post](#) on Monday.

## Fertilizer, E15, specialty crops

The Senate's farm bill 2.0 deliberations follow heavy lifting from Boozman a year ago to update federal agriculture programs representing about 80% of the funding in a traditional, five-year farm bill, something Congress hasn't passed since 2018 amid bitter partisan divisions.

The ag provisions included last year in OBBBA are expected to increase ag-focused federal spending by about \$65 billion over the next decade, according to American Farm Bureau Federation economists. New provisions update the Agriculture Risk Coverage, Price Loss Coverage, Dairy Margin Coverage and crop insurance programs.

Farm-state lawmakers now are trying to tackle the 20% of funding still not addressed, which makes up roughly 80% of the ag programs. That involves issues important to the agriculture industry and broader rural economy that often are overshadowed by the attention given to big-ticket dollar items, or sticking points that lead to boisterous debates.

Those matters include items like rural credit availability, animal health and research, and rural energy.

Meanwhile, the biggest ag-related topics of the day have been pulled into the debate, like a controversial new hemp law, getting more economic aid into the hands of struggling farmers, E15 and surging fertilizer prices.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., a member of the Senate Appropriations agriculture subcommittee, said she hopes E15 and fertilizer measures are ultimately part of the next farm bill.



*Sen. Tammy Baldwin (AP photo)*

Baldwin is cosponsoring various fertilizer measures, including one with Grassley that would require USDA to provide regular updates on the market.

"It would be a great help to our farmers to have that insight to be able to plan ahead," Baldwin told *Agri-Pulse* on Monday.

Specialty crops, like tree nuts, fruits and vegetables, also are in focus. Senate Agriculture Committee member Adam Schiff, D-Calif., has said his farm bill priorities include reversing SNAP cuts and ensuring USDA programs are as accessible for specialty crop growers as they are for producers of the major cash commodity crops like corn and soybeans.

"This must cross a plethora of programs -- insurance, disaster, conservation, marketing, procurement,  
[www.agri-pulse.com](http://www.agri-pulse.com)

research and more,” Schiff said. “We must also ensure that the unique challenges of specialty crop production are addressed through robust and tailored science, research, and pest and disease mitigation.”

Schiff on Monday unveiled a [suite](#) of six bills he hopes to include in the farm bill, including a measure to provide \$5 billion in economic aid for producers.

Other bills would expand insurance access for specialty crops and boost funding for automation.

Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., chair of the Appropriations’ ag subcommittee and Agriculture Committee member, also has been focused on specialty crops and getting more aid to those farmers amid a prolonged slump in the farm economy.

# All signs point to China sticking with US soy deal, Vaden says

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Deputy Agriculture Secretary Stephen Vaden is bullish on the outlook for Chinese purchases of U.S. farm products. (USDA photo)

yearly basis for the remainder of the Trump administration, Vaden said Tuesday at a [WSJ Global Food Forum](#) in Chicago.

“Every indication that we have at the Department of Agriculture is that China intends to keep these commitments,” Vaden said.

The deal also includes an initial pledge of 12 million metric tons that successfully concluded, though long-term tracking of export data remains a major focus for U.S. farmers. [The Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the White House at the time said there would be revived market access for U.S. poultry.](#)

“The takeaway is that agriculture is at the top of every trade deal with China or any other country,” Vaden said. “We have a very simple trade policy. If you want to do a trade agreement with the United States, agriculture is going to get a win. If agriculture isn't able to get a win, your country will not be able to negotiate a trade policy with this administration.”

The comments come as Trump administration negotiators are in India this week for bilateral trade talks aimed at finalizing an interim agreement reached in February for India to buy \$500 billion in U.S. goods over the next five years, including agriculture products.

Vaden also weighed in on the spike in U.S. tomato prices, saying he's more concerned about farm production costs than the impact of tariffs when it comes to food costs.

- **Deputy Ag Secretary Stephen Vaden says U.S. trade deals hinge on agriculture.**
- **The Trump administration continues to mull whether to lift countervailing duties on Russian and Moroccan fertilizer imports, according to Vaden.**
- **High fertilizer prices are a bigger concern for food inflation than tariffs, Vaden says.**

China is on track to buy 25 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans this year and next, U.S. Deputy Agriculture Secretary Stephen Vaden says.

The soybeans are on top of the \$17 billion in U.S. ag purchases that China agreed to make on a

Tomato prices have climbed since the U.S. withdrew from a pact suspending antidumping duties on Mexican tomatoes, snapping 17% tariffs into place. Since they took force last July, the average price of field-grown tomatoes across U.S. cities has climbed from \$1.79 per pound to \$2.69 in April 2026.

Vaden pointed to elevated prices of fertilizer that have been on the rise for more than five years. The deputy ag secretary also repeated his criticism of countervailing duties on phosphate fertilizer put in place by the Biden administration in 2021.

“The domestic companies have not responded with additional supplies. That is supposedly what these trade barriers were designed to do,” he said.

Vaden said USDA continues to have talks at a Cabinet level on whether the countervailing duties should continue against Moroccan and Russian fertilizer imports.

USDA and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative have been divided over how to proceed on the matter, [Agri-Pulse](#) reported in April.

