

The 2017 IAC Youth Conference & Essay Contest

A Platform for Change



Equitable access to Department of Agriculture programs, support in the development and enhancement of local food systems and economies, and improved access to capital for value added entrepreneurial ventures were outlined as the top concerns of these young leaders.

"Many tribes, including my own, depend on agriculture as a way of life..." shared one Essay Contest Finalist, Nicholas Naranjo, a high school senior of the Santa Clara Pueblo. Naranjo was one of the three essay finalists featured as the keynote speakers at the 2017 IAC Annual Banquet. Also featured as an essay finalist was Mihalani Mortenson, a high school junior of Hawaii, who expressed her concern for this legislation's ability to impact indigenous communities. "It gives them opportunities, restrictions, and guidance as to what they can do as Indigenous people," Mortensen expressed as she shared her passion for ensuring sustainable agriculture and cultural preservation within her community are both supported by the 2018 Farm Bill. Teresita Diaz, the third finalist representing the Ojibwe and Taino nations as a high school junior, emphasized that her involvement in advocating for the 2018 Farm Bill possesses the ability to help her community cope with the impact which it will have on all ages. "With our youth, I know a change will come for us... the 2018 farm bill could use some major improvements before it's signed, and our youth are the start of these improvements," Diaz states.



The IAC Essay Contest received submissions from more than 95 high school youth this year. Collaboration of applicants has developed a tremendous representation of the 2018 Farm Bill needs within our Indian communities, both on and off the reservation, across the country. The collection of essays are scheduled to be delivered to the USDA national headquarters later this month, as well as provided to the Native Farm Bill Coalition in support of their advocacy efforts.

The Intertribal Agriculture Council remains committed to carrying the voice of our youth in a way that has yet to be paralleled. A national force for youth leadership development, the IAC Executive Board supported the official seating of the Native Youth Food Sovereignty Alliance Board of Directors (pictured at right).

These twelve (12) young leaders will serve as an advocating body for all of Indian Country's youth. To further illustrate their commitment to youth efforts, the Intertribal Agriculture Council unanimously seated a Youth Board Representative within their leadership; Zachary Ilbery (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) has been chosen to serve as a voting member of the IAC Executive Board.



The momentum of the week has carried IAC Youth Programming into 2018 with large goals. Now having reached more than 500 youth, from over 150 tribes, this youth movement will continue to improve communities exponentially. With movement, comes change; and when the passion and energy of youth are directing the change, it can impact the world.

The following is a collection of the essays submitted by the 2017 conference attendees:

2017 FINALIST

Farm Bill and My Community

By Nicholas Naranjo, Santa Clara Pueblo

Many Tribes including my own depend on agriculture as a way of life. For generations, the people of Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico have been farmers and ranchers with cattle. This has been and continues to be a major source of income for us. We have been faced with many hardships on our lands due to the unique situations that come with living on the Pueblo. These hardships include loss of income from droughts, wildfires in our forest areas and poverty among families. Where most families depend on food programs to feed themselves. Along with other tribes, we depend on our way of life to sustain us and sometimes depend on programs administered by both state and federal governments to assist us. We as the native community and individually as native farmers and ranchers, are left behind and without a voice to speak. This is a direct result of the ever changing policies that are made by these agencies. An important policy to discuss is the 2018 Farm Bill. The last Farm Bill was approved in 2014 under President Barak Obama's Administration. Although it addressed some key issues important to native producers, communities and tribal governments, not all issues were beneficial to us. Now we have the opportunity, as native people, to step up and address these policies in the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. By these efforts, our community will profit. Key topics that will have major impacts on our native communities are: Business/ Economic Development, Infrastructure and Community Development, Natural Resources/Conservation, Nutrition and the Veteran Grant Programs. And other issues that lie in the hands of the Office of the Secretary for the Department of Interior.

In Santa Clara Pueblo, key areas will impact us directly as livestock owners. Title I: Commodities for Livestock Producers, is the first example of this. Increases to indemnity payments for tribal livestock producers would allow us to secure market pricing for our livestock. This will also allow us to receive payments due to losses we have incurred from deaths that are significant and unique to the areas where our livestock are raised. We would then, be paid at an equal level with other livestock producers outside of Indian Country.

We must also ensure our eligibility for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program by adding provisions that allow protection for tribal producers that are outside of our control. The BIA is not fully aware of the environmental impacts and other issues that have a direct impact on tribal producers that vary by region. Exempting tribes from certain limitations for receiving payments on losses due to fires is a provision that is necessary to protect tribal producers. This currently only applies to public managed lands. Although Pueblo lands are not public they are not exempt from fires or other natural disasters that occur on public manage lands, and yet we are not eligible for assistance due to this criteria.

Tribes must also be aware that currently, Title I does not allow for base acreage of tribal lands to be calculated through consultation with tribes, which has a direct impact on what programs we are eligible for. This must be changed so that a proper accounting of base acres reflects what is specific to each tribe. All land bases vary by region and should be properly reflected as such. With this change, it would significantly impact what certain producers are eligible in way of assistance to help with their livestock production.

Another key area for Santa Clara Pueblo would fall under Title II: Conservation. Our pueblo is encompassed by a large portion of forested land. This land has been hit by two major wild fires within the short span of 10 years. The first fire being the Cerro Grande Fire in 2000 and then the Las Conchas Fire in 2010. These fires damaged a significant portion of the forested area. And have brought negative impact on our livestock production because the cattle needs this land to graze. Although the tribe is currently in the process of restoring these areas, it will take a life time longer than my grandparents, parents and even my own before it can be as fruitful as it once was only 10 years ago.

In order to rebuild our lands, it is imperative that we actively participate in conservation programs so that our lands are managed properly for livestock owners. But in order for this to happen, we must change the way certain programs can be administered on trust land. Our tribes must be diligent when it comes to working with the BIA and NCRS so that we can apply for and receive funding to implement these conservation programs. This applies to individual assigned land and land used by the entire Pueblo.

Title IV: Nutrition under the Farm Bill of 2018 has the potential to help eliminate the degree of poverty that our pueblo faces. While Santa Clara Pueblo strives to ensure that our people are taken care of, we still experience poverty among many families. This issue impacts families where grandparents are raising their grandchild, elders with no extended families and also members without employment. Therefore, Title IV is very important. Many families depend on food programs to assist with supplementing what they cannot afford out of pocket. Although not always have these programs provided the necessary help needed by our members. Individual tribes, such as ours in Santa Clara Pueblo, should have the

opportunity to administer some of these food programs directly. This would alleviate members having to go through the state to receive services through such programs as SNAP. Currently our tribe provides general assistance through our Social Services Program which is similar to TANF that the state provides to needy families. By being able to administer the SNAP program directly through our Pueblo this would alleviate the burden on tribal members when seeking services outside of the Pueblo.

Through the Food Distribution Program administered on Indian Reservations, we should be allowed the flexibility to purchase and provide food to our native communities that are grown and raised locally. These products are native to our diet. And would ensure that the food distributed to tribes are of the highest quality and come directly from the supplier to the program, rather than through a middle man. And would mean that our people would have a more balanced and nutritious meal to provide to their families.

As a livestock owner in the Pueblo, the Farm Bill is a very important tool that would help me in my livestock operation. With the wide range of policies that make up the bill, the importance of making change at various levels would affect Indian Country significantly. As a voice for my Pueblo and myself, my role is very important, whether it be as a participant in advocating for change at a local level or nationally. But also as an educator in my community to re-teach the importance and significance of what it means to be a farmer and rancher, so that my tribal government can lobby for change not only for the Pueblo but for the betterment for all of Indian Country.

Santa Clara Pueblo has been at the forefront of most tribes when it has come to lobbying and testifying before Congress in Washington, DC. These issues have included Transportation within Indian Country, the 99 Year Land Lease and Declaring Natural Disasters on Tribal Lands so that funding can come directly from FEMA to the tribes. My family has been strong advocates on important issues affecting our Pueblo by holding positions in Tribal Government that allows them to voice their concerns. We are active participants in programs related to farming and ranching and more recently in supporting a Pueblo funded program on Food Sovereignty through a grant from First Nations.

As an active member with the IAC Youth Alliance I have had the opportunity to advocate for the organization from a youth perspective on issues that affect Indian Country within the Farm Bill. My chaperon and I will continue to advocate on these important issues within my community by educating members and tribal government on the importance of the Farm Bill and the need to participate in the USDA Census Count for Agriculture that directly impacts programs that are offered to Indian Country. As well as work with our Governor and Tribal Council and the Inter-Public Relations Office in our Pueblo to address the needed changes in the Farm Bill that affect native producers across all of Indian Country.

Although Santa Clara Pueblo is just a small voice within Indian Country it can powerful through advocacy and supporting livestock owners and farm producers. To truly be sovereign, we as native people must show our independence by how well we can provide for our people through our native way of life.

2017 FINALIST

What does the 2018 Farm Bill Mean to Us?

By Teresita Equay Diaz, Ojibwe & Taino

"What is a farm bill? A farm bill is an act that is passed by U.S. congress and signed to be a law by the current president of the U.S. Farm bills were originally created to help struggling farmers after the great depression. The farm bill governs federal farm, food, fiber, forestry, and rural policies and programs. To the government, it is a food and agriculture policy tool. New farm bills are created approximately every five years. The most recent farm bill was passed on February 7, 2014. It expires in september 2018. A new farm bill is now in the making.

The new 2018 farm bill is said to be cutting around 38 billion dollars out of farm support programs. Some of these programs include, commodity and trade programs, nutrition assistance programs, and crop insurance. For a farm bill that was originally created to help struggling farmers; it's crazy how much it is going to change in 2018. It has almost made a complete U turn in succeeding in its actual purpose. Being that a lot of farmers in rural areas (like Indian country) are already in tight situations, this new farm bill is like a big fail for rural development.

Now I will be addressing the effects of multiple things in the farm bill that will affect Indian Country. For one, it's planned that grant and loan money programs for rural water systems and waste programs are going to be cut. Tribal lands are in eligibility for these programs. These programs help with funding that goes towards the improvement and cleaning of water and sewage systems in small populated areas. Without these programs there may not be access to clean drinking water, and on my reservation we have never been known to have clean drinking water. I am afraid that without these programs our water might be even more undrinkable then it is right now. Water is life.

Another thing that is going to affect my reservation due to the farm bill is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) eligibility being toughened up, and 25% of its funding being gone within 10 years. SNAP helps low-income families and individuals purchase food to feed them and their family. Currently the max amount of money a family of four can get in food stamps is \$649. That is roughly only \$5.40 for each family member to eat in a day. Also big retailer stores like Walmart where most people on my reservation shop can be affected by the reduction in snap users. Another thing is that in rural areas there isn't a lot of jobs and unemployment is a serious issue therefore people may be at risk of having little to no food. I personally know what it's like to have little food in the house at home and it's hard. So let me just say, It's in my highest hopes that no one on my reservation is left to be hungry after this farm bill.

In order to change the things that I mentioned above in this future farm bill I need to take action. So to take an active role in insuring that my community is represented by the 2018 farm bill, I have an idea of creating a YouTube channel. This YouTube channel will have a really catchy name and will be run by mostly Native American youth from my community. To start off, the youth, including me can post Facebook statuses and newspaper ads to get people to subscribe to us and watch our videos. We can

create a youth council to be in charge of the YouTube channel and also be the voice of our youth on our reservation. For the video aspect, we can do informative and persuasive speeches, short skits, and even interviews with tribal producers to tell about the farm bill and what we need to see in it. The videos will be interesting and in a way, fun to watch because it is young people telling the world what they want to see. It's important coming from our youth because the youth are our future. We can do fundraisers to travel to get our voice to reach more, and advertise for our YouTube channel. We can have monthly meetings to brainstorm and discuss on how we can improve and help. We can also find people to sponsor us. It just takes one person to stir the pot. This is something I'm passionate about and have been doing a lot of brainstorming and talking to different people on their thoughts on the bill and what can help change it for the better.

To successfully reach this active role in my community my chaperone and I must take certain steps. These steps include getting support, networking, and also getting as many of our youth in our community involved as we can. We can do this by creating the community garden into a project for our youth. Our youth take pride in helping others so by doing this and telling them about the farm bill and how it can affect us, and our families. This will help the youth want to get involved. Having support is one of the most important things that leads to success. With the support of others, especially role models in our community, it encourages us to give it our all. In a tough situation it's easier to give up when there is no support. Networking is just as important as getting support. Networking is a way to be seen. Networking connects you to many different people from all over, which would allow my chaperone and I to have a better chance at succeeding.

Last but not least our youth. Without our youth I think my plan would fall apart. People want to know what the youth think. The youth are the most important part of making sure we are represented in this 2018 farm bill. With our youth I know that a change will come for us. Overall the 2018 farm bill could use some major improvements before it's signed, and our youth are the start of these improvements.

2017 FINALIST

2018 Indian Agriculture Farm Bill

By Mihalani K. Mortenson, Native Hawaiian

The 2018 Farm Bill was renewed to benefit the Native people through the Indian Food and Agriculture Initiative. The Farm Bill and all of the main components that it covers are ways to help our communities to be sustainable in a legal way. I am from Hilo, Hawaii in a small community called Keaukaha. I am a Junior in High School. My community is not that involved in agriculture but we have elders in our community who have a lot of knowledge and experiences about agriculture and being able to sustain themselves. While talking with the elders, I found that something common that they all talked about, and is an obvious need in the community, is more interest and involvement in agriculture from the people living there. In my community, the Farm Bill is needed so that we can first, involve the youth in Agriculture because we are the future leaders. The next step, I think, would be to branch out to the parents because they are the main support systems for the youth and their futures.

How does the Farm Bill impact Indian Agriculture? In the making of the new 2018 Farm Bill, NRCS mentioned that "Finding the balance between regulatory and voluntary policy options to address environmental issues for agriculture that will play a big part in the debate for the new 2018 farm bill and also, keeping in mind the native tribes all around the world." Now that the new Farm Bill is here, we see that they have addressed the environmental issues for agriculture. I think that through the Agriculture summits and this essay competition, they have kept in mind all of the tribes around the world. Overall, the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture in a way that allows them to see what they need in their community, then do something about it while keeping in mind the things in the Farm Bill to ensure they are doing these things in a legal way. All ten of the components in the Farm Bill keep agriculture in mind for those tribes, nations, and people all over the world.

We, the people of Hawaii, have people, places, and whole communities that are impacted by the Farm Bill. In the nutrition section of the Farm Bill, it explains that approximately 25 percent of Native Americans receive some type of federal food assistance, and in some tribal communities, participation is as high as 60-80 percent. This is something that has a big impact in my community because there are many people, mostly natives who are on EBT, Snap, The Food Bank and so many more assistance programs because poverty is a huge thing in Hawaii. Poverty is the main reason that nutrition is a big deal in our community. Many do not have the money to buy fresh food so instead, they buy the cheap and unhealthy food. This is a great opportunity for us to start something like a community garden for example. One of the key points in the Farm Bill is, "The Rural Development (RD) programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are essential for rural and reservation tribal communities to develop and improve declining infrastructure systems while spurring economic development and job creation in tribal communities." This applies to my community because from my understanding it talks about using the land spur the economic development and to use that as jobs for Hawaiians. It also said, to decline the infrastructure systems. This means to decline development on our sacred land used for sustainability. On Hawaii, the state is trying to install a thirty-meter-telescope on top of our sacred mountain. The installment of this telescope can ruin the waterways in the mountain which is our main source of water. More on the cultural side, our ancestors and chiefs are buried on the mountain which is a problem in the culture. We do not necessarily have programs that are impacted by the Farm Bill but we can create those programs.

As youth leaders, it is important for us to be the active leaders in the community. I will take an active role in ensuring that my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill by taking the knowledge that I learned about sustainable agriculture from the Pacific Summits in Reno, Nevada and Sacramento, California. I will also take home the things I learned in the Youth Agriculture Summit in Arkansas as well. Like I mentioned in the beginning of my essay, we need to start with the youth and I know that one way to do that is to get an agriculture project within the schools. I know that on my island alone, there are a few schools with programs like 4-H and FFA. We need to start these types of educational programs. I think that a way to start it off would be to start a school garden and plant the native plants and actually serve it in lunch and eventually work up to making sure that all of the vegetables and fruits that are served for lunch and breakfast are locally grown in the school garden by the students. Branching out from the

youth is support from the parents. I think that one way that parents can support their child is by being involved. On the Big Island, where I live, we have a lot of empty lands that could be used for farming. While talking with my parents, they explained to me that there are several acres of land being sold to people with 50% or more Hawaiian blood. If you meet the requirements you can get the land after the legal allegations. If the native parents got the land, it shows their involvement and it can help the youth to expand all of the hard work that they put into agriculture. If we follow the rules and qualifications and understand the Farm Bill, then we can make this happen. But it needs to start with the youth and for us youth here in the IAC and NRCS leadership programs to encourage our fellow natives to have the drive to be sustainable and use the resources in the Farm Bill.

The first step my chaperone and I must take to ensure we reach the active role in our community effectively is to start small by ourselves and to reach out to others in small ways and to introduce to them what we are trying to do. For example, when I first heard of the Farm Bill, I had no idea what it is or how it benefits my community. From that, I think that we need to explain what exactly the Farm Bill is and break it down to the main topics that it covers. Following that, the second step is to actually do something. We need to help everyone and educate them on how to be sustainable. Going back in history to the time when we had a Queen who ruled our land who was suddenly overthrown and taken over by the state, Hawaii became a developed state and as time passed, we became dependent on the products that are imported and all of the new technology. If I were to ask any of the elders who know our culture, "Can the Hawaiian people sustain themselves if we were to somehow become a sovereign nation again?". They would probably say no. I believe that we can become sovereign again if we all can relearn the techniques our ancestors used to survive. Also, I think that the youth who attend the agriculture summits can take back the knowledge and ideas from the other tribes and nations and take it home. We need to change the fact that our people and land have all become too industrialized to change but it is our job to change that.

