



## VIRGINIA AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL

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*We Represent Virginia Agribusiness with a Unified Voice*

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August 20, 2013

Congressman Eric Cantor  
303 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20215

Dear Congressman Cantor,

As representatives of major agriculture and forestry producers and agribusinesses in Virginia, we have questions and concerns about the future of farm policy and the 2013 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is critically important to our collective memberships, and as such, we are writing today to call your attention to the need for action on this measure, as well as to raise a few specific questions about the future of this legislation.

As you know, the Senate passed its version of the Farm Bill (S. 954) on June 10, 2013, by a vote of 66-27. The House passed a version of the Farm Bill on July 11, 2013, by a vote of 216-208.

Virginia's agribusinesses rely on federal farm policy to make long-term business and investment decisions that impact agricultural producers, processors, and many other sectors of rural economies. Our members have also expressed concern regarding the passage of a Farm Bill without a nutrition title, citing the long-term implications for building successful coalitions required to craft and pass both this and future Farm Bills. And producers need the certainty that comes along with a long-term Farm Bill in order to make plans for their operations.

With last year's extension of previous farm programs, current law is set to expire on September 30, 2013. Virginia's agribusinesses urge passage of a long-term Farm Bill before this deadline to ensure producers have adequate tools to succeed in continuing to feed families in America and around the world. Virginia's producers have a variety of concerns regarding the future of agricultural programs in light of the current uncertainty regarding the Farm Bill. While we recognize that discussions in Congress are still ongoing, we have received a number of questions and concerns from many of the Virginia farmers and agribusinesses we represent. In particular, our members have raised the following general questions and points of concern with us. We look forward to working with your office to provide our membership responses to the following inquiries:

1) The impact to current crop insurance programs should current law expire, 2) how long funding will be in effect for current Farm Bill programs, 3) the U.S. Department of Agriculture's ability to honor current Farm Bill program contracts should these programs expire September 30, 4) long-term availability of capital for agribusinesses via USDA Farm Service Agency guaranteed loans and the Farm Credit System, and 5) agricultural research and education funding, including grants for specialty crop research.

Furthermore, other important provisions that Virginia's agribusinesses depend on, such as market access programs, conservation programs, the livestock indemnity program, and various rural development programs face uncertain futures if a Farm Bill does not pass before the end of September.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to finding solutions for the problems agribusinesses and rural communities face. Our members look forward to hearing from you with responses to the inquiries we have raised. We look forward to continuing to work with you in achieving the shared goal of ensuring that Virginia's and America's farmers can continue to feed the world and that rural communities can thrive.

Sincerely,

Virginia Agribusiness Council  
Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association  
Virginia Grain Producers Association  
Virginia Green Industry Council  
Virginia Irrigation Association  
Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association  
Virginia Peanut Growers Association  
Virginia State Dairymen's Association  
Virginia State Horticultural Society  
Southwest Virginia Agricultural Association