Fertilizer producers Mosaic and Simplot said a few weeks ago, as part of a five-year review, that they support keeping the countervailing duties on Morocco and Russia.

“So far as I can tell, American farmers have paid out an awful lot of extra profit to Mosaic and other companies like that for no benefit, and they have definitely received no additional supply,” Vaden said.

He also criticized Florida-based Mosaic for saying it may need to curtail domestic production of phosphate at a time when global supplies are in doubt.

“Yet, despite that, they are at a record export pace of fertilizer that they have produced in this country that they are shipping overseas,” Vaden said. “It just doesn't add up.”

When asked for comment, a Mosaic spokesperson told *Agri-Pulse*: “The reality is that we cannot afford to make phosphate fertilizer in the current environment.”

Vaden also said the Trump administration has received interest from a “host of people, including international companies” about starting new fertilizer production facilities in the U.S.

“I wish I could go through and talk with you about some of these, but they’ve been shared with us in confidence,” he said.

Vaden said the U.S.’s embrace of fossil fuels gives it an edge over Europe.

For example, the biggest cost in producing nitrogen fertilizer is for energy, he noted.

“You know what we have here in the United States? A much better energy policy than any of our Western competitor nations, because we did not in this administration disincentivize the use of fossil fuels,” Vaden said. “Even with the increase in fossil fuel price, we have far cheaper natural gas in the United States than they do in the European Union.”

### **Record beef imports**

The deputy ag chief also stressed that the U.S. is pulling in record high levels of beef imports, despite the closure of the Mexican border to cattle because of efforts to prevent New World screwworm from entering the country.

“We also understand that most of the beef we consume is raised right here in the United States, and that's why USDA has put forward a plan to try to put as much land as possible under federal government control that is available for grazing, allowing it to be grazed,” Vaden said, adding that he's working with his counterpart at the Interior Department on the issue.

A rulemaking will go forward before the end of this year as part of an effort to harmonize regulations between the two agencies, he said.

# Ag industry pushes EPA to approve pesticides waiting in the wings

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Steve Davies



A tractor sprays crops in a field. (USDA photo)

- **Farm industry leaders are concerned about pending approvals of new pesticide products and new uses for existing products.**
- **They're urging EPA to act quickly so farmers can use the new tools by the 2027 growing season.**
- **About 80 applications await decisions by EPA.**

Agricultural industry leaders are sounding the alarm over delays at the Environmental Protection Agency in getting dozens of applications approved for new active ingredients and new uses for already registered pesticides.

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin has repeatedly touted a reduction in a backlog of thousands of pesticide actions, but those are not considered nearly as important pending applications for new tools for growers, says Alex Dunn, president and CEO of CropLife America, which represents pesticide manufacturers.

“I absolutely want to give full credit to the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs for bringing down that backlog. That is a significant accomplishment,” Dunn tells *Agri-Pulse*. But that backlog, which has been cut from about 14,500 actions to about 8,000, can encompass such tasks as “updating addresses, points of contact, clarifying an error in a prior submission,” Dunn says — not actions that include deadlines set by the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act.

Dunn and other farm group leaders are particularly concerned because in order to have products available for the 2027 growing season, decisions need to be made soon, so manufacturers can get necessary state approvals and ramp up production.

“Right now, [EPA] career scientists have signed off on more than 80 pesticide actions, including new active ingredients,” Dunn says. “These are ready, they're done. There's no further work to be done on them, and they are well past their PRIA dates.”

CLA is highlighting six in particular that have been approved for use in other countries. Dunn did not identify them, but according to a list obtained by *Agri-Pulse*, they include three new herbicide active ingredients — epyrifenacil, trifludimoxazin and diflufenican — a new fungicide, pyraziflumid, and new

uses for the herbicides isoxaflutole and florasulam.

“These are products to fight weeds, pests and disease in a variety of row crops, and also specialty crops like grapes and stone fruit and nuts that our farmers in the U.S. are not getting access to,” Dunn says.

The new active ingredients are approved in countries including Brazil, Argentina, and in the case of diflufenican, the European Union.

“That's a pretty high bar. The EU has a very different approach to pesticides than the U.S.,” Dunn says.

Manufacturers of those chemicals either did not want to comment or did not respond to requests for comment.

### **Zeldin points to approval of citrus greening rootstock**

When asked on *Agri-Pulse* Newsmakers last week about when the six chemicals might receive approvals, Zeldin said, “We've been pumping through a lot of approvals very actively every single day,” mindful that the timing of growing seasons “creates more urgency on a particular timeline.”



*Alex Dunn (CropLife photo)*

He also touted the agency's approval of a [new rootstock that helps trees defend themselves against citrus greening](#), a decision Dunn also mentioned favorably.

But farm groups would like to see the agency act quickly on the other products that have been through scientific review.

“The timing on this is really important, because if you approve products too late to be at the market, you miss an entire season,” says National Council of Farmer Cooperatives President and CEO Duane Simpson. “This isn't something that, if we delay it for two months, it may only be a two-month delay. Sometimes a two-month delay ends up being a one-year delay.”

In the fall, “Our members are going to be making plans as to what they're going to fill their tanks with and what they're going to fill their warehouses with, and in order to do that, you have to know what's approved and what's not approved,” he says.