The Farm Bill 2018 should include a way to encourage more youth because the youth to take a stand in their community. We are the foundation of all the evolvement of Native agriculture in all communities that eventually, will involve our parents and adult leaders to guide and support us. The Farm Bill is meant for Native Indian Tribes and Nations. It gives them opportunities, restrictions, and guidance as to what they can do as indigenous people. We need to choose to use it to our advantage or not. Personally, in my community, we need to focus more on the health of the people that goes along with financial problems, and rural development on our land. My role as a youth leader learning about being sustainable, I need to make a difference in my community to prevent poverty and help improve the nutrition that the people intake, as well as using the undeveloped land to make sure that we can eat nutritious foods. As a Native Hawaiian and a leader in my community, I know that my community needs the help and support provided in the Farm Bill in order to thrive and sustain ourselves.

Farm Bill, A Way of Life for My Family, for Indian Country

by Abbi Fitzpatrick, Blackfeet

The United States Farm Bill is federal legislation which regulates policy for food systems in our nation. As tribes focus on policy for food sovereignty, food security, trade, conservation of land and water, and rural economic development, tribes must work hand-in-hand with the federal government according to Farm Bill policy. Tribes once removed from their traditional food systems under federal policy endured starvation and extreme sickness. They were encouraged to learn trades such as farming when they had already established a way to feed themselves successfully for generations. Tribes were never part of the decision making in the new policies in regards to farming, tending to stock, and proper ration distribution. Many tribes fell into an abyss of being taken care of by their government agent. There is much debate as to the sincerity of the government during this time in their efforts to supply tribes with farmable land, proper equipment, and good seed. Although one can find much documentation of poor guidance from the government in the past, tribes today are working tirelessly with policy makers – many policy makers being tribal members – for continued improvement of policy in the Farm Bill.

There is necessity by tribes to encourage members to gain positions of policy decision-making. The Farm Bill impacts every aspect of Indian Agriculture. The policy affects food production, food distribution, food trade, and conservation of the land the food is produced from. These processes then affect everyday health and nutrition, economic gains, and overall well-being of Native communities. Tribes must join the table to reestablish a way to feed themselves for generations into the future. My community consists of Glacier County which includes the Blackfeet Reservation and the reservation-border town of Cut Bank. The county is comprised of Native and non-Native farmers and ranchers. Cities within the Blackfeet Reservation are Browning, East Glacier, Babb, St. Mary, and Heart Butte. This community is next to Glacier National Park to the West and the Canadian border to the North. The largest economy is agriculture-based with barley, wheat, and hay as major crops. Ranching, particularly cattle, is the second largest economy in my community. With the large rural land mass, there is much opportunity for small produce farming, honey farming, and timber management. This county also demonstrates the highest poverty rate for any county in the state of Montana; 33.2% in 2015.

Because of these factors, many of the programs in the Farm Bill are ever present and needed in my community. Some of the programs affected by the Farm Bill in my community are as follow; Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Women Infants and Children Program (WIC), federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program(EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program(ELAP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Farm Loan Programs, Emergency Loan Program, Disaster Set-Aside Program, Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). There are USDA Rural Development Programs for community infrastructure such as Broadband, Waste and Water Disposal, and Housing. There are USDA Rural Development Programs for business development such as Business & Industry Loans, Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Rural Business Opportunity

Grants, Rural Micro Entrepreneur Assistance Program, Value Added Producer Grants, and Healthy Foods Financing Initiative.

There are USDA Rural Development Programs for community partnership such as Community Colleges and Rural Cooperative Development Grants. This vast list includes many programs I am still not familiar with and many not listed. Looking through the lists, I recognized programs I had heard my father and grandfather talk about. I have studied some of the youth loan programs. The Farm Bill truly does have an overwhelmingly, huge impact in my community and on my family. As a youth leader, I have taken steps towards educating myself about the importance of the Farm Bill in my community. My involvement in Indian Ag Youth Alliance, Arkansas Ag Summit, Blackfeet 4-H, and Glacier County Healthy Food Project has given me opportunities to gain knowledge about ranching, loan applications, food sovereignty, and healthy food distribution.

The best way for me to take an active role in insuring that my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill is to be aware of what my community is currently using in the bill. Through my experiences in Blackfeet 4-H, I have learned about Rural Development Programs that have allowed our Blackfeet 4-H Club to grow. In 4-H, I have learned about raising hogs and cattle. I have been able to share that knowledge with other youth and encourage them to be a part of the program as well. 4-H has given me a strong foundation. This foundation will lead me to further education and career opportunities in agriculture. Involved in IAYA, I have learned about youth Ag loans, how ranchers start an operation, and how these loans create a better economy for my community. I am able to sit down with my father and talk about his cattle operation and what I can do to carry on the family ranching operation successfully.

While attending the Arkansas Ag Summit, I was able to learn about other communities. Once there, I began to understand the importance of the Farm Bill throughout Indian Country. The Ag Summit allowed me to question whether or not policies could work for Indian Country. The summit taught me about traditional foods from different tribes. I learned about food deserts and healthy food distribution. These concepts led me to community service action. In my community on the Blackfeet Reservation, Heart Butte is a food desert. With funding from GoFundMe and Glacier County Port Authority, I was able to buy 100 boxes of fruit and vegetables. Recipes including the produce were put in each box. Fifty boxes in early May, 2016 went to Heart Butte Schools. Fifty boxes at the end of May, 2016 went to Cut Bank Kid Pack Program. I was able to obtain a grant from the Red Ants Pants Foundation this year for a third distribution. Not only did I learn about food distribution in my community, but I also was able to share the importance of healthy food. The project highlighted the need for inventive ways of making sure that food donated to families of need have a high nutritional value.

Local farmers and tribes can provide healthier, fresh foods for assistance programs when grown locally. I am able to sit at the table and advocate for Farm Bill programs that help my community. I am able to give success stories of my own. Working in these areas, I could see how food production and food distribution in my community could be enhanced by policy that continues to allow tribes to grow and produce product that may be used locally, throughout the United States, or outside of the United States. The Farm Bill must focus on policy for tribes to develop their traditional foods while receiving economic

gain from their unique products. Steps that myself, my father, and my sister can take to ensure we reach an active role in advocating for the Farm Bill is by being aware of policies, sharing knowledge, and working for economic development.

As a senior, I am ready to graduate and attend college. The knowledge I have gained during this time will be with me as I continue my education. Knowledge and continued experience involving the family ranch allows me to be an active advocate for the Farm Bill now and in the future. My education will lead me to a decision-making, leadership position in regards to food policy while being a local producer. My sister found that tribal food sovereignty has not been introduced in studies at her college. Through the support of mentors, she is now working on a symposium about tribal food sovereignty. She is working to be involved in summer internships with people who have developed these topics and are currently writing policy for tribes in the Farm Bill. Her future interest is to attend law school focusing on food policy that would benefit tribes. My father shared some ideas. In our community, we have board elections for FSA committees. Seldom does a Native producer gain a position. Finding a way to get Native producers on these boards through policy would have a huge impact to service representation. Another idea would be to request a regional loan officer for tribal members. Especially when economic conditions change and producers need to find solutions to stay in business. These are two key ideas that would bring Natives to the table when making decisions and gaining access to loans for farm and ranch operations. Remember.... "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." ~ Michael Enzi

Engines of the Farm Bill 2018

By Alex Kawohni Davis, Muskogee Creek

According to the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, the upcoming Farm Bill can be thought of as a freight train being driven by two powerful engines: commodities and federal nutrition programs. Farm commodity program support encompasses staples such as corn, soybeans, wheat, grains, sugar, cotton, dairy, etc. Nutrition programs include programs such as SNAP or food stamps. Each Farm Bill is different and from time to time new topics take center stage. Conservation has emerged as an important topic for this specific cycle of the Farm Bill and can be thought of as a third engine for 2018. Taking the three engines of commodities, food programs and conservation into consideration, I will discuss how the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture and my community. I will also examine how my community can be best represented in the Farm Bill and the steps that need to be taken to have an active role in my community.

Keeping the three main engines of commodities, nutrition programs and conservation in mind, the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture in all areas and proposed topics. Through Title I Commodities, Indian Agriculture needs continued and increased access to programs that serve as safety nets and price support; these programs are important because more than half of all income from Indian Agriculture comes from livestock production. Engine II, nutrition, is especially important to Indian Agriculture because close to one quarter of Native Americans receive some type of federal food assistance. In some parts of the country the number of those needing assistance can be as high as 60-80%. Indian Country needs the

power to implement and oversee food assistance programs to serve the specific needs of their communities. Engine III, conservation programs, must allow for the use of traditional practices that incorporate ecological soundness. Protection of wildlife is also important to Indian Agriculture.

Some of the programs in my community that are impacted by the Farm Bill include conservation and forestry, which reflects the emerging importance of the engine of conservation for 2018. The Farm Bill is also important for implementing tribal programs such as traditional food gardening and product development. For example, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation wants to buy land to plant river cane to make bows and baskets and to educate the youth. Funding will be needed to plant a garden and to teach people how to cook traditional foods. Maintenance of the grounds is another cost to consider to teach these cultural practices. As for conservation, "By investing more in the Farm Bill's conservation programs, Congress would be investing in Oklahoma's communities and wildlife habitats," according to Ron Suttles, Board Chair for the Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma. "These programs are extremely popular with our farming and ranching community and also provide long-term benefits to some of our favorite nesting species like quail, pheasants, and wild turkeys. If we can successfully increase funding and acreage for Farm Bill conservation initiatives such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that would be really beneficial to Oklahoma's farming and ranching community, wildlife, and taxpayers at the same time". As for forestry in Oklahoma, the needs include protection from threats such as wildfire, insects and disease. Forestry advocates also see a need for long term conservation program, protection of endangered species and job creation.

I will take an active role in making sure my community is represented in a variety of ways. I am currently applying to become a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Youth Council. Once I am a member, I plan to educate other council members about the Farm Bill and how it affects our community. I would then be able to partner with other members in educating the youth by dispensing information at various events the council participates in. From there, I think social media would be a great way to inform the public about the Farm Bill. Hopefully these forums would inspire discussion, food for thought and call others to action. I have already attended an official council meeting and believe I can receive support through the Wellness program, which the council seemed to be struggling to deal with. Hopefully, I will also be able to attend more programs such as the Native Youth in Agriculture Summit in Arkansas. The program was extremely educational and provided a networking tool for me and my like-minded friends all over the country.

The two steps my chaperone and will take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community are to (1) go through Native American Education channels to spread the word and to receive additional support and (2) reach out to the school's FFA program to discuss teaching members more about the Farm Bill. My mom is currently serving as an elected parent at large representative for my school's JOM program. My mom is willing to advocate for activity funds from either JOM or the Title VI program to help support culturally appropriate projects related to the Farm Bill and education. I have been an active member of FFA at my school for several years and I am willing to bring up discussion

about the Farm Bill with my teachers and peers. Through JOM and FFA, I believe I can speak to and for a great number of people. Of course, contacting the Muscogee (Creek) Agriculture Department to get more specific information about our needs in Indian Country would be high on the list of priorities to help me reach my goals.

The Farm Bill of 2018 affects all of Indian Country in all topics, my community included. After thinking about all the ways to further educate myself about the bill and how I can teach others, I have come to the conclusion that we as a community must become the powerful 4th engine. The more people we can reach, the stronger our voice, the stronger our drive. If chosen, I would be honored to attend the conference in Las Vegas to learn more about the Farm Bill and its impact on Indian Agriculture.

Indian Country Nutrition Priorities

Alexis Rae Annette, Minnesota Chippewa

There is great concern in Indian Country today regarding the 2018 Farm Bill. Legislators are considering many changes that could greatly impact my community in a negative way. I live in Pine Point, MN. My community is like many across Indian Country. It is located on the White Earth Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota. The population on this reservation is about nine thousand five hundred. Many people, about 80% or more, live at or below the current poverty level. This equals about seven thousand six hundred forty individuals. They are the ones who participate in the programs that will be directly impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill. This includes the elderly and the young.

Some of the programs that will be impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill are currently being utilized in my community. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) previously known as food stamps and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) which provides nutritional assistance to families of young children (five and younger). The Farm to School program provides fresh produce and other products directly to the schools in the communities from the local farms and gardens. The school lunch programs would also be directly impacted if budgets were reduced or cut. In addition to all of this, the food shelf programs would also suffer if funding was reduced or cut.

Many members of my community utilize all of the programs in one form or another. Almost every family would be impacted by the reduction or loss of the ability to participate in one or all of the programs. The number of healthy meals would be fewer. This would directly impact the elderly and the young. The White Earth reservation has been able to create a somewhat better environment for it's members. The White Earth Reservation has become a self-determining administrator of many of these programs. The ability to directly administer these programs to it's members who live on or near the reservation impacts the number of participants and their comfort level in program participation. This has resulted in an improvement in the delivery of services in the programs to those who are eligible.

There is also a need for education of the participants in these programs. Assistance in how to prepare healthy, tasty meals on an extremely small budget would be of great help to program participants. This would greatly assist families of young children and families who have members who suffer from chronic or debilitating diseases.

Instead of cutting funding to the programs, it could be reallocated. The funding could then be used to bring healthy foods directly into the community. Many members of the community have displayed difficulty in obtaining or utilizing any type of transportation that would enable them to obtain fresh wholesome food on a regular basis. Most community members live at least thirty miles from retail facilities that provide these products. Living in remote and isolated areas presents a great difficulty in applying for and participating in the nutritional support programs. The White Earth Reservation has taken steps to improve the accessibility of the programs for individuals. It has opened satellite offices for people to make applications in. However, considering how large the reservation is and how remote some of the communities are, there is a need for more of these satellites to be opened and staffed. The option would open up and ease the transportation difficulties of individuals.

There are many options for individuals to get information regarding the Farm Bill budget cuts. Information on how it will impact the population of the reservation and other communities who utilize the programs that will be directly impacted by the Farm Bill are also easily accessible through many sources. A major resource is the community itself. Education of community members who can then further the education and advocate for the community would be a tremendous step. It could have a snowball effect by achieving the entire community's participation. Members of the community could be encouraged to write letters and make phone calls to their representatives voicing their concerns relating to budget cuts and the differing allocation of funds in the Farm Bill of 2018. It would also be an advantage to develop community collaboratives. These community collaboratives would allow the sharing of knowledge, each community successes, and to work on changing the processes that did not achieve the desired results.

We could bring individuals into the communities who were knowledgeable in the growth and harvesting of traditional Native American foods. They would also be able to educate members of the community in the harvesting of traditional foods that grow in the wild. We would also have experts who would come into the communities to educate them on the preservation of traditional land practices. Communities would be utilizing the best practices that would allow for future generations to enjoy and use the land resources in the same way that many would be enjoying the day. Teaching the sustainability of land and resources would tie one generation to the next in a positive way. The allocation of funds for these practices and activities would actually decrease the dependence that many have on a system that sets them up for failure.

My chaperone and I could attend workshops and conferences. We would be attending these conferences to gather information and training in regards to the potential difficulties that changes to the 2018 Farm Bill could present to participants of the program. We would also be attending workshops and trainings to gather information about the sustainability of culturally significant and traditional foods. This would include the development of markets for the products that would be grown and produced. We would also be seeking training in the development of a financially responsible fiscal plan. This would insure the successful continuation of plans or programs that would be developed. We would definitely focus on the sustainability of community farms.

These are some of the plans that would work for the communities impacted by changes in the

2018 Farm Bill. In order to be successful and maintain a positive outcome, regardless of budget changes, these ideas would enable participants to uphold a healthier lifestyle.

The 2018 Farm Bill and How it Affects My Tribe

By Allison Gross, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

My community, on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, is one mostly made up of small, family farms. Many of my peers and close friends live on farms or ranches that are family-owned and operated on the reservation. For generations, their families have been working the land of our reservation, which contains the worst lands in the state, given to the Native Americans because it was considered un-farmable land that nobody wanted. Despite this, they have continued to thrive.

The 2018 Farm Bill's main impact on our native community is significant to restoring our dietary and economic health. Native American people have the highest rates of diabetes in the world. This comes from the abrupt introduction of new foods into their diet by European colonizers. Diabetes was actually rare to find in Native Americans until the early-to-mid twentieth century (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). Not coincidentally, the year 1890 was the year Native Americans were given rations such as white flour, sugar, lard, and dairy products. Since we have strayed from our natural nourishment, our dietary health has gone down.