*Duane Simpson (NCFC photo)*

Simpson also says that U.S. growers are at a disadvantage because producers in other countries have access to crop protection tools not available in this country.

“I think folks are kind of pushing from all directions, looking to move forward,” says Andrew Walmsley, vice president of government affairs at the Council of Producers and Distributors of Agrotechnology. “We recognize and appreciate the leadership of Administrator Zeldin. He is in a tough spot, but at the end of the day, policy and science should guide any decisions of the agency.”

Walmsley also mentions the potential sway of the Make America Healthy Again movement. “Our understanding is some of this is MAHA-influenced, and look, we all want folks healthy and we share in that commitment but, you know, hungry people aren't healthy

people.”

Asked about how he's balancing the MAHA movement's concerns about pesticides with the needs of farmers, Zeldin said on Newsmakers, “It's quite simple for us at EPA. It's about following the science. We want gold standard science, best available science.”

### **MAHA activist says Zeldin has made no pesticide commitments**

Zeldin and other federal officials have met with MAHA activists, but he has “unfortunately made no commitments regarding pesticides,” says Kelly Ryerson, known as the “Glyphosate Girl” for her formerly titled blog.

“I have been waiting for him to issue his MAHA agenda since January, but there have been no updates on that report,” she added via email.

Zeldin was the subject of a MAHA petition seeking to have him removed as administrator, but there have been no reports that Zeldin's position at the agency is not secure.

The November petition said Zeldin had “dangerously weakened protections against some of the most harmful chemicals in our environment.”

Shortly afterwards, [on an appearance on a MAHA Action web show](#), Zeldin said he was willing to work with MAHA activists and said the forthcoming MAHA agenda would address plastics, Superfund site cleanups, lead pipes and food waste.

“For any of you out there who want to be directly in touch with this EPA, you want to partner with us, you

want to help with the development of the MAHA agenda for EPA, please let [MAHA Action President] Tony [Lyons] and his team and MAHA Action know,” Zeldin said. “We will be in touch with Tony and his team to make sure that any person who reaches out to him ... will be part of that process in developing a MAHA agenda.”

The Center for Food Safety, a frequent litigant against EPA, disagreed with the industry’s position.

“We don’t agree with industry that every pesticide they develop should be automatically approved, with ‘delay’ being the only issue,” said Bill Freese, science director for the group. “Some shouldn’t be approved at all, others only after a proper assessment and human health and environmental mitigations stronger than those industry and EPA agree to.”

He said there are numerous health and environmental issues with some of the chemicals.

Epyrifenacil, for example, “suppresses red blood cell production and causes liver tumors in rodent studies,” Freese said. “EPA needs to assess it cumulatively with the dozens of other pesticides that also cause liver tumors,” including trifludimoxazin. “This would result in a cumulative exposure threshold that is lower than the sum of those for the individual, liver-cancer-causing, pesticides individually.”

He also said EPA had not assessed trifludimoxazin for volatility. Australia has established significant mitigation measures for the chemical, which EPA has not, he said.

As for isoxaflutole, “Even EPA agrees this is ‘likely to be carcinogenic to humans,’” Freese said, citing a 2024 cancer report from the Office of Pesticide Programs. Freese said it’s “bad enough it’s been approved for isoxaflutole-resistant crops, we certainly don’t need any additional uses.”

# Nebraska stakes out new ground on farm data ownership as other states weigh broader measures

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(USDA photo)

- **Nebraska has become the first state in the nation to enact a law declaring farmers own their farm data and barring its sale without written consent.**
- **Lawmakers in Iowa, Missouri and Colorado have proposed their own ag data privacy bills, which would go even further than Nebraska's by requiring companies to pay for farm data.**
- **Increasing adoption of precision agriculture technologies is increasingly allowing more data to be collected on farms, though some surveys have suggested producers are wary about sharing it.**

As new technologies take root in U.S. agriculture and producers' digital footprints grow, statehouses across the country are starting to wrestle with a new question: Who owns the data a farm produces?

Nebraska's Legislature in April became the first in the nation to agree on an answer, [enacting a law](#) that declares farmers own the data they generate and bars companies that collect data from selling it without written consent. But lawmakers in three other states — [Iowa](#), [Missouri](#) and [Colorado](#) — have pushed bolder, more sweeping versions of the same idea, seeking to reshape how farmers' data may be used and whether outsiders who want it must pay.

Only Nebraska's bill has achieved passage so far. Iowa's measure, which was attached as an amendment to a right-to-repair bill, cleared the House but stalled in the Senate before the session ended. Measures have also been introduced in Missouri and Colorado.



Reed Freeman (ArentFox Schiff photo)

Reed Freeman, a partner and chair of the privacy group at ArentFox Schiff, said the Nebraska bill's passage might be the first time in the world any legislative body has "applied a privacy regime to data that's not about people," noting most data privacy law to this point has been focused on the personal data of individuals. As the use of artificial intelligence grows, he expects discussions over frameworks for data ownership and privacy will continue in statehouses across the U.S.

"I would say we're at the dawn of this conversation," Freeman said. "We're at the very beginning."

### **A new kind of harvest**

The fight is over a byproduct of modern farming technologies that largely came into use less than 30 years ago. Yield monitors and soil sampling were commercialized in 1993. Over the decade or so that followed, farmers also began using mapping tools, GPS guidance systems, and variable rate technologies that adjusted their seed and fertilizer applications within fields, according to a [2023 report](#) from USDA's Economic Research Service.

Around 27% of U.S. farms and ranches surveyed in 2022 and 2023 used some form of precision agriculture to manage crops or livestock, according to a 2024 Government Accountability Office report that draws from USDA data. At least half of the largest 40% of farms by acreage that responded to the 2023 ERS survey had adopted yield maps, soil maps, variable rate technologies or guidance systems, which was true for about a quarter of the smallest 20% of farms, except for cotton.

Increasingly, high-tech farm machinery collects data on yields, soil conditions and planting rates, along with other metrics, which farmers can use to track progress, diagnose problems and guide future decisions. But as the use of these technologies grows, so do concerns about who the data is being shared with — and why, according to some farm organization leaders who spoke with *Agri-Pulse*.

"If you go to almost any farm meeting over the last number of years and you ask producers what's on the top of their mind, it always seemed to come back to their concern about their ag data and the protection of it," said Mark McHargue, president of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, one of the groups that backed the Nebraska bill as it was going through the state's legislature.

Some surveys have shown farmers are wary of sharing their data, particularly with those looking to profit off of it. However, others suggest producers are still unaware of what their data is worth or, in some cases, if it can even be owned or sold at all.

A [2016 American Farm Bureau Federation survey](#) of almost 400 farmers found that 77% of respondents have concerns about which entities can access farm data and whether it can be used for regulatory purposes; 66% believe farmers should share in profits stemming from their data; and 61% fear it could be used to influence their own decisions in the marketplace.

Meanwhile, a [2023 North Dakota State University study](#) found that farmers' comfort levels depended heavily on who was receiving the data. Around three-fourths of surveyed North Dakota producers were fine handing it to a banker, crop insurance agent or crop consultant, while only 33% said the same of government representatives. Just over 16% were comfortable sharing it with third-party firms that profit from the data but give producers an incentive in return, while only about 7% were comfortable when the firm offered no incentive at all.

A [2022 survey](#) sent to 211 Florida farmers found more than 64% of respondents hadn't even conceptualized their data as "a new kind of harvest" that could be commercialized, while nearly 43% were unsure of the value of their data. Almost 63% had never learned about data as a form of property, though 46% considered agriculture data a type of intellectual property.

And a 2025 survey of crop input dealers found that 33% of respondents believed data privacy concerns may limit customers' use of precision agriculture services. Sixty-three percent of dealers who responded to the survey, which was conducted by Purdue University and CropLife magazine, reported having a customer data privacy statement or data terms and conditions agreement, while 52% said they archived and managed yield, soil test and other data for future use.

Additionally, while around 46% of responding retailers said they worked with producers one-on-one with their farm data without aggregating any, around 35% reported aggregating farmer data within the dealership. Another 17% said they aggregated farmer data, including for use outside of the dealership.

Farmers can be inherently distrustful of outsiders, and a wave of venture capital that in recent years has brought new players into the ag-tech industry may be feeding into some of the budding interest in privacy legislation, said Todd Janzen, an agricultural attorney and the administrator of the Ag Data Transparent project, which created a voluntary certification process for companies that commit to meeting a set of data transparency principles.

Kansas State University economist Terry Griffin told *Agri-Pulse* that data doesn't generally "play well" within the legal concept of private ownership under British common law, a predecessor to much of the U.S.'s legal tradition. He said he's pointed out in past discussions with farmers that data's characteristics tend to fit more closely with the idea of a "public good" than a "private good," though he added that's generally been an unpopular message.

"A lot of farmers would say, 'I don't care what you say, I own my data,'" Griffin said. But he added, "It's not

like owning grain or livestock or a pencil or land. It's got very different characteristics than those physical goods.”

### **States weigh giving farmers control over ag data**

Of the ag data privacy legislation that has emerged so far this year, Nebraska's law takes the narrowest approach. It declares that the farmer owns agronomic, land, climate and livestock data they generate — yields, soil tests, input prescriptions, and livestock breeding and feed records, for instance — and that controllers or processors of that data hold only a limited right to use it for whatever service they provide, whether it's maintaining equipment, running diagnostics or doing other forms of producer-authorized work. Any sale of that data requires the farmer's written consent, which must be obtained separately from the fine print of a service agreement.

“Whoever has the data, whoever has the information, has the power. And we think landowners and the producers should have it,” Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen (R), who helped to champion the effort in Nebraska, told *Agri-Pulse* in an interview.

Enforcement of the data provisions falls to the state attorney general, with penalties of \$1,000 per violation. Companies get 45 days to fix a violation before the attorney general can act, unless they were selling data without consent. And the law does not establish a private right of action, which means producers themselves cannot sue.

An earlier 2025 version of the measure would have let producers withdraw consent and force a company to delete their data. However, this early draft of the bill drew concern from some industry members, like equipment dealers who worried its language could be applied too broadly, said Phil Erdman, the director of dealer and government relations for the Iowa-Nebraska Equipment Dealers Association.

One of the concerns dealers had was that the data deletion provision might be read broadly to allow customers to request dealerships to delete any agricultural records, including those simply indicating the customer had bought a tractor, Erdman said. Dealers use that information for determining market share and tracking whether they are meeting obligations to manufacturers, he added.