Our economic health is also impacted largely by the Farm Bill. The federal government has been loaning money for agriculture lending since 1916. Since then, the loans have become instrumental in the success of the United States' agriculture entity, especially in the 1980 farm financial crisis. Farming is a perilous business to get into, especially since many variables, like overall crop failure and weather related damages, such as droughts or floods, cannot be stopped. This is why it is important to retain the ability for government loaning. (Regaining our Future)

Covered in the Farm Bill is food distribution programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which are present on Native American reservations. In fact, 79% of the Farm Bill's fund are used for food stamps and nutrition all over America. Many reasons for the high need of food programs on Indian reservations, is lack of financial resources and general poverty. It is important for the health of the Native American community that such programs continue. Without the aid some families would go days, or even weeks without substantial amounts of food. Even if programs continued with planned cuts, there is no doubt the quality of the food allowed would go down, leading to even more medical disadvantages. (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)

Many people in my community benefit from programs covered in the Farm Bill. One such program, that I mentioned earlier, is SNAP. It is a federal program that provides food to low-income housing, including the elderly and disabled, and it is available to Tribal Members living on or near reservations. Another beneficial program is School Lunch Program, which is run through the United States Department of Agriculture. The Farm Bill ensures that kids will get a nutritious school lunch that provides them with all the vitamins they should be getting at that meal. Lower income families can also apply for free and reduced meals, another platform covered by the Farm Bill are available to low-income families, of which

many are Native American. The poorest in the nation, Ziebach County, which is also part of our reservation is rated sixth poorest in the nation with a per capita income of \$20,944 per household. This helps ensure that students will get at least two meals (breakfast and lunch), Monday through Friday. (www.fns.usda.gov/)

Food sovereignty is also a significant matter in the 2018 Farm Bill. It is important to keep the people who distribute, produce and consume the food at the heart of the discussion, and not corporations that don't have our best interest at heart. This also goes back to government rations. Before European colonizers put Native Americans on reservations and started to give them fatty, salty, foods to replace their traditional diet, which they thrived off of, the Native people's relationship with the earth, and what lived on it, was forever ruined with the introduction of processed, refined foods. (Declaration of Nyéleni) Having enough good, wholesome food to eat, otherwise known as food security, is important too. Having easy access to culturally appropriate food will be instrumental in restoring the dietary health of Native Americans—ways to grow, gather, or hunt food that is sustainable and made to last for future generations. Then we need a way to distribute them so the people get what they need to be healthy and stay that way, will need to be established. Restoring both food sovereignty and food security is invaluable in growing our public back to their original health. Regaining control of our food supply is something many tribes are making strides in order to do so. (www.nativefoodsystems.org)

Things I can do in my community to make the 2018 Farm Bill work for us, is to spread awareness of the upcoming bill and seek out community leaders. Communicating what the bill could mean for our community will raise responsiveness and get people involved. Many people are unaware of the upcoming bill, despite the significance it will have in our community, both dietary and economical. Awareness among those who will be most impacted, will be priceless. My father (chaperone) and I will try to utilize both of our social resources to spread awareness and make change. My chaperone does a lot of work with local farmers, and it could be effective if he was to speak with them about the bill and its effects. Following the progress and news that is related to the upcoming bill, will also help in being mindful of what the bill will mean for my community. Watching for movement and mentions of the Farm Bill among the U.S. House of Representatives, can also help with anticipating which way the members will be voting when it will come to them in 2018. Writing letters and making calls to our local senators and representatives to let the needs of our Indian people be heard and recognized is something any citizen can do to bring the subjects to light. Alerting our Tribal Council District Representative and then Tribal Council in general of what the problems are- and how we can fix them- in the upcoming bill, will ensure that things we want changed in Indian country are will change. Getting our leaders involved, along with the youth will help make our opinions heard.

In conclusion, I believe there is a lot we can do to make our voices heard. Action needs to be taken to ensure food sovereignty and security is protected on reservations in America. Although I have never attended an Intertribal Agriculture Council Education Summit, I believe that I can do a lot to help my community and others. The time to act is now, and I would like to help.

Farm Bill

By Ashawnti Irvina Bidtah, Navajo

The 2018 Farm Bill is a "major omnibus piece of federal legislation that addresses all of these policy areas". The United States federal laws are bringing food and agriculture policy has been traced back in the 1800's. Agriculture production had led birth to states, and the federal Farm Bill was envisioned in the 1930's which created new farming communities. It had created a problem that still impacts tribes and tribal agriculture today.

The Indian Country has a relationship with farming and ranching we have been engaged with providing for ourselves. The Farm Bill impacts Indian agriculture by getting economic, food, infrastructure, and health needs. The Indian country has a voice in the congress of the Farm Bill. In title 1: Commodities say that the definition of livestock had added reindeer, caribou, elk, and horses. All other provisions of the program should ensure that the payments rates are set at 90%. Tribal producers from any limitations on getting payments on losses from fire on public managed land, but Tribal lands are not "public". Tribal producers and government are going to be recognized as "farmers and ranchers". Which they're eligible to participate in the program which usually they are "left out".

In Title II: Conservation says that conservation programs have to allow the use of traditional ecological knowledge-based conservation practices. On tribal lands they need to make the NRCS more effective on tribal lands and individual land. The opportunities for the Indian Country has is tribal governments and individual Indian producers who live on the lands are engaged in outgoing activities. Any tribal government or tribes have access to every program allowed under the conservation title. It can also encourage and allow beginning producers to take part of the conservation.

The Indian Agriculture is impacted by expanding the Market Access Program. If so there would be more tribal food, businesses, and agriculture. If there was an impact there would be more stable food business, and tribal economies. They are able to get to support on tribal foods and fighting food fraud. Another impact is food fraud is a rise throughout the world, and they try to mimic tribal foods. The Indian country will grow a better relationship with the Department of Commerce. The USDA department of Commerce has to ensure tribal food production is properly supported and encourage on tribal lands. In conclusion the Indian Country has an impact on the 2018 Farm Bill, and the Indian Country can be impacted by the Farm Bill. The Indian Country can be impacted both in good and bad terms. The Farm Bill takes the Indian Country serious and gives them opportunities. There is more key points and recommendations in the Farm Bill for 2018. Either way the Farm Bill does make an impact on Indian Agriculture.

The 2018 Farm Bill has an impact on Indian Country. The Farm Bill has taken the Indian Country serious, and gave them opportunities in the Farm Bill. In the 2018 Farm Bill has 12 titles talking about the opportunities given. There are people and programs impacted by the Farm Bill. Each section talks about the opportunities given to the Indian Country along with tribal governments

The programs that are in my community are impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill is the where we get our food. The Indian Country had invested in food production. Livestock mostly takes up about 2 billion

of agriculture income for tribal producers. Half of all the income from agriculture Indian Country is annually 1.9 million dollars that comes from livestock production. The Indian Country would get support and maintain the tribal food and agriculture business. A number of tribes have individual Indian producers that are engaged in trade of food and agriculture productions. The tribal food products have a higher amount of market demands in overseas market. Expanding the Market Access Program has the funds to increase the program MAP. The will get support for tribal food and fighting Native food fraud, which means food that are mimic can be uncovered and prevented in the marketplace.

Another program that is impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill is where they get their lands. Each tribal producer is eligible for all disaster assistance programs. The USDA allows the use of traditional ecological knowledge-based conservation practices. Lands that are within Indian Country are significant need of the conservation practice of the implementation. In one title allows the CRP lands or other lands to engage in conservation practices to be used by the citizens. The USDA-NRCS is to immediately get a report to all tribal government and individual to identify which tribal lands still need the proper natural resource inventory funding support. They do not determine any tribal landowner or operator of land in violation of any term of conservation program

Last program that is impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill is income. The 2018 Farm Bill has to continue to address the farmer longstanding issue of credit access for tribal producers. They added to provide tribal-specific training assistance on financial and loan servicing programs. Structuring loans to suit the business the FSA will lend 100 percent the cost of bred livestock. The first year of operating they will take advantage of prices expenses. Some of the producers have to take the plan or stop their operation. The FSA are planning prices higher than usual prices but a producer should be able to restructure their debt in a way that will not count towards life time limits on loans.

All in all, there are more different programs that impacted by the 2018 Farm Bill. These are the three main programs that I thought was impacted by the Farm Bill. Land, Food, and money are important in the Farm Bill. These three main programs have a big impact with the Indian agriculture, and can have a big impact if we have the funds to increase land and food. The Farm Bill takes a big impact on either tribal land or not. But these programs have an impact on the Farm Bill too.

The Farm Bill plays a huge role in Indian Agriculture. The Farm Bill has twelve titles altogether. The Bill is like an "it's like a Swiss army knife" formal president Obama. Every title of the bill is important to the Indian Country, and it gives opportunities for the Indian Country. The Farm Bill also effects credit not just land wise. Also the Farm Bill can have programs for their land, and can help them out with their money for their tribal government.

One, active role I can take insuring my community is represented by the 2018 farm bill is starting a small farm. It would not be the best farm but we can take try take advantages or the opportunities from the Farm Bill it gives us. There are some opportunities we can take when we start a farm. We can grow our food products and make money by selling our food. We can use our own food for ourselves and not always selling it. You have to take care of the livestock, and make sure you are watching all the animals carefully if you're going to sell the animals for money.

On our farm we can take the opportunities that we can take is getting involved with activities we were getting left out on. We can build a better relationship with the program. Most of all is we can be heard in the Farm Bill. It says "opportunities for Indian Country" in each title. The USDA has to allow for the use of the traditional ecological knowledge based conservation practices. The advantage you can take is the getting extra support from the different programs listed in the Farm Bill. Plus the Indian Country had invested heavily in food production mostly in livestock.

Financial wise had invested in food production mostly in livestock, which makes up about \$2 billion of agriculture income for tribal producers. From farming we can have our home grown meats and vegetables. We can sell the food products, and get money. We can sell hay and corn for money. Livestock we can keep the animals and take care of them and have get to a certain weight and auction them off or start to breed them and sell them to another person. We can also have it for our own house food for our own eating for our family then sell some products.

All in all, here are some ways I can take an active role insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill. This a goal I can try to reach to open up with my community and the 2018 Farm Bill. If we can do this, we can make an impact on the 2018 Farm Bill. I can make try to get even more programs to help out on the Indian Agriculture and make an impact. This is how I can take an active role in my community to make sure my community is included and represent in the next Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill talks about the Indian Country and the opportunities that are given to the tribal governments and Indian Country. The Farm Bills impacts the Indian Country in positive ways. The 2018 Farm Bill has 12 titles altogether and each section tells the advantages the Indian Country has on the farm Bill. Each Title talks about the Farm Bill.

The two steps my chaperone and I can ensure we effectively reach this goal is Teamwork and Knowledge. On teamwork we can make sure we are on all on the same page. We can help each other and teach others about agriculture. Tell others that the Farm Bill can have impact on the Indian Country and it can benefit us in different ways. We can get more people involved in with Indian Agriculture and tell them the benefits we get from agriculture.

Knowledge we teach other more about farming and livestock. We can tell more people to get involved and take the advantages the Farm Bill gives us. Have more people speak out about the agriculture and how it impacts our everyday lives. If were to get more people we can start our program within our community. The more people we have we can increase the funds of certain events for our program, and try to get more opportunities from the next Farm Bill. So by the next farm bill we will have more opportunities.

In conclusion, the Farm Bill can take a huge impact on Indian Agriculture. Throughout the whole essay I talked about how it impacts us. The Indian Country should take advantages they get from the Farm Bill of 2018. This how my chaperone and I can take an active role to insure our community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill: Understanding and Advocating for Change

By Beau DuBray, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

The Farm Bill of 2018 has great potential to benefit the indigenous peoples of America in many ways. However, in order for this to happen, we must be present in the formation of this particular legislation. Without a voice we can't be heard, so that begs the question: What will we say? What is said should be related closely to how the Farm Bill will impact Indian Agriculture. However, we must first recognize the impact it will have in general.

The Farm Bill is a guideline for the USDA's assistance among producers and within communities, industries, businesses, and schools through various programs and services. Of course, in our world today, this requires a substantial amount of money. The budget for these programs and services will be divided to the subjects of most importance. This is where our voice becomes important. Congress and the USDA will decide where these funds go and it is up to us to make sure we present a strong case for why the native community is in need of these resources. Of course, money isn't the solitary thing we require as a prerequisite. It is also about the laws and amendments that will allocate for agricultural sovereignty and self-sufficiency within our tribal communities.

Being of a rural reservation, I have been exposed to extreme cases of poverty within my own community that shouldn't be tolerable today. Despite these unfortunate realities, there are programs that assist low-income families that could really benefit from the Farm Bill and ultimately the people of the communities themselves. Some of these programs include the Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). First off, CRYP is a youth and family services organization that does many things for the community including housing a garden. Next, SNAP provides low-income families with electronic benefits – electronic benefit transfer (EBT) – that can be used to purchase groceries. Finally, FDPIR provides poor families with a delivered package of commodities. All of these programs relate in the following context. Each one aids my community by helping its poverty-stricken people have access to resources that they cannot obtain on their own. However, this isn't all that they do. For example, EBT allows for a larger client base. How? It's simple. People who originally wouldn't buy a producer's products now have the money to do so. With these programs, the allotted budget the USDA provides is very important, for if it is cut, not only will those in need of assistance be affected, but so will the producers. What could this mean? Our tribal economies will suffer furthermore because they rely so largely on Indian Agriculture which is currently influenced by the government.

These programs aren't the only things that the Farm Bill will touch, however. In addition, the Farm Bill will affect tribal regions in regards to the farming and ranching community, the environment, and the health of tribal members. Many farmers rely upon crop insurance which adds risk protection to the cultivation of tribal lands. As the risk runs rather high in Indian Country, many farmers may see farming on the reservation as too risky and thus Indian Agriculture will suffer. In a relationship of equal correspondence, livestock producers face the same risks as crop producers and so there must be enough funds to provide for safe, reliable insurance. Moving on to the environment, the Farm Bill will affect the

conservation practices that will transpose to the reservations. Tribal lands are some of the last places where you can breathe fresh air and enjoy the beauty of nature. As people of these lands, we face the duty of protecting it and finding ways to grow economically without destroying it. To end with, the health of tribal members is at risk. Diabetes, among other diseases, is becoming an epidemic in Indian Country. To combat it, we need to make sure that everyone is getting the proper nutrition that they need. I already talked about some great programs that are helping, but with an increased budget, the quality of food people receive would improve as well.

Now that I have said what needs to be done with the upcoming Farm Bill, what am I going to do about it? One can say whatever they want to, but to actually act out is what counts. Being a young, high school student, I face certain restrictions. However, I am not entirely useless. Although I may not be able to directly influence congress's decisions regarding the Farm Bill, I can still advocate my thoughts. First, of all I will need to find support wherever I can get it. Informing others within my community might inspire them to act and hopefully influence changes. Second, I will need to, with the help of my chaperone, come in contact with my local and state representatives and share with them my opinions on the matter and make sure that they are doing something about it. Also, I want to share my support, and hopefully my community's support, for the Intertribal Agriculture Council and make sure that my reps understand the severity of the Farm Bill. If we can get a voice, we can be heard. Which is the first stage, seconded by actual legislative action which we will need our representatives to perform.

To be perfectly honest, I didn't even know what the Farm Bill was before I began researching the topic of this essay. I certainly didn't know of the great importance it has on Indian Country. My original thinking on the solving of agricultural problems within my community was that it pertained only to the tribe. I thought that the solutions were simple and that we were simply being indolent. Of course, we could all do more, but I've made the realization that there is more to these problems than I initially thought. Although the solutions may begin at the lowest levels advocating and performing small actions, it will eventually need to reach the higher platform of government and be taken as serious crises of indubitable importance.

The 2018 Farm Bill

By Brandon Lee Downwind, Redlake Nation

The 2018 Farm Bill provides Indian agriculture with resources and programs that make a great impact in Indian country today, though we are mostly invisible to these programs it still has a great effect on Indian agriculture. We can reach our goals in Indian country with the programs and resources that the 2018 Farm Bill provides. The bill provides funding for environmental protection which impacts our agriculture production. The Conservation Title helped producers, and landowners to take in conservation activities on agricultural and forest lands designed to safeguard and improve water quality, quantity, soil health, wildlife habitat, and air quality.

Our lands are in dire need of high conservation practice even with multiple efforts across previous 2018 Farm Bill negotiations, the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) conservation program

portfolio still needs attention so that the programs and authorities can be more beneficial on tribal lands. Trade is also affected by the 2018 Farm Bill. Whether it is between countries or between tribes, trade is essential to agriculture. Tribes have a long traditional practice of trading food, agriculture products, and goods of all kinds. Our intertribal trade routes and traditions are preserved in our oral and written histories going back before the creation of the United States trade. Every title in the 2018 Farm Bill impacts Indian agriculture. We are mostly invisible to these sections and titles, but we can change that to further improve Indian agriculture.

Programs that are impacted in my community are the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, there are many tribal governments and tribal farming, ranching, and food businesses that are already engrossed in producing covered commodity crops of wheat, corn, soybeans, and are deeply involved in livestock operations. The income from this program helps local farmers in my community. Rural development program, my tribe benefits from the program. This program brings in jobs and provides funding for businesses and individual Indian producers. In fact, the Rural Development grant and loan programs are sometimes the only option tribes and their neighboring communities have for building new infrastructure or updating antiquated systems essential to spur and sustain economic development and growth in their rural communities. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, approximately 70 percent of all Native people reside, and within rural, reservation, remote, and isolated communities which are normally within the land base of Indian Country. This program helps so many low income native families in Indian country it makes a huge impact in my community, and the farm bill is making this program better every year. These programs in my community are impacted by the farm bill.

One way I will take an active role in ensuring my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill is to make sure my community is using programs in the farm bill to further help the people in my community, and other communities in my reservation. I will encourage my friends to get involved in agriculture and other programs that are affected by the 2018 Farm Bill. I will also start a community garden to encourage youth and adults to be more self-reliant when it comes to food, and agriculture. One other way I will take an active role to make sure my town is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill is to be more involved in traditional agriculture, and to be more involved in the traditional food business. I will tell people about the bill and educate them, so that more people can learn about the bill, and know how it impacts Indian agriculture. That is how I will take an active role in ensuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill.

My dad and I will take two steps to ensure that we effectively reach this active role in our community. The first step we will take to reach this active role is to start a community garden, and tell friends and family about the garden. I will also take my active role to the tribal council in my community to ensure my voice is heard as well as my dad's voice. This will hopefully pave the way for my tribe and I to be heard and represented by the 2018 Farm Bill. I will continue this step by continuing to go to food and agriculture summits. The IAC summits really helped me understand the plight of Indian country and agriculture. The summits help me take the needed steps to ensure i reach an active role in my community. Going to these summits gives me the needed information and insight to take an active role in my

community.

My second step to ensure I reach this active role in my community will be to encourage people who are looking to get more involved in agriculture to attend the IAC summits like the one in Arkansas so they can help their communities. I will encourage people in my town to be more involved with the land and support local native farmers on our reservation. Getting more involved with the land and supporting local native farmers helps my community to be more self-reliant when it comes to food. This is how my dad and I will reach myself active role to ensure my hometown is represented in the bill.