“There was just a lot of disruption that could have happened,” he said.

Lawmakers reworked the bill significantly this year to address some of those concerns, and the updated measure generally was received better by manufacturers, dealers and other earlier critics, said Republican Nebraska State Senator Mike Jacobson, its lead author. The new version focuses primarily on the concept of ownership, he said.

“It essentially set up the framework and what I would say is the concept that the producer owns their data, that anyone that handles their data must provide a duty of care to protect the data, and that they cannot resell the data without the prior written consent of the producer or the owner,” Jacobson told *Agri-Pulse* in an interview.

The measures introduced in Iowa, Missouri and Colorado take a more expansive approach, each following a core idea: that the producer owns their data and may profit off of it. They even share the same title – the Agricultural Data Ownership and Market Competition Act.

These bills distinguish between two kinds of data, and assign ownership of both to the producer, according to [a summary published by ArentFox Schiff](#). The first type – raw data – is unprocessed information recorded by an instrument, which Iowa and Colorado say cannot be copyrighted under federal law. The second – transformed data – is the product a company builds from the first, like a predictive yield model, a field prescription or a report comparing one operation with others.

Under the Iowa and Colorado bills, a farmer would own the raw readings and the transformed product built from them, and could copyright, license or sell the transformed work. Missouri's bill doesn't formally define raw data, using a broader "agricultural data" category instead, and gives the farmer only a "proportional" stake in transformed data.

All three measures would allow a farmer to request a copy of their data in a portable format, take it to a competing service provider, and require a company to delete it. Waiving these rights requires a producer's written consent, which cannot be placed in a terms-of-service agreement.

Additionally, companies would be required to pay farmers for their data at a fair value, with any revenue-sharing terms set out beforehand in a written agreement.

Willie Cade, CEO of Graceful Solutions and an advocate for these bills, said under those bills' provisions, whoever is seeking access to farmers' data “would have to negotiate” with the farmer to determine compensation. He said the overall total would depend upon what the two parties agree upon, but stressed that he hopes producers begin to see their data as something of value as a result of these bills.

“You may not think your data is valuable, that it's only valuable when there's a whole lot of it aggregated together. That's just not true,” Cade said. “Every element of that data has value going forward.”

However, Erdman expressed concern with these bills, saying they could have “far-reaching implications.”



*Mike Jacobson (Nebraska Legislature photo)*

He noted that equipment dealers are concerned they'd need to pay for data access just to repair equipment, which could potentially be passed on to the customer as part of the repair costs. He also called the level of penalties "astronomical."

"The approach is very different," he said, comparing these bills to Nebraska's. He added that the Iowa and Colorado measures currently lack buy-in from dealers and other parts of the agriculture industry.

These bills route enforcement through the states' consumer-protection laws, with Colorado's treating a violation as a deceptive trade practice while Missouri's and Iowa's tie violations to their consumer-fraud statutes. Unlike Nebraska's bill, all three would enable farmers to bring their own lawsuits over violations, allowing them to seek up to \$10,000 per violation, along with attorney's fees.

Still, the bills diverge in a few ways. According to the ArentFox Schiff summary, Missouri's caps market concentration, barring companies from collecting agricultural data from producers representing more than 25% of the total farmland in any single county. Companies that exceed that limit would have 90 days to stop collecting data in that county and delete enough of the excess to come back under the cap or face penalties.

Meanwhile, Colorado's bill would levy a 3% excise tax on transactions involving transformed data and put the revenue toward a state loan program for beginning farmers, though this would require the approval of Colorado voters. The bill refers the question to the statewide ballot in November.

Both the Colorado and Missouri bills would sunset if not renewed, with Colorado's listed to expire in 2037 and Missouri's set to lapse six years after taking effect.

The Iowa measure was folded into a broader right-to-repair bill, HF 2763, as an amendment. The Iowa House passed that bill 70-18 on April 27, but the state Senate did not take it up.

Pillen expects to see other states follow Nebraska's lead by passing their own ag data privacy bills. He believes it's important for farmers to own and control data in a changing technology landscape.

"We're excited to be the first to do it," Pillen said of the Nebraska law. "We're really sure many more will follow it, because it's just pragmatic, common sense."

# Growers warn soaring regulatory costs are squeezing California agriculture

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Tim Hearden



California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross (Agri-Pulse/Tim Hearden)

- **Fifth-generation grower Tara Beaver Coronado says soaring costs and flat grape payments are threatening her ability to keep farming in California.**
- **Speakers at a recent *Agri-Pulse* summit warned that regulatory compliance costs, including a 1,400% jump for lettuce growers since 2006, are outpacing farm income.**
- **Panelists said overlapping rules, outdated restrictions and rising penalties are pushing production costs higher and driving consumers toward cheaper imports.**

Fifth-generation farmer Tara Beaver Coronado didn't think she would follow in her family's footsteps.

She left her parents' farm in California's Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta region with the goal of becoming a teacher, but returned in 2018 to plant a vineyard. She also runs a YouTube [channel](#) called Field Trips with Tara, which highlights other farmers.

Beaver Coronado entered a 10-year contract for her 50 acres of grapes when the wine industry was booming. Since then, her operating costs have roughly doubled, but payments for her grapes haven't.

"Without the help of my parents, I don't know how I would have gotten started" farming, Beaver Coronado said June 2 at the *Agri-Pulse Food and Ag Issues Summit* in Sacramento. "I'm hoping to push through with my wine grapes. I haven't given up yet."

Her remarks echoed a recurring theme among the panelists at the daylong summit at the downtown Sheraton Grand – that sharply escalating costs are making it more difficult for California growers to stay in agriculture. And the state's regulatory environment deserves much of the blame.

"What I try to tell people is that you may love the regulations, but they're not free," said Dan Sumner, director of the University of California Agricultural Issues Center in Davis. "There's a balance of costs and benefits."

Myriad challenges confront California agriculture, from rising input costs and labor shortages to shifting consumer demand and political uncertainty. However, several of the [nearly two dozen](#) growers, policymakers and industry professionals who spoke at the *Agri-Pulse* summit cited regulatory pressures among the key drivers of rising costs.

For instance, a video produced by Western Growers recalled a [2025 study](#) by California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo researchers Mike McCullough and Lynn Hamilton finding that regulatory compliance costs for California lettuce growers had risen by nearly 1,400% since 2006.

Over this period, new state and federal laws guiding food safety, water and air quality, wages and worker safety placed an additional burden while farm gate values increased only slightly, according to the study.

“I think of it as playing regulatory Jenga when you never run out of pieces,” said Chris Zanobini, chief executive officer of Ag Association Management Services Inc. His organization manages several specialty crop marketing groups.

Among the mounting burdens listed by speakers:

- Stiffer penalties for failing to meet the state’s Heat Illness Prevention Standard for workers were meant to “go after the small percentage of violators” but were “viewed as punitive,” acknowledged state Sen. Dave Cortese, D-San Jose.
- Legislation in 2022 requiring producers to reduce single-use plastic packaging by 25% by 2032 has sent fresh produce industries scrambling for alternatives and could prompt a flurry of lawsuits, several speakers said.
- An effective ban on fully automated tractors in California that dates back to a 1970s worker safety rule hasn’t been updated despite the emergence of self-driving cars in cities.

“In every single state, you can use an automated tractor except in California,” Beaver Coronado said.

Sumner noted that regulatory costs aren’t just borne by growers but also by processors. As a result, retail prices rise, sometimes prompting consumers to seek cheaper imports, while California growers’ income remains flat.

“With all the prices going up, it effects the demand side as well as the supply side,” he said. “Something’s got to give.”

California’s Department of Food and Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency and State Water Resources Control Board commissioned a [multi-year study](#) of ways to streamline reporting requirements under CDFA’s Produce Safety Program, the state’s Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, and the state’s winery and confined animal facility programs.

CDFR Secretary Karen Ross, who spoke at the June 2 summit, told *Agri-Pulse* that an updated report will be released soon.

“It’s a very small-scale version of what I hope will lead to more,” she said.

Read more news at *Agri-Pulse.com*.

# USDA to revise payment limit regulations

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Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Noah Wicks



An Indiana farmer plants corn into a stand of cover crop on his farm in Porter County, Indiana. (USDA photo/ Donated by Jacob Tosch, Porter County SWCD)

The Agriculture Department is adjusting payment limit regulations for certain commodity and disaster programs funded through the Commodity Credit Corp., according to a [Federal Register notice](#) published Wednesday.

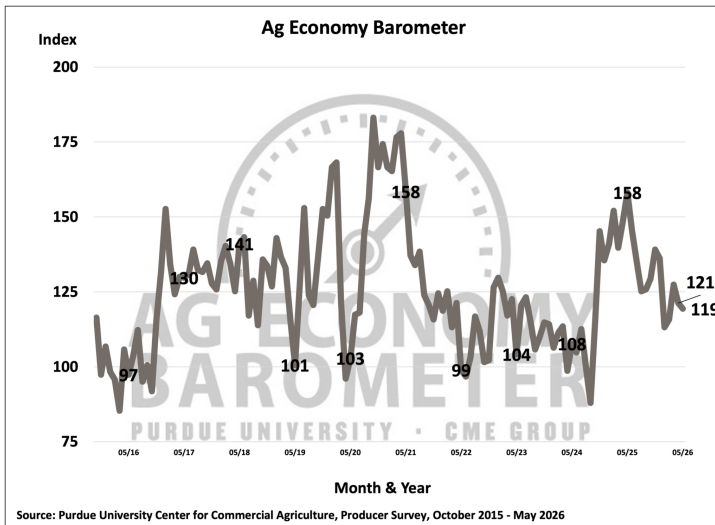
The changes create a category for qualified pass-through entities in some Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, and this category will be used to help determine those entities' payment limits. The pass-through entities include joint ventures, general partnerships, S corporations, and limited liability companies that choose not to be treated as a corporation, according to the notice.

The rule also exempts recipients of certain disaster and conservation program funding through several programs from the current \$900,000 adjusted gross income limit.

The changes are being made under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which was signed into law last year. The agency separately raised payment limits for the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage programs through a rule earlier this year, according to the notice.