In summary the 2018 Farm Bill impacts most titles and programs in the farm bill which include, but are not limited to The Conservation title, trade, Rural development and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. Programs that are impacted in my community are the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the SNAP benefit program. My active role is to get more people involved with agriculture, to support local farmers, and to make sure that programs in the 2018 Farm Bill are being used to help my people. Two steps I will take to ensure I reach this active role are starting a garden, and making my voice heard by taking my active role to my tribal council. My second step is to encourage kids to attend food and agriculture summits, to get more involved in the land and support local native farmers.

The Future of Indian Agriculture

By Caleah Marie Lee, Navajo

What does my community need in the Farm bill?

Within my community irrigation is needed mostly for agriculture purposes. In Lukachukai and the surrounding areas the lack of water resources is very evident. Many families have no resource to rely upon, most of the water supplies comes from a small stream for agricultural needs. The lack of water benefits is one of the main reasons for the terrible agricultural production.

How does the Farm bill impact Indian culture?

As native Americans, our voices have never been heard, sacrifices have been made just for someone to hear our thoughts. The Native Americans of the agricultural community have not been heard. The USDA programs have not been supportive among the tribes because of the invisible effect. The Farm Bill Act has not been a supportive organization to help native Americans receive all aspects of the projected outlays of the 2015 Farm act. 39.2% of the non-white principal of Farm operations may be a high percentage, but the lack of involvement is the issue among all Indian cultures. Other parts of the Farm bill includes jobs, providing food and economic resources, including supporting the youth should be factors that are granted to the Indian country. Parity, opportunity, and consistency are huge discussion factors that the Indian country has been trying to encourage for over 30 years. For years native Americans have wanted the same equal treatment non-natives receive. All we want is the idea of having a reliable job and reliable food source that will be the best option for our youth. As the Navajo nation continuously grows, our youth has been a huge factor among everyone. They are our future leaders for the new economy to come. These small, but great changes, could provide the Navajo nation with a reliable program that our youth and upcoming leaders will soon pursue.

What programs in my community are impacted by the Farm Bill?

The agenda all under the effects of the Indian country programs and opportunities are all programs that are impacting Navajo communities. The expand market access program (MAP) increases the funding and increasing results in tribal food business participation. More tribal foods and agricultural business can benefit and improve the programs widely. Supplement nutrition assistance program (SNAP) also need the improvement of consistency and flexibility to keep the Indian country well involved. Farm service agency programs address the efficiency of credit programs in the country. These communities are always hit hard, more than other areas of the country. The remote and isolated nature of our farms and the reality of reservation communities are located in "Credit Debts." The people desire a system in which they can rely upon when times are hard. Jobs and agricultural efforts are needed greatly throughout the country, due to the high unemployment. Those programs provide these families with a progressive lifestyle. The Indian country has been trying to make this a big deal for quite sometime now. Efforts to make this possible need to be expressed, the loss of the agriculture resources is not suitable for either the people and economy.

How will I take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm bill?

I can take an active role in my community by following up on the success and challenges of the specific bill programs. Sharing any evaluations and feedback on the Farm bill programs. I can write a letter to Mark Killian (Arizona Department Of Agriculture), explaining the issues and concerns my community lacks. For an example: the lack of nutrition and health is a major concern in my community. I want to express my ideas and my understandings of what can be done for this small community. I feel best that a community center would fit my intentions greatly. The Farms bill supports the nutrition and health for all the People. They emphasize that portion greatly throughout the 7 articles of the bill. I would push this creation of a community center, for the best benefits. Students could go there after school to do homework or to play basketball at the courts. This production would provide job openings, employees could supervise the students and maintain the facility. The obesity rates would drop, nutrition programs like commodity programs could be held here. The community wouldn't have to travel on distances to receive these benefits. I would include all this into my letter to the senator of Arizona, representing agriculture. It might be a huge task but the next generation can make a difference.

What are two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community?

My chaperone and I will make this a public concern. First, we would explain our views to our chapter house Committee, so we can hold a chapter meeting that I can discuss our plan. Yes it may be small but many local members attend those meetings. Our idea is bound to travel across the reservation. We will explain the Farm bill and what we as Navajo's receive from it. We would also attend the Arizona Agriculture Hearing and suggest our idea to a representative. Most importantly we could also get one representative to advocate for this public matter. In return we would motivate voters to vote on their behalf. If this plan were to follow through, other tribes at the council would surely look more into this suggestion. It would become a worldly change if it were to become popular. The more publicity this

suggestion receives; it is bound to open the views of looking upon a new production of a good change. So many intentions can be given to those who choose to make a difference. The future relies on those who are willing to work hard for a progressive change, in their own communities. I personally think my generation of students coming from a variety of different backgrounds will pursue a career in the Agriculture course. Many high school students who have taken and learned both sides of agriculture, will be those future leaders that make a change to the Farm Bill. I, for one will be one of those future leaders for my people and for the other indigenous communities struggling. I will make that difference in my community!

IAC Farm Bill Youth Essay

By Calico Ducheneaux, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Han, Wašíčuya Calico Ducheneaux emáčiyapi. Hello, my Name is Calico Ducheneaux. Lakǰótiya Wóič'ile Wíŋ emáčiyapi. In Lakota, I am called Looks for Herself Woman. I am from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe headquartered in Eagle Butte, SD. When you think of South Dakota and the Midwest, the first thought that comes to mind is often large, rolling plains growing luscious crops like wheat, corn, or soybeans; or perhaps, you see cattle grazing on green grass void of tall buildings or large crowds. Many of these things can be seen on my reservation as well. My reservation has around 300 range units primarily used for cattle production, and the picturesque Midwest can be seen prominently there. When you think of the Midwest, however, value-added agriculture isn't always your first thought because often this part of the nation is simply used for creating the raw material, not processing them. This means that many of the producers in the Midwest are only receiving the profit yielded from the first step in the multi-faceted food system here in the United States of America. Though this area of the country has a propensity for being the best at the initial steps in the food system, this advantage shouldn't also be a limitation--I think my reservation and others in the Midwest should begin to endeavor into value-added agriculture and completing the food system to increase food sovereignty, increase food security, add to the economy of my reservation, and also set a precedent for other reservations and States. In order to accomplish this goal, we must look to the 2018 Farm Bill to include concerns such as infrastructure development, access to financial security and a safety net, and education for this development.

Before continuing the discussion of creating a local food system, the 2018 Farm Bill and its potential impact on Indian agriculture must first be addressed. First, the Farm Bill is essentially the largest legislative act involving agriculture in the United States and controls the government funding allocated to different producer and consumer programs in the United States (since all people are involved in agriculture in one way or another). Whether people realize it or not, everyone is in one way or another connected to the decisions made in the Farm Bill discussions--indigenous peoples are no exception to this rule. "We have the highest numbers per capita of individuals who are dependent on feeding programs in the United States" (Simms Hipp and Duren 14). One cannot argue that native peoples in this country are intricately involved with the ramifications of the decisions made about the Farm Bill; food assistance programs like FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations), SNAP (Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Programs), WIC (Women Infants, and Children), and others account for around 80% of the Farm Bill budget, and many reservation communities see 25-50% of their population being assisted by such programs. However, food assistance programs barely scratch the surface of the Indian involvement in the Farm Bill, and they shouldn't be what indigenous peoples are defined by. Tribes all across the United States are involved in production agriculture; native farmers and ranchers created nearly 3.3 billion dollars in revenue. This revenue and its growth potential is all dependent upon the funding allocated in the Farm Bill because this legislative act dictates funding and standards for every step in the food system.

As stated in the *Regaining our Future* report, "The Farm Bill provides resources and programs that will allow us to reach our goals more quickly than in the past" (Simms Hipp and Duren 14). Though creating a local food system on my reservation would be possible without the assistance of the Farm Bill, the process would be much easier for my reservation and many others if the Farm Bill and the programs it controls were easier to access for Native peoples and took into account the special circumstances present in many reservation communities. Despite the fact that there is usually no specific language used in any Farm Bill program excluding tribal participation, there are, for the most part, little to no programs that stress or even mention the special circumstances tribal communities and thus tribal agriculture is often put under. This special language acknowledging the circumstances of Indian agriculture is necessary in many cases because for over a century, indigenous people were left out of the discussion involving agricultural assistance programs, conservation efforts, and credit--essential aspects to any agribusiness. It wasn't until the Working Group leading up to the Intertribal Agriculture Council pointed out these errors that this inequality began to change. However, that put Indian Agriculture many steps behind those who were always included in this discussion. As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, there are farms and ranches all over the Midwest. However, the farms and ranches on reservations are often less productive, less frequent, or less well-established than the farms and ranches seen off of the reservation. Why is this? Many of the programs in the Farm Bill having to do with conservation, infrastructure development, and credit weren't made to include Indian producers--the conversation of assisting Native farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists simply hasn't completely made its way to the forefront of national agriculture discussions, and that's why it is essential that this happen in order to create strong food systems in tribal communities like my own.

Though creating a local food system on my reservation would have many benefits, executing the steps necessary to complete this task would be much more difficult with the current disadvantages Indian Agriculture face due to lack of consideration in Farm Bill discussions. My reservation and many others need food sovereignty in order to truly be sovereign, and we need the Farm Bill to ultimately give Indian agriculture a seat at the table to be recognized as important.

Indian Agriculture on any reservation, not just my own, has the potential to set the precedent for other states and nations through many means, but I'd like to focus on local food systems. Since tribal entities are sovereign nations, creating a food system that is also sovereign will help to truly make tribal nations sovereign. Despite the many disadvantages previously mentioned, tribes are at an advantage

because of their right to self-rule and their raw resources available. As stated by the Regaining our Future report, "Our rural, reservation, and isolated communities are in dire need of infrastructure and economic development focus." I think the rural environment of many reservations could actually be beneficial because it means we are filled with raw materials and the room necessary to grow. However, the best way to increase tribal participation in the entire food system is to get involved with the many programs offered through the Farm Bill funding such as the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants Program, Rural Business Development Grants Program, and many more. However, what we need from the Farm Bill is to be recognized for the unique circumstances and unique assets we have that are different from what local, state, and federal entities have.

Through the tireless work of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, the National Congress of American Indians, and other organizations, our voice is slowly but surely being heard. However, there's still a way to go before we are at the forefront of Farm Bill discussions. In order to accomplish my long-term goal for my reservation of creating a local food system, there are many things I (and my chaperone) personally must do in order to ensure the that this goal is met--the first and arguably most crucial is I must advocate to my tribal leadership for the importance of agriculture as a means of economic and cultural well-being. Many tribes including my own still don't see that food sovereignty=tribal sovereignty. Myself and my chaperone must take the knowledge and lessons we learn at this conference and those of past years in order to show my tribal leadership that agriculture is of the utmost importance for economic development. Even if the advocacy of groups like the IAC, IFAI, or NCAI bring Indian Agriculture to a level playing field in the Farm Bill, it means nothing if my tribe can't see why agriculture is a great means of restoring our nation's sovereignty. Attending this conference will allow me to have more knowledge about how to influence my tribal leadership, but it will also give me networking connections to those who have even more influence than I myself have. If my chaperone and myself can bring home both knowledge and networking connection back to my tribal leadership and advocate for food sovereignty, we can help our tribe to see its importance. Conversely, if I can voice the concerns of my tribe's agricultural pursuits at this national membership meeting, I can also help advance the Indian Agriculture discussion in regards to the Farm Bill which will also help my tribe any many others in the effort to achieve food sovereignty.

IAC Youth Essay Contest (Farm Bill)

Chyanne Tidwell, Cherokee

Did you know people think they are not involved in agriculture? If you eat, use medicine, play sports, or wear clothing you are involved in agriculture some kind of way. As most people know in the year of two thousand eighteen it will be time for the new two thousand eighteen Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is the major omnibus legislative act which is historically considered by congress every five years. The most recent version of the Farm Bill was passed in two thousand fourteen. Congressional Budget office projected that the two thousand fourteen Farm Bill would have a four hundred eighty-nine billion dollars as spending money for the next five years. Eighty percent of this money would go to nutrition, eight

percent to crop insurance, six percent to conservation, five percent would go to commodities and one percent would go to any other thing they may need.

I come from a small rural town in Oklahoma named Checotah. My family and myself own longhorn and angus cattle. My father also owns a daycare in our hometown not only does the farm bill impact our family it also impacts our business. Our daycare is the only daycare in our town accepts Cherokee and Creek child care funding. This is a process which children with their certificate of Indian blood card can receive funding for child care, this funding also helps with the food program we use.

The Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture in many different ways. One of the ways the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture is by the Commodity Supplemental Food Program also known as CSFP. Commodity Supplemental Food Program works to improve the health of low income elderly people at least sixty years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious United States Department of Agriculture Foods. Commodity Supplemental Food Program is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the United States of Agriculture. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program under section 4(A) of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. Participants of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program must reside in one of the states or Indian reservations that associate with the CSFP.

Another, way the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture is the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations also known as the FDIR. The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation provides United States Department of Agriculture Foods to income- eligible households living on Indian reservations and to American Indian households that reside in approved areas near reservations or in Oklahoma. The Food and Nutrition Service an agency also of the United States Department of Agriculture administers the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations at Federal level also. Therefore, the Farm Bill impacts both the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDIR) there are many more Food Distribution Programs such as the Emergency Food Assistance Program also known as the TEFAP.

The Woman, Infant, and Child (WIC) Program is also a program that is impacted by the Farm Bill. WIC was established as a permanent program in 1974. This was established as a safeguard to the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are nutritional risk. The Woman, Infant and Child Program works farmers markets to help increase participant access to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

As being a part of our local FFA program we as a FFA chapter have a community garden which is a garden at our elementary school that is provided by our FFA chapter in which we grow produce while teaching the younger children about agriculture. The community garden is also a outdoor classroom for the students of the local elementary school. When it is time to plant we take a day out of the week and go down to the elementary school where the different grades rotate throughout the day to come learn about the different types of produce we plant, how to keep the plants healthy, what to put on the plants and much more. We as the FFA chapter teach the younger students how to plant the seeds and plants. When it is time to pick to the produce we get the younger kids and teach them how to remove the

produce without damaging it. After, we get all the produce picked we select a few students to take the produce down to our local senior citizens center in which we give all the produce to at no cost. We pay for some of the plants, seeds, and fertilizer through our FFA chapter although, we pay some of these expenses we try to get some of the grants there is for community projects. The Farm Bill could affect some of the program funding for grants and other things to help the community such as our community garden.

How I can take a role in insuring my community is represented by the two thousand eighteen Farm Bill is to be a voice not only in my community but in my state if need to be. I can also continue to work in our community garden that we get grants for to help us plant produce to give to the elderly in our community. This is just one role I can personally take. Another role I can take to support our local farmers and ranchers that are in our community. I also can get our local teens involved and teach them about the things they may not know about the Farm Bill or may not know what the Farm Bill does not only for our community but for state and our nation. Although that is a couple of roles I can actively take to insure my community is represented by the two thousand eighteen Farm Bill.

Two steps my chaperone and I must take to insure we effectively reach this active role in our community is to encourage people to support our local farmers and ranchers. We also can talk to our local representatives and congressmen of the Farm Bill. This is two of many steps my chaperone and I must take to insure we effectively reach this active role in our community.

How Does the Farm Bill Impact the Indian Agriculture?

By Cody Michael Young, Navajo

The farm bill impacts the Native Americans by giving us many benefits like food production which makes up 2 billion of agriculture income for tribal producers. And also more than half of all income from agriculture in Indian Country is 1.9 billion annually. The report was commissioned by Seeds of Native Health, the tribe's four-year, \$10 million philanthropic campaign. Launched in 2015, Seeds of Native Health seeks to improve Native nutrition and food access by providing grants to local indigenous communities and funding research and education. Then it also gives us food and water like when people have a big family and cannot support because they don't have a job then they get food stamps because they cannot afford to feed their family, because more than 50% of Native American citizens participate in food programs that comprises 80% percent of the farm bill. And also many Natives are surviving on this program to. And then people who don't have running water are able to go down to NTUA (Local utility service) and get water that they can drink and give to their livestock. And the farm bill is the reason that lets Bashas and NTUA do this for our people. And that is why the farm bill is important.

Our Community may be small but we are bigger than most of the other small towns on the reservation. Here where I live there is a grocery store, a hardware store, gas stations, hotels, a school, restaurants, post office, a police station, fire department, a bank, a utility service, a fitness center, chapter house, a chiropractor, and a hospital. So that is a lot on our plate because with all of those businesses that means we are supporting neighboring small towns. And all of these stores and businesses have some

sort of benefit to the Native Americans in some way from a discounts or the food stamps. And an important one in this one is the 2018 Farm bill must continue to address the longstanding issue of credit access for tribal producers in addition to providing tribal specific training and technical assistance on financial education and loan servicing programs.

I will take an active role in my community so that my community will be represented in the 2018 farm bill by pretty much studying the farm bill first so I can learn it and make sure that I know then I can see if I can make to one of the chapter meetings and then tell them what I have learned and then maybe if I can make some tweaks in our community and make some adjustments so the everything in my community will work smoother and more effectively. Like the people that are struggling out here and live in poverty. The community can start like a food drive so that I we feed the people who are hungry. And maybe get in touch with the people who own livestock and are farmers who own a lot of land and find a way that they can get the most out of what they are doing.

Then the two steps that my chaperone and I can take to make sure that we effectively reach this goal is when we go to the conference we can really pretty much listen in and learn as much knowledge as we can and like the people from far away. We can learn their solutions and thoughts about the important topic of the farm bill and what it does to us. And then maybe share our struggles with them so we can learn their struggles and then we will try to find a way to resolve these struggles together and then people will be happy. Second is that we need find a solution to some of the downs of the farm bill but most of it is pretty helpful from everything that it already does for us like water protection and land protection and also the crop insurance that many farmers use today. Then the farm bill has a big problem that they are stopping because the faking of the food services that are provided for us Native Americans. So we will think about all of those topics and find a way to think of a better way to make them better and also improvements that we could make to make the Native Americans and the farmers of America safer and more secure from the struggles and challenges that the farm bill stop.