# High input costs drive farmer sentiment down

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Grace Miller



The Ag Economy Barometer Index shows May 2026 down by 2 points from April. (Purdue University-CME Group graphic)

the conflict.

Eighty-six percent of farmers think their farm is worse off than in May 2025. In addition, slightly more than half of farmers – 52% – think the U.S. is "headed in the right direction," the lowest value for that metric since the question started being asked monthly in July 2025, and down 5 percentage points from April. In the last six months of 2025, 71% of respondents said the country was headed down the right path.

Alternative investments, interest rates and net farm income led to increased farmland value indexes. The short-term index increased from 121 points in April to 130 in May. The long-term index increased from 155 points in April to 160 in May. Over the next year, 22% of the farmers think their farm will be better off financially.

About half of farmers surveyed for Purdue's latest ag barometer called high input costs their biggest concern, as farmer sentiment stayed relatively steady in May.

Overall farmer sentiment, according to the [Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer Index](#), fell 2 points from April to May. The Current Conditions Index dropped by 8 points, and the Future Expectations Index increased 1 point.

The conflict in Iran remains a concern for respondents and, similar to [April's barometer](#), approximately two-thirds of respondents believe their net farm income will decrease as a result of

# Farm Journal releases report on dairy industry

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Grace Miller



Dairy cows line up to eat in the barn. (USDA photo)

Farm Journal's latest [State of the Dairy Industry report](#) says the industry is shifting to focus on components, instead of total pounds of milk. Driven in part by [increased protein consumption](#), producers are strategically adjusting the cows' feed to get more fat and protein.

However, despite this higher efficiency, only 61% of producers saw a profit, according to Farm Journal's survey. Factors contributing to low profitability are high input costs and unstable milk prices.

The cost of land is listed as the top challenge to growth, with "inflation/cost of materials to expand" in second place.

Labor is the third biggest challenge to growth for the industry. Twenty-eight percent of producers agree that it is difficult to retain labor, and 30% need resources to help. To combat this issue, they are increasing use of flexible schedules, overtime and time-off benefits.

Another challenge dairy producers face is burnout. "No money, no fun. Nobody wants to keep milking cows," one respondent in the report said.

Despite these challenges, 45% of producers are planning to expand their operations over the next five years. The report cites the "resilience" of the dairy farmer as motivation for continuing to produce in these conditions. However, 25% plan to retire in that five-year period. Only 4% of producers are planning on dispersing their herds and exiting the industry.

A promising income stream for many dairy producers is [beef-on-dairy](#), where beef bulls are crossed with dairy cows. Fifty-six percent of producers currently breed beef-on-dairy, and 11% plan on implementing it within the next three to five years. The beef-on-dairy industry is becoming more data-driven, and producers are expected to keep health records of the cattle for feedlots and meatpackers.

Carbon credit usage has stalled. Only one in five dairy producers currently participate in carbon credit programs because "they just don't believe the check justifies the headache," the report says. But 55% of producers are practicing sustainability measures, notably when it makes them more efficient.

Phil Plourd, an insights adviser at [Ever.Ag](#), concluded the report noting, “given historical resilience and at least some light tailwinds, I’m confident this will be at least an OK year for dairy producers and the larger industry.”

# Proposed rule further limits DEI in federal grants

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The sign above the door to the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging inside the main administration building on the primary University of Kansas campus on Friday, April 12, 2024, in Lawrence, Kan. (AP photo/John Hanna)

The Office of Management and Budget [has proposed a rule](#) affecting USDA and agencies across the federal government by targeting awards that would advance the “‘woke’ policy agenda” and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

“Collectively, these [DEI] policies wasted a great amount of taxpayer resources and caused great harm to public trust in government,” the proposal says. It adds that revisions to the guidance will improve “transparency, accountability, and oversight.”

President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) on the first day of his second term requiring

OMB to terminate DEI programs. The proposal also requires “discretionary awards [to] advance the President’s policy priorities” – which senior appointees will review.

The proposal to tighten the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance would continue to enforce for grant recipients the Drug-Free Workplace Act and a Reagan-era [executive order](#) saying that federal program participants who have been debarred or suspended from one agency are debarred government-wide.

The proposal was released on May 29; [public comments](#) are due on or before July 13.

# Farm Hands on the Potomac: USDA communications shakeup, IDFA hires Youker and Wilson, Yates departs AFBF for Farm Credit Bank of Texas

Published on June 03, 2026 | Authors: Lydia Johnson, Grace Miller



The Agriculture Department has announced a new communications team. **Harry Fones** was named acting director of communications. Earlier, he was communications director for the House Freedom Caucus and principal deputy assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Homeland Security. **Michael Abboud** was named deputy chief of staff for public affairs. Abboud was previously associate administrator for the Office of External Affairs at the Environmental Protection Agency. **Alec Varsamis**, who was USDA's communications director for the past year,

and **Jentre Kennedy**, the press assistant for USDA's Office of Communications, have both left the department.

The International Dairy Foods Association added two staff members to the government relations and advocacy team: **Darrin Youker** is the new director of state government relations and **Cal Wilson** is manager of government affairs. Youker will lead IDFA's state advocacy work tracking and engaging on the growing volume of state legislative and regulatory activity affecting the dairy sector. He joins IDFA from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, where he served as policy director. Wilson previously worked for the Senate Ag Committee Republican staff as a staff assistant. In addition to the new staff, IDFA established a strategic advocacy fund to support the efforts, deepen member engagement and further target coalition and advocacy efforts in states. Both Youker and Wilson will report to **Chelsie Keys**, IDFA's senior vice president of government relations.