So in conclusion the farm bill is a very big priority in our life because it is basically our life because of everything that it does for us. And that is why I want to win this essay because how much could be better in the farm bill even though that it already does a lot for us. But in the end the farm bill is great for because the farm bill provides us with all of these necessities and the 12 areas that the farm bill covers like commodities which covers the money that is distributed to the Natives for crops and food and water and also livestock. Then next is conservation and that covers the safe keeping of things. Like cross agency coordination between Natural Resources Conservation service and the bureau of Indian Affairs must be improved to ensure all tribal producer have access to conservation programs and the US Department of Agriculture programs which require an NRCS approved conservation plan. And also trade like in the Native Country food production is a vital part in the trade title program. The MAP via Intertribal Agriculture Council that provides export readiness training assistance. Another important one is nutrition Approximately 25 percent of Native American receive some type of federal food assistance in some tribal community's participation is as high as 60 to 80 percent. And those are the important topics that really help and provide the Native Americans with benefits that really help.

Farm Bill Impact

By Cody Johnson, Cherokee

Hello, my name is Cody Johnson, I am a Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Citizen. I am currently attending Checotah High School where I am a Sophomore. I am actively involved in my local FFA chapter and am on the high school wrestling team. These activities keep me busy year-round while I am also in the process of building a herd of purebred Angus and purebred Simmental cattle along with a cross of the two breeds. I have had the opportunity to attend the Muscogee Creek Nation livestock shows showing pigs and cattle. During my experience showing I have learned how to vaccinate cattle and pigs, also learned how to breed pigs and cattle by Artificial Insemination, thus potentially producing higher performing calf/swine or higher quality show animal. In my operation I have also developed a feeding program to determine when and how much to feed my livestock. There are many different types of feed that do many different things to increase the protein value and many different types of products in which to do this. I have learned a lot of other things about cattle such as how many acres each cow needs to be healthy.

This past summer I had the opportunity to attend the Native Youth Summit in Fayetteville, Arkansas. During this summit I learned how people plan to increase Native Foods and Heritages and what people have already done to increase Native Foods. One of the many things I learned was that when planting different types of corn each type of corn should be planted roughly one mile away from each other or else you will have that type of corn mixes with your other type of corn. I also learned the process creating a business plan. We created a business plan with team members and presented it to our peers. The 2018 Farm Bill impacts American Indian Agriculture because it gives us a budget on how much we can spend within Native Agriculture. Our budget is 489 billion with all total outlays from 2014 to 2018. They have given us percentages on how much we can spend on crop insurance and on all other parts necessary to harvest products correctly and effectively. This means less crops to plant and harvest which means less food and less animals so therefore less food for the community and for people who depend on animals for food. People with livestock are having problems as well because they have certain regulations that they must now follow to maintain their food to high safety standards. The agricultural industry is having to maintain a high safety standard for all products grown or raised in the United States because the ever-growing world population is one that is growing more rapidly and they are holding the producers to a higher safety standard.

Here in my community there are many different types of programs that are affected by the 2018 farm bill such as Food stamps, Drought Assistance, Crop Insurance, Crop Subsidy, and the Crop Rotation Program. The impact could be devastating to the farmers and ranchers who can't afford to purchase the crop insurance and this could put them out of business if they lose all their crops and can't afford to buy and plant more crops. Along with the new parents who depend on the WIC program to help them feed their children and themselves. In my community eighty-eight percent of all the citizens in my community depend on the WIC and FDIPER programs to support their families.

I plan to take an active role in insuring my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill is by collaborating with other Cherokee Nation youth and establish means of communication with the tribal council through a series of local tribal community meetings and presenting my findings. By doing so I will meet new people and help educate them about how the farm bill will impact our community. I can also take an active role in the farm bill by talking to my local state representative and congressman about the 2018 farm bill and how it affects not only the older generations of farmers and ranchers but also the younger beginning farmers and ranchers as well.

Here are two steps me and my chaperone are taking to ensure we effectively reach our active role. My chaperone and I plan to establish communications with the decision-making members of our tribe such as the tribal council and the Department of Agriculture within the Cherokee Nation. Some of the youth agriculture programs in the Cherokee Nation are helping native youth get involved in the agricultural industry by providing them with the tools that are necessary for the development of such programs. I also plan to establish a way to market the agriculture commodities that are currently being grown and raised on the 2300 acre Cherokee Nation farm by talking to my chief about allowing the native Cherokee producers to hopefully get their goods put into the Cherokee FIDPR (Food distribution program) to allow our produce and meat to feed our people to help us regain our food sovereignty.

For years several forward thinking Native Americans and some tribes have lead the fight for more tribal control. When the specific tribes did not want to break with status quo due to the uncertainty of dealing with the federal government, individual tribal members pushed for their own control. This personal control has been best obtained through the government agency known as Farm Service Agency. Through the Farm Service Agency, individual tribal members can establish a business plan and borrow money for agriculture endeavors.

Instead of cutting funding to the programs, it could be reallocated. The funding could then be used to bring healthy foods directly into the community. Many members of the community have displayed difficulty in obtaining or utilizing any type of transportation that would enable them to obtain fresh wholesome food on a regular basis. Most community members live at least thirty miles from retail facilities that provide these products. Living in remote and isolated areas presents a great difficulty in applying for and participating in the nutritional support programs.

The Importance of Native Youth in Agriculture

By Cole Brewer, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

My name is Cole Brewer, I live on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. I am the seventeen-year-old son of Jess and Fanny Brewer. My family's ranch is twenty miles south of Eagle Butte, South Dakota. In my family I am the fifth generation to ranch on Cheyenne River. My reservation is very agriculturally orientated, and with this essay I hope to keep it that way.

The Farm Bill has effected Indian Agriculture in different ways since the pre-1930's. Early treaties stated that the government was to assist Indian peoples in the aspect of farming. They were to supply the Indian peoples with seeds and instruction on how to be self-sustained farmers. Today's Farm Bill is much

more involved, featuring many programs to help Indians in agriculture. In the 2018 Farm Bill we need to insure that the Native voice is heard and certain programs and opportunities are kept up and modified to benefit Native Americans in agriculture.

There is a wide variety of programs in my community that are affected by the Farm Bill. Under Title 1-Commodities you have the Farm Service Agency; they handle programs such as: Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Landowner Assistance Program, Price Loss Coverage, and Agriculture Risk Coverage. Title 2-Conservation has the Natural Resource Conservation Service, their programs are: Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Conservation Reserve Program. All these programs are just the ones involving agriculture in my area. Other government programs under Title 4-Nutrition are: Women Infants and Children, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. All the programs I have mentioned are impacted by the Farm Bill, and are very important where I live.

There are very few younger people stepping up to fill the shoes of the older and retiring agriculture population in Indian country. I feel that raising the maximum amount on the Beginner Farmer Program would allow for this transition to happen more smoothly and frequently. The beginner farmer loan of \$300,000 seems to many like a rather large sum of money, but in agriculture without a lot of family backing or a great deal of money to start off with this number is not reasonable to begin a career and make a living in agriculture. Someone looking to get into agriculture (for example ranching) is faced with: lease payments, buying cattle, feed expenses, bull power, machinery, water expenses, and other miscellaneous things needed to operate a ranch. To be able to afford all these things and be able to live is extremely hard, most will choose a different occupation.

Through the research I have done, I would see it beneficial to extend the loan period for the Beginner Farmer Loan program from seven years to ten years this would make it feasible for the young operator to make a living. For Example: if you were to borrow the \$300,000 on seven years, your principle payment is \$42,857, but on ten years your principle payment would be \$30,000. So, the difference of \$12,857, could be used to live on, or better your operation. Combined with the idea from, Regaining Our Future, of adding the first year's operating expenses to the loan, would be a huge step in helping the younger generations get into agriculture. This is what I see as a senior in high school trying to make life decisions, I could go into debt and buy 100 head of cattle, which would use up the \$300,000 to buy cows, bulls, tractor, and first year ranch expenses. After the seven years it takes to pay the loan off, I would be making somewhere around \$30,000 per year. When you do the numbers, young people can go to a two-year school, and come out and make more money than someone after the seven years in agriculture. By expanding the maximum loan amount, you would enable the young operators to start out with bigger operations and make a better living, one more comparable to what their peers are earning after college, so by doing this young people can see that they could be making a good living in agriculture and you could capture their interest back to their rural communities.

Agriculture is my community's backbone. What I have begun to see in my area is as farmers and ranchers get older there is no one to pass their business to, and non-tribal members from other places

are coming in and buying the land. This is a tragic evolution to our community; the people buying the land don't live here, therefore, these men and women coming in and buying land in Indian country are not from here and very seldom spend money here or pay taxes. Therefore, if this keeps happening our local business's will be forced to shut down. Once this happens it will be a downhill spiral for our community. If we don't find a way to keep our youth in our agricultural communities so many reservation communities just like mine will either not exist no more or be devastated in poverty.

Furthermore, my community needs these programs which help young people get into agriculture. With people in agriculture growing older across the nation, especially in Indian country. With the 2018 Farm Bill quickly approaching we need to get programs set in place to help our youth. With my ideas of youth mentorship programs, that explain to younger generations the importance of their future role in agriculture, and the ideas stated in *Regaining Our Future*, we can improve the Credit Title in the farm bill and, once again, get young people interested in agriculture. It is very important that the 2018 Farm Bill includes programs specifically designated to youth. Without youth growing up and getting into agriculture our whole economy, especially in Indian country, is going to crumble. The Native voice needs to be heard, because these ideas can save our small communities.

I can help represent the interests of my community in many different ways. First I would reach out to our Native American producers and interested youth in my area to discuss what they would like to see in the 2018 Farm Bill. Another step would be to talk with my local NRCS and FSA workers to find out what they have seen working the past four years, and any changes they would like to see come in the next Farm Bill. After I have gathered everyone's opinions in my community. To attain with my goal of insuring that my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill, I would start off by relaying the information I have gained to my area Intertribal Agriculture Council. I would also write letters to share the concerns of the people here in Indian Country on the upcoming Farm Bill with my State Senators, John Thune and Mike Rounds also my State Representative Kristy Noem and South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard. I believe it would be very important to meet with our Tribal Chairman, Harold Frazier, and Tribal Councilmen/Women to share to information I had gathered, and ask them to also contact all of our state political figures to insure that our Native voice is heard on these topics in the 2018 Farm Bill.

One key thing my chaperone and I see being instrumental to ensuring that we reach an active role in our community is getting out there and talking to the people that rely on these programs and are familiar with how they work. Also, talking with the people who aren't as familiar with all the programs offered. Understanding the views of the operators that need these programs would be vital. We think it would be crucial to talk with the younger generations as well; to see how they feel about the opportunities available to them through the current Farm Bill, and what they would like to see in the 2018 Farm Bill to make it easier for them as younger generations to get into agriculture.

In conclusion, the 2018 Farm Bill is going to be instrumental in Indian country. I believe that raising the maximum credit amount on the Beginner Farm Loan and expanding the loan period from seven years to ten years would help the younger generation to see a future in agriculture. Getting our youth back into agriculture and staying in agriculture is not only important for local economy, but also our national

economy. We need our youth involved in agriculture so we will always have a voice in our tribal, state, and national government, that has a real life grasp on agricultural subjects and not several generations removed. Indian country needs its youth in agriculture to help supply healthy nutritional food for our people. In Indian country we are facing severe health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. The younger generation of farmers and ranchers are going to be our life line to a healthier food source, because our youth care about our people, our communities, and our country.

The Farm Bill

By Colton Denetsosie, Navajo

The Farm Bill has benefited the tribal lands in a variety of ways. Without it, some things that we take for granted today, might not even be here today, but it is far from perfect. There are some things that happened in the last couple of years that I think that makes the Farm Bill not quite effective on Indian Agriculture. First off the Farm Bill helps the Native American nations by giving somewhat of crop insurance, such as if a storm or hurricane destroys crops, the Farm Bill can pay for almost all the damages where you don't have to fork out so much money to pay for the damages. Another way the Bill helps Tribal reservations is that they give out commodities to the farmers and ranchers to the Indian people as well as regular people who are on some form of food stamp. It also helps Native American farmers and ranchers by funding their crops. It also funds education, research, and commodities. Which most of these things are greatly appreciated by the native people who can't keep a steady job or not getting paid enough by their jobs.

Furthermore, there a couple of programs in my community that are affected by the Farm Bill. Such as the energy part of the Farm bill. In my area we have an old coal mine that is still in production but will be shut down in a couple of years. My family had built their wealth around these non-renewable resources. So it will be quite hard to find some other form of high paying income in that field, such as my uncle who is going to lose his job if our local coal mine called PEABODY. He is a welder and may have to travel to find a good paying job. Along with the new solar plant that had just opened up, it will go into production which will bring income into our community. Even the average person is affected by the Farm bill. It also reduces or gives free lunch to kids that go to the boarding school or the public school for kid's parents who don't have a steady income. Most of my friends had free lunches when I was growing up because their families did not make as much money as my parents did. While growing up, the school made the so called "rich kids" pay for their own meal every day, and if they did not, they had to eat low quality food, myself alone had to pay up to \$300 a year from 1st grade to 8th grade. I also have a little brother who use to have to pay for his meal, my meals alone for the first eight years of my schooling costed me \$2,400 alone, did I mention the food was not good at all?

I feel the only way to insure that my community is represented by the 2018 Farm bill and to play an active role in it is to; ask meat producers if they are being funded by the Farm bill, if not I will do with all my power to talk to the representatives of the Farm bill and give questions on why they are not doing their job and protecting Rural Development Programs. I'm also going to make sure that the school lunches

have better food to eat and make sure that they serve quality food to the students. Lastly making sure that our local native and non-natives producers have crop insurance on Native Reservations. I myself and my family may be effected by the crop and animal insurance. My family is a part of the Navajo Beef program which is an organization that gives premium beef to the native casinos that are all over the reservation. It can also be found in some select grocery stores around the Navajo Reservation. We are somewhat of a sub group to the organization. My mother is the president of our organization which is called United Turquoise Cattle Ranchers Association (UTCRA). We unfortunately do not give full advantage of this because the Farm Bill does not give us animal insurance, we lose at least 3-4 cows and some bulls because of the steep trenches that are at the place we keep our cows. So we lose a couple thousand dollars every year to cows and bulls that die.

With all these commitments I will obviously need help, such as a chaperone. Therefore, my chaperone and I will make sure that we are active in our community by being involved with the meeting that take place in my hometown of Kayenta, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. We shall speak up and try to give the people some sort of voice in these meetings. We will also help in local events that happen and benefit the community. That is how my chaperone and I will do to ensure that we effectively reach this active role in our community. In my eyes this action need to be done by me, or someone willing to take on the challenge. The reason why is that our town chapter is corrupt. They take money for themselves which should be used to fix up the issue of stray dogs and homeless people in this town. The people who run the chapter mostly as I said earlier, take money from local taxes and revenue the business's pay to stay here. Although I know that this is an issue on almost all reservation chapters.

In conclusion the Farm Bill and Rural Development Programs may have their flaws but all in all they still help the Native Reservations. Such as giving commodities, crop and animal insurance to farmers and ranchers. It also funds our education and research that happens on the reservations, It also ends, and creates new job such as in non-renewable energy sources and renewable energy sources. That is how the Farm Bill impacts the Indian Agriculture, as well in my community and how my chaperone and I will insure that my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill and also reaching an active role in my community.

2018 Farm Bill and Community Impact

By DaleAnn Cobell, Blackfeet

The next generation of Native American people have the potential to do amazing things. Just having a voice and speaking up is powerful, being a young next generation Native American I worry about things that can have an impact on my people and the community I live in. Speaking up for something that has the potential to impact millions of Native Americans is powerful because you can be the voice that leads to a change. The Farm Bill is one of the largest pieces of domestic legislation considered by Congress every five years and a major legislative act that serves as the primary agricultural federal food and nutrition policy tool. The bill also affects crop insurance, conservation, commodity programs, and research and education. The bill can also be quite controversial because it can impact international trade, environmental conservation, food safety, the well-being of rural communities and many other things that

deal with agriculture and different food programs.

The 2018 Farm Bill has the potential to have a big impact on Indian Agriculture. Over 50 million acres of tribal lands to some extent play an important role in food production and agriculture while the Native American communities within all of those acres of farmland have the highest numbers of individual's dependent on supplemental food programs. As Native Americans living on reservations we have access to millions of acres of land on our reservations that are already involved in some way in food production, but, that food does not always stay in our communities. Mainly Indian Country has been left out of the Farm Bill discussions with the exception of very few active tribes. This means that there have not been many Native American voices that influence the national food policies and being left out of these discussions can have a negative effect on Indian Country because the health of our people depends on a louder voice and the Farm Bill has many resources that can aid us in reaching our goals.

There are different programs in every community that are impacted by the Farm Bill. I live on a reservation where many people rely on commodities and food stamps to get food on their tables to feed themselves and their families. Both of these programs are affected by the Farm Bill which also can affect crop insurance and conservation which can have an impact on Indian farmers and ranchers. The Farm Bill also provides food programs for people living under the poverty line and nearly 25% of Native Americans, even 50% in some communities participate in the food programs that make up to 80% of the Farm Bill. All of these things have an effect on my community because it is a reservation. Also just being knowledgeable about the Farm Bill as a Native American is very important because it directly affects our lands, our foods, our waters, our natural resources, and our economic development opportunities.

I plan on having a voice in my community and speaking up and taking on an active role to make the Farm Bill a topic of discussion within my community so that my people will be represented in the 2018 Farm Bill and can help Congress shape the next one. I plan on doing this by deeply researching the Farm Bill and its effect on Indian Agriculture and different Native American communities more so that I can become more knowledgeable about the subject than I already am. I also plan on telling more people about the bill and the effects it has on our community and encouraging them to get involved so that we can have a bigger voice. I will begin with my family members, then friends, and move into spreading the word in my community.