**Ryan Yates** joined Farm Credit Bank of Texas as senior vice president of government relations. He worked at the American Farm Bureau Federation for the past 12 years, recently as managing director of public policy.

Tyson Foods named **Jeff Schomburger** president and CEO effective Oct. 4. He previously held numerous roles at Procter & Gamble during his 35 years with the company, including most recently as global sales officer. Schomburger succeeds current leader **Donnie King**, who is retiring after 43 years with the company. King will remain on the Tyson Foods board of directors.



*Ryan Yates (AFBF photo)*

**Carlye Winfrey** was promoted to professional staff on the Republican staff of the Senate Ag Committee working on nutrition issues. She was previously a legislative aide. Winfrey was formerly a government relations manager at Monument Advocacy.

**Bill Davis** started as the senior director and head of U.S. federal and state affairs at Zoetis. Previously, he spent eight years at Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health and two years at the National Pork Producers Council.

USDA appointed the members of the Cotton Board: **John Newby**, **Brad Harrison**, **Bradley Monahan** and **Lisa Keyser**. Newly appointed alternate members include **Shep Morris**, **Adam McLendon**, **Jason Lawless**, **Robert Hill**, **Jeff Mitch**, **Samantha Gordon** and **Yelena Mogelesky**. The rest of the board, alternates and advisers, were all reappointed.

**Tim Massa**, executive vice president and chief associate experience officer of Kroger, will retire on Sept. 18. He spent 16 years in leadership at Kroger, rising from vice president of talent development to senior vice president before his current role. He previously worked at Procter & Gamble. A successor has not yet been named.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has named **Kendall Stephenson** executive director of international energy. She has previously worked at the Chamber of Commerce as senior manager of policy for the Global Energy Institute, which she left in April 2025 to serve as the government relations manager for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

**Ken Silveira** is now the CEO of Grimmway Produce Group. He was formerly the president at Bengard Ranch Inc. **Jeff Huckaby**, the former CEO, is now chief agricultural officer.

**James Peterson** is the new CEO of Wish Farms. He has been with the company for almost 15 years. He was preceded by Gary Wishnatzki, who is the owner of Wish Farms, and who will be transitioning to chairman of the board.

Defenders of Wildlife hired **Mike Leahy** as vice president of government relations. He most recently was the senior director of wildlife for hunting and fishing policy at the National Wildlife Federation. Leahy worked for Defenders of Wildlife from 2000 to 2013.

**Ily Soares** is now the chief financial officer of the Farm Credit Administration. She has been acting CFO since the retirement of **Mary Peterman** on April 30. Soares has been with the Farm Credit Administration for 17 years, and was previously the deputy chief financial officer. Earlier, she worked for the Interior Business Center.



*Ily Soares (LinkedIn photo)*

**Elliott Dennis** was named an associate professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Missouri. He will also be the inaugural Mershon Family Production Agricultural Economics Scholar. He will begin on Sept. 1. Dennis was formerly an associate professor at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

**Josie Kavanagh** was named director of PAC and political operations at the Biotechnology Innovation Organization. She formerly worked as the director of scheduling and finance administration for Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C.

Rational 360 hired **Maggie Allard** as senior vice president. She previously spent six years at Adfero, most recently as senior vice president and headed the energy and agriculture

practice.

**Wes Saber** was appointed chief financial officer for FreshEdge. Saber was formerly the executive vice president and CFO during his 11 years at Haribo of America. He also worked at Mars for over 12 years.

The Nickey Gregory Co. named **Scott Chapman** president in December, succeeding founder **Nickey Gregory** after his retirement. Chapman was the vice president of sales at the company for 18 years. Prior to his tenure at the Nickey Gregory Co., Chapman spent 15 years at Kroger.

PACE LLP hired **Katy Albiani** as an associate. She was previously a senior legislative assistant in the U.S. House for Rep. Vince Fong, R-Calif., and earlier was a legislative aide in the California State Assembly.

**Danny Reeves** was promoted to director of member services and coalitions for the House Financial Services Committee. Previously, he was the deputy director of member services and coalitions.

The Texas Pork Producers Association hired **Laura Jimenez** as the consumer marketing specialist. Prior to

this role, she was a sales consultant at Buckhead Meat and Seafood.

**Addison Randall** is now a marketing events specialist with Ever.Ag. She previously worked for the Iowa Pork Producers Association as an event and program manager.

The National Farmers Union announced its National Youth Advisory Council for the 2026-2027 year: **Taryn McCaa** and **Darla Fesmire** from the Oklahoma Farmers Union, **Carter Hass** and **Lily Thomas** from the North Dakota Farmers Union, and **Easton Hansen** from the Wisconsin Farmers Union. All will serve one-year terms.

*Are you changing jobs, getting promoted or receiving an award? Know someone who is? Email [Lydia@Agri-Pulse.com](mailto:Lydia@Agri-Pulse.com) to be featured in next week's edition of Farm Hands on the Potomac.*

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