If selected for the amazing opportunity to go to this conference, I believe that my chaperone and I can learn a lot more about the Farm Bill and the things we need to do to go about taking the first steps of spreading the word in our community. I believe that the first two major steps my chaperone and I must make to ensure that we effectively reach this role in our community are first of all we need to spread the word about the Farm Bill. We must educate our people and make sure that they know about the bill and understand the different effects that it has on them. I feel that a lot of people in my community probably do not know about the bill and the different effects it has on them. The second step my chaperone and I must take is to get out and encourage our people to speak up so that their voice can be heard so we can have an impact on changing the Farm Bill.

The Farm Bill has an effect on everyone but has a very big impact on Native Americans in Indian

Country. Many Native Americans do not realize or do not know about the different kinds of impacts that it has on them and the services they rely on. As a young Native American from the reservation, I have the chance to speak up and make my voice heard to make a change. I have the chance to educate my fellow Native American people in my community as well as my peers and family members about the Farm Bill which is important because we can be the generation that leads to this change. The Farm Bill has a big impact on Indian Agriculture because so much of tribal land is used for agriculture like 50 million acres of it. There are also many different programs within my community that many people rely on for just their own basic needs that are affected by the Farm Bill, also not only on my reservation but every other reservation. This is why I believe that I need to speak up to encourage my tribe as well as other tribes to speak up as well so that Native American's can actually have a say in the decisions that will shape the next Farm Bill in 2018.

How I Can Help My Future In Agriculture

By Daniel Fales, Yurok

In the 2018 farm bill there are almost a unlimited amount of things that will affect natives and even if they do not directly relate to us they will affect us in some sort of way in the long run. Because whether we like it or not nonnatives are a big part of our lives and the things that affect them will eventually affect us. So I believe that we have to have a strong voice not only for the good of native people but also the good of all society but make sure natives come first then worry about others. Some things that will affect us directly is the 1 trillion that could be added for agriculture and rural development. This would make a huge change in the kind of programs that tribes and the government could provide. Whether it is a crop insurance program for someone that cannot afford it or a program to give fresh fruits and vegetables to those in need. This could also help in rural development of reservations and a revitalization of culture in places that their culture may need help. I know at least in my tribe we really need a culture revitalization program because we currently do not have any first language speakers and have only have very few people who are fluent speakers. I am lucky because I have been able to take my native language as a class at my high school for three years and hope to be the first to get my 'seal of biliteracy' after I take another year of the language class. With the addition of a trillion dollars for agriculture and rural development and this could encourage people who may of been on the fence about getting involved in some sort of agriculture. I know a few experiences that I have people have been too scared about the reward not being worth the risk but if there is programs that would help those people then they might actually get involved and with the number of young people involved in agriculture down then we need to encourage young people even more than ever. That's one of the many reasons that our voice has to be heard in the 2018 farm bill discussion.

I don't know what programs specifically will be affected on my reservation because I don't live on my reservation and don't know of any programs that my tribe utilizes but I know in my local farming community most of the programs that will affect them is all of the organic programs, because most of the farmers in my area are organic. One of my ag teacher's at my high schools' family owns an organic dairy

and produces organic vegetables and if they couldn't produce organic then their business would not be able to survive because they do not grow enough produce and produce enough milk to keep up with commercial farmers. The programs that support organic production and specialty crops support the agriculture that occurs in my area. One policy change that will affect them is the RMA and their ability to provide crop insurance.

I will take an active role in insuring my community is represented by making sure that they know about the upcoming farm bill and make sure they can access the information. I will also make sure that they give me feedback and tell me what they need out of the 2018 farm bill so I can get their voices heard on a bigger platform. Also by just talking to them to hear what they need or want to change in this upcoming farm bill. I can also do this by going on to my reservation and talking to the people themselves because often times the people have better ideas than the people lawmakers that make the farm bill because they have the real world experience and the knowledge about what has worked and what hasn't. These are the people whose voices don't get to be heard and need to be because if they don't do anything then how can they expect change. So if we give them a voice on a large platform for everyone who makes the farm bill then imagine all the good that can be done. If all the people who don't speak out about the problems in the farm bill did then we would have no problem with under representation.

Two steps me and my chaperone can take to ensure we take an active role in our community are. One step that me and my chaperone can take is to make sure we spread the word to all of our local farmers on and off the reservation. I am lucky in that sense that I have a ag teacher that also helps run her family's farm and is connected with all the farmers in my area so she can help spread the word. I also have a great uncle that owns a farm in my area. My grandma is also a very involved on my reservation and also is very involved in what I do. She is basically my voice on the reservation. I can also send this message though my native language class, Student government class, and FFA chapter since I am an officer this year. There is so many ways I can ensure my message is being heard and be active in my community. Another way I can ensure that we effectively reach an active role in my community is by staying involved in the IAC because by attending the summer program in Arkansas that opened my eyes to all the problems in Indian country and how a young person like me can make a big difference in my community, county, state and nationally if I get involved. If I keep coming to these events, then that in turn will help my community by giving them a voice and having a place where it can be heard and where it can go the next step to where more people can hear it and if people see that someone as small as me can have their voice heard then that might encourage others to get involved.

IAC Farm Bill Youth Essay

By Darrylyn Fry, Narragansett

From doing research, the "Farm Bill is the major legislative act historically considered by Congress every five years that serves as a primary vehicle for developing these federal food and nutrition policies." The Farm Bill policies stretch across administrations making most of the debates. The views and voices of the Farm Bill spread around the world. The most recent Farm Bill was passed in 2014, three years ago. It

was said that the Farm Bill that has been recently passed would have been spending about 489 billion dollars over five years. While this was said, it was also stated that all money profits were being used for good causes such as funding nutrition programs, having crop insurance programs, conservation programs, and other things like trade, rural development, forestry, energy, and agriculture.

While the Farm Bill is a very big deal in native country, some may ask "What does my community need in the Farm Bill?" The answer to that is, because your community needs to know and be aware of what's going on in Indian Country. Your community needs to know that the Farm Bill helps stabilize the community market and support farmers as well as ranchers. When droughts and natural disasters happen, the Farm Bill can help get you back on your feet. Therefore, if your community needs to be built so that it can feed and sustain every member then that is what your community needs in the Farm Bill.

Furthermore, the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture because it impacts many areas of your life such as the conservation, nutrition, housing, development, and more. The Farm Bill impacts the nutrition part of our life because at least two-thirds of the Farm Bill funds are devoted to the nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP. This assistance program provides benefits to buy food, it is also used to expand the domestic market for agricultural products. In addition, the Farm Bill also affects the housing and development, the Farm Bill has a goal which is to provide a safety net for farmers and ranchers. When farming and ranching you are dealing with major risks and the Farm Bill helps provide safety. The safety net includes many programs like commodity programs, crop insurance, disaster assistance, and agricultural programs.

Moreover, I know that the Farm Bill is a big thing in Indian Country and I also know that this program was created in a part to avoid a violation of organizations and rules concerning subsidies that distort planning decisions. I feel that taking an active role so that I am able to help my community is something that I would greatly enjoy, in order for me to take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 farm bill is getting educated on how the bill will impact my community and what programs affect my community. Attending the summits and just advocating and being a voice, even if that means publishing results from a food sovereignty assessment. I would become a leader in my community and make sure my tribe has everything it needs whether that be food or housing. I would also make sure people that not only me but others are involved so I would post on social media in order to get the word out on what is happening in and around the community and Indian Country. As said, being apart of the 2018 Farm Bill is very big so I would work really hard to have not only me be apart of the Farm Bill, but my community.

Finally, last but not least, two things my chaperone and I can do to make sure and ensure that we effectively reach this active role in our community is one, we can't give up, giving up is ceasing in making an effort, resign oneself to failure, by giving up, you aren't trying. If we were to give up then the assistance programs given will no longer want to help due to the fact that no one is trying. With one person not trying, it more than less makes the rest of the community slack. Whereas, if there is one or more persons succeeding then, the rest of the community will want to help and succeed themselves. If my chaperone and I can stick to our plan and that is to stay active in the Farm Bill so we are aware of what's going on

than others will do the same.

Including this, another thing that my chaperone and I can do to ensure that we effectively reach this active role in our community is keep everyone engaged, if we are able to include everyone than more people would want to participate in the learning of the Farm Bill and more people will want to learn more about what is going on, not only going around them, but what is also happening to the Farm Bill, if it be the financial situation, the assistance or anything else. The more people that get involved, the more the Farm Bill will work out for the better, the most communities will get help and then the information will be spread about letting everyone know what is going on.

In conclusion, the "Farm Bill is an omnibus, multi-year law that governs an array of agricultural and food programs." The Farm Bill is used to help farmers and ranchers and many others, the Farm Bill give benefits to people who are hard working and to people who need it. A Farm Bill will help in a situation with a food desert. Food deserts are part of the country, usually found in destitute areas. Areas that would have a food desert are places that have little to no farmers or ranchers, and places that have little to no grocery stores or gas stations. So, all in all, the Farm Bill connects the food to our plates to create meals, they impact what kinds of food is grown like carrots, potatoes, beets, greens, etc. and how the food is grown, for example, naturally or with pesticides. It also helps the farmers that produce the food and helps with the sustaining of natural resources such as soil and water.

Our Future

By Devyn Antone, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

It is almost a new year which means there will be a different Farm Bill for the year of 2018. Another year with a different president and there will be a particular set of regulations enforced into the 2018 Farm Bill. However, the Farm Bill impacts every farmer and rancher, including the indigenous farmers and ranchers. I will tell about why the new Farm Bill should be applied the next five years.

To elaborate, the 2018 Farm Bill would be instrumental for many reasons. The first reason is that the 2018 Farm Bill is known for aiding many things for all of the ranchers and farmers that apply. The 2018 Farm Bill is capable of helping regain a healthy future for crops, animals, and properties. Many Native American ranchers and farmers have proven that ranching or farming is their life. Since the world's weather is just a prediction, farmers and ranchers never know what can happen to their crops or animals. The 2018 Farm Bill is there to help farmers and ranchers find out whether they can restart on what they already have. Farmers and Rancher use crops for a variety of reasons. Selling the crops for income, some them for a food supply for both themselves and animals they raise. The Farm Bill for farmers and ranchers is a very crucial bill. Crops and animals have been a part of the Indigenous culture since the beginning of time. However, since the Farm Bill was established, it has helped every farmer and rancher around the world. The Farm Bill has been able to give us a platform to plan for a catastrophe and rebuild our lives from there. It has allowed us to continue what we started in the beginning but with more support. The 2018 farm bill is a plea for the legislature for Native Americans and Americans because of what it has done for our crops and most importantly the support for the animals. Native Americans are involved in

everything from the food chain to farming, ranching, etc. However, the farm bill is not just something to help us with our crops and more. It is a way for us to unite and help get the farm bill in our community and defend our interests for the things we do.

My community is comprised of mostly farmers and ranchers. Countless of them grow crops and raise animals. Some programs support the plants, depending on the crops. Native Americans use their animals for many things, from rodeo to using animals for helping around the home. The farm bill allows the indigenous culture to continue old farming and ranching ways. Programs in my community use some crops to sell to people that enjoy vegetables or fruits. Without the farm bill, many people will not be able to get the things to keep a business up and running just in case of something that could happen in the world. For example, one supermarket for one small town needs as much as it can get to support the city they are in. Without a certain amount of things to keep the supermart running there is not a significant possibility that it could help the town anymore.

Using real vegetables from farmers has been a big deal for the supermarket because they know it is natural. However, there are many farmers in my community that pick and plow up some of their vegetables and bring them to sell out of their vehicles. In a native town, there are many reasons to have the farm bill for them because as an I am a Native American I like to keep things natural and have things as it was before. Using farm goods and natural things is good for as long as we can support ourselves. Without the farm bill, we have a lower chance of succeeding in business later on in the future. There are also many dangerous things that farmers go through to provide for people's needs. Some things are so unpredictable that they never know what can happen to equipment. Also, food for their animals is essential, animals have to eat, as do we.

To ensure that the 2018 Farm Bill represents my community I will use my skills by communicating with people and making sure I take the right steps by educating people about the 2018 Farm Bill. There are a variety of ways to provide farmers and ranchers the knowledge about what the 2018 Farm Bill is about and what they should know. I will be able to provide the means to help the 2018 Farm Bill. I will be sure to attend all meetings and be a good representative for my residents to know what is going on with the 2018 Farm Bill. I will also hold at least one meeting for the 2018 farm bill in my neighborhood to show awareness for the 2018 Farm Bill. Every time a big event is happening in my community, I will also make sure everyone hears about myself taking the initiative in the Farm Bill. For example, making a float or adding something in a parade. I will also talk to people that I know will spread the word. I will also attend every meeting with the Intertribal Agriculture Council to help me with ways to get the better information for my community. I can also hold many meetings with council members to see if they can give me a hand with the things that I need help with doing.

Last but not least, my chaperone and I will take many steps to get to the right place to help with many things in our town. We will make sure that we attend every meeting with the Intertribal Agriculture Council. My chaperone and I will travel to wherever we need to go to get information for the meeting that my chaperone and I will be holding. We will also get many updates for my community to ensure that we have the information that we need to strive for the future. Also, my chaperone and I will hold many

town meetings to get everyone in my neighborhood to know more about the farm bill. We will also provide information on posters and display them in the city's most visited places. My chaperone and I will make sure that everyone knows what the farm bill is and help them understand what the farm bill is.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Indian Agriculture Council for taking the time to read my essay. I also am very appreciative of the opportunity to voice my opinion and to be able to have such a fantastic opportunity to be a part of this competition. I am very thankful for the opportunity to show my writing skills and what I am capable of doing. I will take whatever measures required to be able to speak out about the 2018 farm bill.

What Does My Community Need from the 2018 Farm Bill - and from Me?

By Ellise David, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

"It's like a Swiss Army knife." That is the analogy that President Obama made in regards to the 2014 Farm Bill because of its many functions: research, jobs, infrastructure, conservation, innovation, safety nets, and health and nutrition. Each and every one of the twelve titles of the bill were important to Indian country then, and they still are today.

To bring the topic closer to home, I would have to say that my community needs the Farm Bill to be comprised of well-developed policies specific to Indian Country with strong, specific language that WILL bring about positive change in regards to food security, food production, and building stronger Native communities.

I first heard about the 2018 Farm Bill during student leader training sessions last summer at the Native Youth in Food and Agriculture Summit held at the University of Arkansas. It was immediately obvious that the bill is important to the future of Indian country, and that there is an urgency in Farm Bill education. According to Janie Simms Hipp and Colby Duren in their publication *Regaining Our Future: An Assessment of Risks and Opportunities for Native Communities in the 2018 Farm Bill*, "We are entering a period where Indian Country voices in the Farm Bill debate need to be louder (Simms Hipp & Duren, 2017, p. 14)." We had a 3-hour session with "Mama Janie" about the Farm Bill and how it will affect Indian Country. While they raised our level of awareness to the issues that we face they also encouraged us to step up, to be that voice, to make a change.

Throughout the training sessions and later, when reading through the "Regaining Our Future" literature in depth when I returned home, I could immediately see how most of the Farm Bill's titles directly affect programs in my community: Commodities, Conservation, Credit, Rural Development, Research, Forestry, Nutrition and Horticulture. The two sections that really stood out to me, the titles that I have already been involved with and feel that I have the biggest chance of taking an active role in, are Nutrition and Horticulture.

According to the 2014 Farm Bill, eighty percent of the budget was projected to to be spent on food stamps and nutrition. That is a crazy figure in my mind. We were the first farmers, the caretakers of the land and all the Creator had given us. For centuries our people had been able support ourselves through our own food systems until treaties, federal removal, and reservation policies removed us from

our traditional lands. First foods have always been a center stone of the Native American way of life, of our tribal cultures, traditions, languages, and dances; all are based on our traditional foods. We have gotten away from that, and our health is suffering because of it. We need to find a way to sustain ourselves through healthy eating and healthy food choices, not what is handed out to us.

“The full scope of food and agriculture programs must be available to us in order to turn the page on the significant food and health-related impacts without our Native communities. We have the highest numbers per capita of individuals who are dependent on feeding programs in the United States. Our health disparities are among the worst of any population group in the nation (Simms Hipp & Duren, 2017, p. 14).” One of the biggest issues on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, as well as others, is the health and nutrition epidemic. That sentiment was brought to light in my own community during the summer of 2016 when I conducted a food sovereignty assessment for my Tribe.

When tallying up the surveys and analyzing the people's' responses it was very clear that we rely heavily on the local market, the only market located on our reservation, which has very limited amounts of fresh produce but is bountiful in processed foods. Our reservation is located in a food desert, as are many reservations, and that is taking its toll on our people. The results of the assessment made it very clear to me that the people of my Tribe aren't as healthy as we were when we were feeding ourselves years ago. The reasons identified for this came down to four main things - our immediate food sources, our reliance on food stamps, the lack of our ability to grow our own foods, and the lack of traditional foods incorporated into food programs (school lunches being the main concern).

I have already begun to take an active role in ensuring that my community is taking advantage of the provisions afforded us in previous Farm Bills. The data collected through the food sovereignty assessment was used to apply for a National Farm to School Network's Seed Change in Native Communities with Farm to School mini-grant for our Warm Springs K8 Academy. This project aims to expand farm to school activities in Native communities as a way to initiate and begin to regain food security and food sovereignty. We were fortunate to be one of five Native schools awarded the mini-grant. We'll be using the grant to help students make connections about where food comes from and how it relates to their cultural heritage by building a greenhouse and planting a school garden and promoting a healthy snacks program. The garden will also be used for science and nutrition education.

The greenhouse is up, supplies have been purchased, and we are eagerly awaiting the day that we get to start planting seeds. I will continue to take an active role in this project. During the second semester of this, my senior year of high school, I have requested to change my schedule so that the first two periods of the day will be spent at the K8 Academy so I can work with the staff and students to achieve the goals and objectives lined out in our grant proposal. I have also taken on the role of senior student body representative to our school board. Not only will I report to them on the happenings at the high school, but I will be able to share with them the positive impacts that the school greenhouse and garden activities are having for the students on the reservation. It is my hopes that the district will see the effectiveness of the garden and support the continuation of the project after the mini-grant has come to an end. I am also hopeful that students will be hooked on growing their own foods and interested by

other agriculture activities that we'll be doing with them through our local FFA chapter and "Ag in the Classroom" projects.

The next project I intend to tackle pertains to Traditional Foods Section 4033. This section of the Nutrition title would benefit our Tribe because it allows for traditional foods to be served in residential child care facilities, child nutrition programs, long-term care facilities and senior meal programs. The people of my community definitely made themselves heard on this topic in the food sovereignty assessment - they want to see salmon, elk and deer meat, roots, and berries on the menu in our Head Start and daycare programs, the elementary school, the family services center, and our senior programs. I look forward to this next challenge, and will follow the development of and advocate for this topic of the 2018 Farm Bill.

In conclusion, the 2018 Farm Bill has far-reaching implications for all of Indian Country. My community needs me to continue to educate myself about the Farm Bill and it's many functions, and then share that knowledge with others. I will continue to work with our reservation school to promote nutrition and horticulture and hopefully inspire the next generation of Native youth to become involved in agriculture. I need to seek out more knowledge about and network with others regarding the allowance of traditional foods in our various Tribal entities.

My community needs the Farm Bill to be specific to Indian Country with strong language about food security and food production in order to make our Tribe stronger, healthier, and more self-sufficient. I look forward to accepting the challenge of promoting the 2018 Farm Bill because I am determined to change my reservation through agriculture. I WILL make my voice heard.

Food Quality is Real Food Security

By Elsie DuBray, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

The Farm Bill impacts Indian agriculture in numerous ways. First, it affects important food programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for food stamps and food through commodities from the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). In communities where the poverty rate is as high as it is on Cheyenne River, programs like SNAP are vital. There are also community efforts to raise healthy food, such as the Cheyenne River Youth Project's (CRYP) Winyan Toka Win (Leading Lady) Garden, which are affected by the Farm Bill. Next, the Farm Bill impacts the disaster relief programs that provide subsidies for farmers and ranchers when a natural disaster like a drought strikes. Food production is the primary occupation of our reservation's farmers and ranchers, and their livelihood is greatly affected by the Farm Bill's horticulture programs. In addition, these farmers and ranchers receive the support of the Farm Service Agency and their products like crop insurance that they offer.

There are food nutrition programs, farm and ranch programs, land conservation programs, horticulture crop programs, Farm Service Agencies, crop insurance, and programs for energy, forestry and research projects, all within the Farm Bill. Many of these programs impact my community. On Cheyenne River, there are many people who need the food programs that are funded through the Farm

Bill. If SNAP and FDPIR programs lost funding or were not funded, people would not have enough to eat themselves nor to feed to their children. If the disaster program wasn't funded by the Farm Bill, farmers and ranchers could lose absolutely everything in just one dry summer or one tough winter. For example, this summer we had a major drought here and without the disaster program to assist with buying hay and feed for this upcoming winter, many ranchers would have to sell their animals. This is also why the crop insurance program is so important.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is another program under the Farm Bill that is utilized by my community. This allows programs like the Conservation Reserve Program to be utilized by area farmers and ranchers. Both of these programs of the Farm Bill are important to ensure the health of the land. Rural Development programs are beneficial to many Tribal projects, city and county projects across the reservation, as well as many of the nonprofit organizations on the reservation, in particular the Cheyenne River Youth Project (CRYP). The horticulture programs in the Farm Bill are also utilized in my community by individual ranchers and farmers, as well as the Specialty Crop Grant program and Farmers Market Program which are beneficial to CRYP with their garden. The Farm Service Agency provides local jobs and offers programs that support many individual ranchers and farmers in my community. I was glad to read about and I fully support the efforts of the Indian Agriculture Council to recommend that the Farm Bill include provisions to protect Native foods in the marketplace, as well as Native seeds and traditional foods. In addition to buffalo, our chokecherries, timsilas, buffalo berries, June berries, sand cherries, etc., as well as medicinal plants, need to be included and protected.

I am anxious to learn more about the Farm Bill. Until I did some research for this essay, I did not realize how many programs were funded through this bill and thus how essential it is to my community. In order to expand my knowledge on the issue, I would open my mind to the ideas of others. I would ask for the opinions of my peers, community members, and local leaders to see what our communities need from the Farm Bill, and to also try to see the impact of the Farm Bill from multiple perspectives. Given this opportunity to build upon what I currently know, I would then like to take the newfound knowledge I obtain and write to our Senators and Congresswoman to push for the funding necessary for the programs most important to my community and those prioritized by the Indian Agriculture Council. I would stress the potential many of these programs have to increase the health of our community, as well as the importance of making sure the programs we have and create will increase the well-being of our people. If South Dakota's Senators and Congresswoman are in the state, perhaps I could present my ideas in support of the Farm Bill to them, and ask them what they are doing to increase South Dakota's representation in the Farm Bill, specifically, my community's representation. Ultimately, talking about it is the most effective way to get the ball rolling, and that's exactly what I intend to do.

In order to make sure our active roles in our community are being reached effectively, my chaperone (my mom) and I must take two major steps. First, we must educate ourselves. A complete understanding is the key ingredient to successful activism. In order to do this, we would need to read the Farm Bill in its entirety, and conduct additional research to familiarize ourselves with each of its many components. The next step we would take would be spreading the word. The only way to get people

talking is to start the conversation. We would talk to friends, family, and community members alike to get their input and also to share the importance of the Farm Bill, and the many programs affected by it, with as many people as possible.

We would advocate. In particular, we would advocate for more programs like the Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables which was directed by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill). I have often wished for better, healthier, local food in our school lunch program. It would appear this could be accomplished with the support of programs under the Farm Bill. Making the change to locally-grown fruits and vegetables and locally-raised chicken, beef, pork and buffalo in school lunches is a reasonable request and one that benefits both local producers and all those who eat this food through school lunch or the elderly nutrition center or CRYP, etc. With the outrageously high rates of diabetes, obesity and heart disease in our Native communities, especially in our youth, purchasing healthier local food should be our primary focus-at home and at school. In my view, food quality supports food security and this would be one way to increase food quality. These are just a few examples of many that highlight the significance of both the Farm Bill itself, and also of taking action within your own community.

Being A Farm Bill Catalyst

By Gabriel Keith Lambert, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

Every title in the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture to some degree. For instance, Title IV which is Nutrition may seem like it has the largest impact on our people's food sources because it funds SNAP and our food distribution programs, but it also allows farmers a way to sell produce directly to SNAP participants and other USDA programs to buy directly from farmers to provide food to participants; thus, making it have an even greater impact on Native Agriculture. In my tribe, we not only participate in Title IV, we have also taken advantage of Rural Development, conservation, and forestry funds. Individual tribal members have found conservation, commodities, trade, credit, horticultural, crop insurance and miscellaneous funds helpful in their agricultural, home, and financial progress. Although HUD184 (Native American home loan program) funds are the most used program for Natives in our community to finance a home, USDA lending funds allow more flexibility for people to purchase land, farms and even livestock. These programs also have set aside specifically for Native Americans. Native people have totally different ideas on farming from cattle and other livestock to small gardens in a back yard to simple rural living, but all aspects of Indian Agriculture are impacted through the Farm Bill. However, we observe the Farm Bill, Native Americans have been producing food since before America was America. We have made changes through time to adjust to modern farming and have lost much of our cultivating practices, but we must continue to progress back to food sovereignty. Although land ownership and farming changes from tribe to tribe and state to state, the Farm Bill contains funding, that if properly applied, has the ability to create opportunities and a sustainable Indian Agriculture for individual tribal members, tribes as a whole, and communities where Natives live.

There are several programs in my community that are impacted by the Farm Bill. As mentioned, the SNAP and Food Distribution Programs provide food directly to tribal and community members.

Currently, nearly fifty percent of our community participated in some form of food assistance program. Changes in the Nutrition portion of the Farm Bill could affect the nutrition of all of these people because with or without these programs they would still have to eat. My mother is a grant writer for the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and has received Rural Development funds for two projects in our community, a commercial kitchen for a development project and a commercial aquaponics greenhouse. One of these grants creates jobs and allows our tribe to economically develop a historic property, and the other creates jobs and gives our tribe the opportunity to develop a food source that produces vegetables and fish. Tribal members and community members regularly purchase homes, land, farm supplies, farm equipment and livestock with USDA lending and grant programs. Natural resource programs helped to remove cedar trees and helped build ponds for our environment. Many community members, such as my grandmother, have received hoop houses provided by the Farm Bill that extend their growing season. Many farmers in our community participate in farm to school and farm to market programs to sustain crop income. Our local college has recently added an agricultural degree program which will rely on the titles that fund research and horticultural projects. Disaster and other farm insurance programs have helped our community in the recent years due to fires and floods. Tribal and non-tribal people in my community are very dependent on cattle and crops associated with cattle, so we are very reliant on insurances and other provisions for loss within the Farm Bill. In the future our tribe plans to apply for energy, horticultural, forestry, and disadvantaged farmers funds to help build new programs to better serve our people.

I can take an active role in insuring my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill by being a voice. As a student I can inform other students about the importance of the 2018 Farm Bill. As a tribal member I can attend band meetings to assure our tribe is taking an active role in voicing our concerns about the Farm Bill's effects on our tribe. I can also write letters or attend meeting where tribal leaders will be to encourage our tribal community to speak up for our place in the Farm Bill. Some things I should encourage our tribal leaders to seek from the farm bill is that there are proper "Native American set asides" and "Indian only" focused programs. It doesn't stop with tribal leaders; I can also write or visit our state and national leaders, congressmen and senators, to advocate for Native Americans in our communities in the Farm Bill. In Oklahoma, we don't have "reservations" because all of Oklahoma is Indian Territory, so when there are advantages to Indian Country, the whole state benefits. As well as, when there are advantages in the general community, where jobs are created, and the economy is boosted, Native American benefit too. Although my goal as a Native American is to encourage "tribal set asides" and "Indian only" programs, I can't forget that funding for the Farm Bill, as a whole, is imperative for my community.

Two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community are to educate ourselves on the Farm Bill and to learn more about our communities' needs. Since the Farm Bill has twelve titles with a lot of components, we both will need to learn as much as we can and put ourselves in places that will allow us the opportunities to learn the details that can help our community. Also, the more we learn about our community's needs, the better equipped we will be to be a voice for our community. As we learn the details of the Farm Bill and our needs in our community, we

can be a catalysis for agricultural growth by letting our leaders know what they need to do to help the community and by letting our community know what the Farm Bill can do for them.

IAC Conference Paper: Farm Bill Discussion

By Jason Gerry, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Greetings and salutations, my name is Jason Gerry and I am a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota. I am an active member in my community as well as in the traditional practices of my tribe. I was picked to attend the IAC Native American Leadership and Agriculture Summit in Arkansas the summer of 2017. I have only recently discovered the importance of agriculture and food sovereignty on Indian Country, but looking around my people's lands and in my own family, I can see that we need it more than I had originally thought. It is not news that the American Indian struggles with diet related diseases such as diabetes and obesity, but why is this you may ask? There is little national data on the food intake of American Indians, but a survey done in 1970 over the food patterns of certain tribes in North America showed that the American Indian has one of the unhealthiest diets among different races in the United States. Specifically, they found that Standing Rock had a high consumption rate of junk foods, coffee, sugar, and carbonated beverages. The same survey discovered that the main way food is prepared is by frying or boiling. They also found that Native Americans located on the reservation usually only consume natural and traditional foods on special occasions and for ceremonial purposes. These problems have only gotten worse over the years due to Standing Rock being located in the middle of a large food desert. In fact, there aren't any places that an enrolled member can get fresh traditional produce from Fort Yates, ND to Bismarck, ND. I truly believe that funding from the Farm Bill could reverse these tumultuous health effects by starting an education program to give information to residents of Standing Rock about farming, growing private gardens, and the importance of traditional foods to a healthy diet in hope that they don't have no longer will have to rely on unhealthy foods and can get back to the ways of eating a traditional Lakota diet.

In order to understand how the Farm Bill will help tribal agriculture, we need to know exactly what the Farm Bill does. The Farm Bill affects how food is grown and what foods are grown, which in turn can directly affect the economy and the personal health of people. It can do anything from insuring farmers crops to giving families with a low income the means to access healthy and fresh foods that they otherwise would never try to obtain on their own. It is also meant to help farmers startup and sustain a successful and healthy farming system. You can see that the Farm Bill is vital to all steps in the food system because it needs to be able to help all the needs of Americans so that we may have a healthy and sustainable future. Now that we have a better understanding of the Farm Bill in general, we have to ask why is this important to me and my Tribe as well as all Native Americans across the nation. In the 2014 Farm Bill, a program was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) giving qualified tribes and individuals the right to purchase tribally owned farmland to help bridge the gap of agricultural financing on reservations. This program would help Native American who wished to start or expand their own agricultural practices to receive proper funding and backing if they're qualified for these grants and loans.

This example shows us that the Farm Bill has a very big say in who will succeed and how healthy foods get to the consumer. Taking this single program into consideration, you have to realize that out of all the countless programs in the 2014 Farm Bill, this is one of the few times Native Americans are even mentioned and still, it calls for tribes and farmers to qualify under USDA rules and regulations. "USDA programs and authorities strewn throughout the Farm Bill have very few 'Indian-only' focused programs, very few 'set-asides' for tribes, and USDA does not have '638' self-governance contract and compact authority" (Simms Hipp and Duren 16). In order for the Farm Bill to really have an impact on Indian agriculture, the Farm Bill needs to include clauses that let tribes oversee the programs created by the bill so that it can meet the needs of Native American producers and consumers.

According to statistics gathered by the 2012 Indian Agricultural Census, there were 363 farms on Standing Rock with only 91 being owned by Native Americans. This has dropped from the last census in 2007 where there were 108 Indian owned farms. Now that might seem like a small drop from the last census, but considering that Native Americans only hold around 25% of the farms on Native owned lands, that decline hurts Indian agriculture on Standing Rock tremendously. The non-Native farmers rarely, if at all, keep their products on Indian land, and this trend seems to continue with the Native American farmers. They don't have any infrastructure development enabling them to keep their produce on reservation lands--this is where the Farm Bill can be very helpful. If the Farm Bill were to include clauses that allow Indian peoples to govern their own agriculture programs based on USDA programs, then the tribes would be allowed to incentivize farmers and ranchers who chose to keep their product on Indian lands. This would not only boost our reservations' economy with effective cash flow and more career opportunities, but it would give tribal nations a chance for real sovereignty. If tribal producers were keeping their products on the reservation and their products were being consumed by their own people, then the tribal members would have a better understanding of what they are consuming and will know exactly where their food is coming from. Not only will it lead to a healthier future for all tribes across the country, but it would eliminate the distances that tribal members have to travel to get healthy foods and create an "oasis" of food on our reservations. If Native Americans were to be included further in the Farm Bill and given the rights to run programs on their own, then the possibilities of which tribes can achieve with food sovereignty are virtually limitless. Proper government funding and opportunity through the Farm Bill to tribal agriculture would also give tribes the means to educate the youth further and show the true importance of what we are trying to achieve--food sovereignty as a means to tribal sovereignty.

In conclusion, I believe that Native Americans need to be mentioned and included in future Farm Bills--specifically the 2018 Farm Bill--so that tribal members can get further agricultural education and receive the proper funding to produce their own food on their own terms. This would increase reservation productivity tremendously and give people a reason to look towards the future. The Farm Bill influences all programs that deal with food including assistance and distribution for those who cannot afford it. Considering 25-50% of Native Americans in some communities are on some sort of food assistance program, you can see the potential impact Native control over food assistance and food production could have in tribal communities. Native people hold agricultural knowledge and opportunity that no other

Americans have--we just need the means to take control of our resources and potential.

Why We Need To Make A Change in The 2018 Farm Bill

By John Clark, Jr., Ojibwe

In the rural community of Pine Point Reservation, it's not uncommon for children, adults, and even the elderly to be constantly hungry. This is something that I am definitely not proud of and I want to see change. For me to see a change in this hunger on my reservation; I need to start with the 2018 farm bill. The 2018 farm bill, which is going to be signed into law by the U.S. president, Donald Trump is going to be a big change for rural areas. A farm bill is an agriculture policy tool for the government. The farm bill is divided into multiple different titles relating to food and farming, and is renewed every 4-5 years. Some of the titles it is split into include Commodities, United States Rural Development, Trade, Nutrition, Crop Insurance, and miscellaneous.

Currently the most recent farm bill from 2014 provided \$489 billion in spending for the next 5 years. 80% of the spending going to nutrition programs, 8% in crop insurance, 6% in conservation, and 5% in commodity programs. The last 1% is for things like rural development, research, livestock, and forestry. In contrast to the 2014 farm bill, the 2018 farm bill is going to be spending a lot less on the crop insurance program, SNAP program, water and wastewater direct loan and grant program, the single family direct loan program, and many more.

The farm bill impacts Indian country because it's a rural area, and in many rural areas agriculture is the main economic activity. Also agriculture helps with rural development. Some of the programs that are going to be impacted in my community by the farm bill are the supplemental nutrition assistance program, commodity program, the single family direct loan program, and the water and wastewater direct loan and grant program.

Let's start with the SNAP program. SNAP is just an acronym for supplemental nutrition assistance program. SNAP is the nation's most important anti-hunger program. In a typical month it helps around 40 million low income people get food they need. Without SNAP children and elderly on my reservation may suffer hard from food insecurity. SNAP has reduced childhood food insecurity by 12.8 percent, and has saved 3.9 million people from going into poverty in 2011. On reservations poverty is common and so is not having food. Most people on my reservation already do not have jobs and are unable to receive SNAP benefits. This is something that frustrates me, because it is not easy to find a job when the nearest town is over 20 miles away from you, and this town happens to be really small. The job options are very limited. Therefore, with money being cut and eligibility being toughened on the SNAP program, It is not going to be anywhere near easy for someone to have access to food. So do the people who are unable to find a job end up hungry every day? No one in America, or anywhere else in the world should be hungry. Because of things like this in the new farm bill, I have to make sure that I give my community and the rest of Indian Country a voice. A loud enough voice to where people can understand the importance of this bill and the effects from it.

So to take an active role in ensuring that my community is represented in the 2018 Farm bill I need

to network. Networking is developing new contacts and interacting with people and exchanging information. The main way that I would like to network is through social media. Social media is used by mostly everyone. I would most likely use Facebook to post statuses pertaining to the farm bill and get people interested. I would also bring it into the schools so the other students can play an active role by becoming an advocate for the farm bill on our reservation. It only takes one voice to alert many. Doing this would make people aware of the situation. Once more people are aware they will tell their friends and family and then they will continue to spread the word. Pretty soon everyone knows about it and is posting about it. This is how we can be noticed and be able to start a movement. We can also contact our newspaper and write an article on why it is so important to our people. We can contact the radio station to set up an interview about the farm bill and the importance it has on our reservation. If we can create young advocates the voices will bring power and with power becomes change.

Two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure that we effectively reach this role in our community is one, be persistent and two, listen to other people's ideas. Persistence is like not giving up. You keep moving forward with what you are doing and looking for new solutions. We sometimes want to give up when we have people who don't care or just don't believe in what we have to say, that's when we become more persistent and not give up. For every time we get shot down we come 10 times stronger. We need to have persistence to keep moving forward. Also it is important to listen to what other people have to say so you can gain more knowledge and learn different ideas. From other people I could learn of new ways to better represent my community in the farm bill. Listen to our elders on their ideas and what they need and want.

To sum it all up, the farm bill does not only affect Native Americans and people in rural areas. It affects anyone who uses the programs said above. This is the reason I need to make sure that my community and other communities are represented in the 2018 Farm bill, and I make a change and help others understand what is important.

What The 2018 Farm Bill Needs From a Cherokee Nation Youth Tribal Leader

By Jori Cowley, Cherokee Nation

Being an FFA member has provided me with many amazing opportunities over the last five years to experience first-hand the world of agriculture. Not only have I learned to value the precious jewel that it agriculture is, but I have also been weighted with a heavy burden. This burden has changed the course of my life and provided me an unlikely future that I did not know I would be playing a role in. This burden and my future role is agriculture advocacy for the United States and the world population. My purpose of agriculture advocacy correlates directly with The 2018 Farm Bill. Living in Oklahoma right in the heart of the Cherokee Nation, I have seen first-hand what my community needs in this farm bill, and why this particular bill is detrimental to my future as a native American agriculturist.

My community needs so much out of the 2018 farm bill, most importantly adequate and fair representation in Washington. This past summer I attended Washington Leadership Conference for FFA, and while I was in D.C. I got to speak to Oklahoma Senator, James Lankford. I discussed with him how

vital young leaders are in the decisions and bills that are passed in Congress. This conversation with Senator Lankford encouraged me to be an advocate for agriculture in my community. Since my trip to D.C., I have paid extra special attention to what Oklahoma agriculture needs to help it become even more prosperous. I have learned that my community needs protection, funding, regulation adjustment, promotion, and conservation efforts.

The 2018 Farm Bill most importantly needs to include protection for farmers and agriculturists. This protection needs to include an end to harassment from uneducated consumers that shine a dark light on the whole agricultural industry, with untruthful information regarding agriculture processes. Next, we need to strive to promote and educate consumers so they can trust and fully support farmers and ranchers. This push of agriculture literacy could benefit every segment of the agriculture industry. Then, Agriculture subsidies need to be examined closely and directly changed to support every single agriculture industry equally and effectively. Trade Regulations also need to be examined to promote fair trade for agriculture, through the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Lastly, my tribe and other tribes voices need to be heard in the land and water conservation efforts.

In 2015 through 2016 I received the opportunity to serve on the Cherokee Nation Tribal Youth Council. Through serving on this council for my tribe I received knowledge on agriculture in the Cherokee Nation specifically. The Knowledge I gained proves to be prominent in how the Farm Bill will impact Indian Agriculture. The Cherokee Nation holds conservation efforts at the very top of our tribal priority list. The farm bill could greatly affect these efforts in a very powerful way. It would springboard these conservation efforts into actual acted upon progress. With the implementation of NASDA's voluntary conservation programs in the 2018 Farm Bill, it would bring justice to the conservation strives that Indian Agriculture has desperately advocated for, for many years. The farm bill also impacts Indian Agriculture in restrictions and regulations put directly on Oklahoma and other mid-western and southern states. The Farm Bill of 2018 will directly impact Indian Agriculture and my tribe in many diverse ways. The impact being helpful or hurtful is up to agricultural advocates such as myself that are ready to put their foot down, and lead our communities in a strive for a promising future for the agricultural industry.

The programs in my community that will directly be impacted by the farm bill are urban agriculture initiatives, FFA, 4-H, farmer lead organizations, and agriculture literacy education organizations. First, urban agriculture initiatives will be affected if harsh taxes, restrictions, and regulations are put on urban agriculture, in its early stages of developing into an effective agricultural industry. Next, youth lead programs will be impacted by the farm bill in a sense, that everything that happens to the agriculture industry: these youth agriculture leaders will combat or promote, depending on what is developed through the farm bill. Farmer and Rancher led organizations play the same crucial role that young agriculture leaders play and they also are crucial in encouraging and inspiring these young leaders. Agriculture literacy organizations could be so significantly impacted by this bill, they could receive the crucial funding and the national support that they need to educate consumers on agriculture, and farming in 2050. These amazing programs in my own tribal community are heavily depending and relying on The 2018 Farm Bill to make a change that would benefit farming in all scenarios.

I have decided to take an active role in ensuring that my community is represented by The 2018 Farm Bill. I did not predict that my work in ensuring that my communities voice is represented in the farm bill, would begin five years ago when I accepted the challenge, of advocating for agriculture at the 2013 National FFA Convention, in Louisville Kentucky. Since taking that pledge at the national convention I have actively sought to educate consumers in my community on everything that agriculture does for Oklahoma. Including the crucial role, Oklahoma agriculture will play in feeding a hungry world by 2050. I plan on continuing my role in agriculture education advocacy even after the farm bill is passed, because I truly have a passion for being a part of solving agriculture legislative issues. I realize that without personally contacting Oklahoma and other state Senators, there will be no way that my community will be represented in the 2018 Farm Bill legislation. This is a burden I wish to address with my Mother who also actively uses her tribal voice in advocating for not only the Cherokee Nation but also the agricultural industry. There are many steps, my chaperone and I can take to ensure that we effectively reach this active role in our community. The most important step is to continue to educate others in our tribe about The 2018 Farm Bill and important consumer knowledge. We must also get other agriculture organizations included in the campaign, for the implementation of an adequate farm bill for our community. My chaperone and I will take a stand in helping the agriculture industry and our Native American Community through The 2018 Farm Bill, because if we won't who will?

Though my love for agriculture began when I first joined 4-H at the age of 7, I now have the skills and understanding through FFA, and the Cherokee Nation Tribal Youth Council to make an impact through The 2018 Farm Bill that could change agriculture forever. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit because it will, in the end, contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness." Jefferson was absolutely right about agriculture and we need to consider his view on the agriculture industry, in The 2018 Farm Bill for a successful future for Indian Agriculture in each of our communities.

What Does My Community Need in the Farm Bill?

Joseph Gabriel Vieira, Muscogee

It is time for native Americans to unite and reclaim native foodways, improve our food security, and stand up for sovereign growth throughout Indian Country. The health and well-being of our people heavily depends on Native American involvement in regards to the 2018 Farm Bill. The bill will impact five million Native Americans and Alaskan Natives in the United States. Nearly 25 to 50 percent of our citizens directly participate in feeding programs that take up almost 80 percent of the Farm Bill. We have the highest number of people per capita that depend on feeding programs. More than 50 million acres of our lands, to an extent, are capable of food production and agriculture, but aren't being used. We need to work closely with the Bureau of Land Management to open more of our land to farming so we can become more self-reliant and grow as Native Americans. We cannot ignore the one piece of federal legislation that can either improve, or slow down our relationship with farming and ranching, a relationship that we've been a part of for centuries.

The farm bill impacts native Americans due to the listings of "Commodities." The entire Native population is defined, fed and monitored primarily through the Farm Bill. Since the early years of the "Indian Removal Act" the tribes have been listed as government property and little has changed in the technical wording of that responsibility. The last time the farm bill was ratified the wool subsidy was removed. This was a major change to the wool producing tribes and individuals of Indian Country. The wool subsidy was primarily set up during World War II as a means to promote wool production so our soldiers would have warm and water resistant uniforms made with natural fiber. Since the US military does not utilize wool uniforms anymore the subsidy was removed. This affected the western tribes the most as they are the largest wool producers in the country. During that same negotiation the "WIC" program, which stands for Women and Infant Children was also ratified and almost removed. This would have affected almost every Native American woman and child in Indian Country.

Endeavors that specifically relate to the Farm Bill, would include expanding the scope of "livestock" to include animals produced by Native American people, specifically (reindeer, elk, deer, caribou and horses) and increasing the indemnity program to include payments being raised from 75% of value to 90% of value with these changes the disaster assistance to tribal members can be greatly improved. The Farm Bill also needs to address the "lack of land equity" and "normal carrying capacity" when declaring damages for disaster relief. The Farm Bill also should include full disaster relief for fire damage to tribal lands which are NOT public lands.

For years several forward thinking Native Americans and some tribes have lead the fight for more tribal control. When the specific tribes did not want to break with status quo due to the uncertainty of dealing with the federal government, individual tribal members pushed for their own control. This personal control has been best obtained through the government agency known as Farm Service Agency. Through the Farm Service Agency, individual tribal members can establish a business plan and borrow money for agriculture endeavors.

The main programs that impact my tribe and my community are the livestock and disaster relief provisions of the farm bill as well as the food subsidy programs like SNAP and WIC. These programs have been valuable resources in the recent past and have allowed for Individuals as well as Tribes to recover losses due to nature as well as the nutritional requirements of the elderly and the young alike. Oklahoma's largest industry is agriculture. Oklahoma's native tribes are playing a larger role in how they look at the industry and how they plan to capitalize on the continued agriculture growth in our state.

My tribe, "Muscogee Creek Nation," is extremely active in the political process in my state as well as in Washington DC, and the execution of the programs set up through the Farm Bill. The Creek Nation is a founding member of the IAC, and was the first tribe to be awarded a grant for a Tribal Extension Specialists through the Land Grant University system. As a Quarter Blood Creek citizen I have direct access to the tribal government system and play an active part in tribal politics. The Creek Nation has a Youth Agriculture Development Program that helps students like myself with the financial burdens of exhibiting livestock, attending speech contests and Archery contests as well as guidance and counseling on filling out the Youth Loans for the Farm Service Agency forms. By delivering a powerpoint presentation

to the Agriculture Youth Advisory Board I can make my tribe more aware of the provisions in the Farm Bill that will affect all tribes not just the Creek Nation. Through proper execution at the committee level this presentation will also be eligible for review by sub committees of the Muscogee Creek Tribal Council or a Full review by the entire council at the Tribal Mound during the monthly Tribal Council Meeting. My school advisor and I will make a PowerPoint presentation and since he serves on the Creek National Youth Agriculture Advisory Board he can have me placed on the agenda at the next meeting to present the concerns outlined on the IAC website.

We will also invite the Tribal Councils lobbyist and the Creek Nation Tax Commissioner and Head of State Jerry McPeak who also serves as a member of the National Native American Farmers and Ranchers Board of Directors. This will ensure that the issues outlined will be heard by the members of my tribe with the most experience and who can give our concerns the most exposure nationally.

The Native American community and my tribe has helped me out for as long as I can remember. I am proud to be a Native American, and I am honored to take part in programs my fellow Indians have put together, and who have worked hard for us to be where we are today. I will be grateful to take part in such a major event such as the 2017 Youth Conference.

The Future is in Our Hands

By Ka Mele O Nalani Mano- Nakooka, Native Hawaiian

The Hawaii Farm Bureau was organized in 1948 and founded by Hawaii farmers and ranchers that worked with organizations, communities and individuals that were involved in aspects of the Agricultural Industry of Hawaii. By 1950 there were more than 2,000 member families in eleven counties across the state. The HFB is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation and is the Voice of Agriculture protects, advocates, and advances the social, economic and educational interests.

In the HFB there has been a level of success from the members and the agricultural community. To ensure their success they had called for members all over Hawaii. Each member would have to communicate effectively as well to bring success in our farms. In order to bring success, they had to find out the impacts their regulations would have in farmers and markets, and have different management programs.

Some of their goals are to adopt sensible land use policies to preserve agricultural lands in use and to ensure that it is suitable for the future, to manage reliable water sources and adequate supplies, continuing state and county support for farmer's market programs to expand local crops, and to increase awareness of the economic and social contributions of Agriculture made to the State.

The farm bill impacts Hawaii Agriculture by needing to reduce its labor use. Changing of labor use will cause a dramatic impact of fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural crop products. This will also affect some livestock farms. Another impact would be that the minimum wage will increase. In order to direct higher minimum wages, non-family farming such as pineapple farming, will have to find new markets. There are also several employment benefits that will increase which is extending sick leaves or health insurance. Overtime regulations will allow the employers to work up to ten hours and get 60 hours a week.

Farms across the US will need to adapt to these new regulations by using a variety of strategies.

Programs impacted by the Farm Bill would include the FSMA Hazard Analysis & Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Foods which will require a food safety plan to meet the Food Safety Modernization Act. Producers or forestry managers who would like to increase environmental benefits would sign up for the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Programs) or the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA). In order to sign up for these programs, it would go through the NRCS (USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services). Those who sign up for these programs, the NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance. Of course there is also the most obvious, Agricultural Programs.

To insure that my community here in Hawaii is represented in the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, I could get involved in agricultural programs and learn more about agriculture itself. Not only for my agriculture but others as well. I could also ask questions to farming businesses that are already involved in the Farm Bill and see what was the most major impact they had when the first Farm Bill was enacted. Learning about agriculture is very important especially if it is degrading every year.

As I learn more about agriculture I could share them with my community especially the youth. Maybe I can convince them that we need to take a stand to our agriculture because over the years we have been adapting to foreign foods. A research that I had done before says that in every culture there has been an increase in health related problems because over the years we had been turning away from our agricultural foods. That is why I am already trying to get involved in my islands agriculture seeing as there are more than one culture on the island.

On my island there are many people from different cultures such as Hawaiians, Filipinos, Caucasians, Kosraeans, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Portuguese, etc. Most being immigrants from the pineapple plantations that we used to have on the island. Having these many cultures mixed on a small island in a small community has caused all of us to turn away from our agricultural foods and grow accustomed to each other. That is why my classmates and I have started a Community Food Assessment project.

The Community Food Assessment project is where we would ask members around our community to fill out a survey asking about their eating habits, if it is close to their cultural foods, how healthy or unhealthy they eat, if they grow their own foods, or hunt and fish for them. The purpose of this project is not to change how our community eats but to show that we have a say in what we want in our stores or that they have the ability to make their own farms/gardens. Our goal is to get 1000 surveys by the end of the school year and present our findings to the community. So far we have nearly 300 surveys.

I wasn't aware of having a farm bill in the first place. Now that I know about it, when my class and I present our project, I could also share about the Hawaii Farm Bureau. This way more members in my community could become aware of the Bill and maybe get involved in the programs. We could also share our findings with the HBF. The bill does give us a voice to protect our agriculture so I would highly recommend the programs to the people of Hawaii who are not involved in any agricultural affiliations.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation plays an important role to the natives of Hawaii because we are the people of this land, we are from this place, this is where our elders were born. Over the years our

agriculture has been slowly disappearing and with the HFB we can preserve our agriculture but we, the people of Hawaii, need to take an active role in the HFBF. Since I am already starting to become active in how to preserve my agriculture, I need to find ways to spread awareness of this farm bill and how it impacts our agricultural community and how we can take a role in the Farm Bureau.

A Clear Vision

By Kelci Bends, Northern Cheyenne

Balasha Baax'iilooshe huuk. Hello, I'm Kelci Bends. My Indian name, given to me by my Uncle Leonard who is a medicine man of the Crow Tribe, is Red-Winged Blackbird. I am a member of the Lakota Sioux Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and Crow Tribe. I live on a ranch on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation of South Dakota with my mother and step-father, and I also live on a ranch on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation of Montana with my father and step-mother. I have lived on a ranch my entire life, and have been a producer from the age of three when my first cattle were branded. Agriculture is a very important part of my life, and all of my parents are very successful cattlemen and cattlemen. Ranching is in my roots. My grandparents, Debby and Arnie Bends, own a large operation of over 900 head of cattle on the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations, and before them, my great grandpa Melvin Small ran an even larger operation as well. Also, my great-grandfather, Bud Annis, ran 2,000 head of cattle and 800 head of bucking horses on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, where my family and I live to this day. Today, we are third-generation bucking horse and cattle producers. I have always been very involved and interested in learning how to improve agriculture on reservations, and I believe that through this essay program, I could embark on a journey that will help me to better my community, as well as many others. The Farm Bill supports ag producers all over Indian country, and it also supports the well-being of Tribal members on my reservation.

The Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture in multiple ways. Without the Farm Bill, USDA programs wouldn't be possible. These USDA programs (FSA, NRCS, RMA, etc.) help our farmers and ranchers with the financial aid they currently rely on to assist in funding agricultural necessities such as building fence, putting in new water lines, and crop supplement. They also help young aspiring ranchers begin their journey into agriculture by providing funds to purchase cattle, feed, and land where access to credit does not exist.

Another way in which the Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture is the disaster relief programs. My reservation is located in central South Dakota, and we receive disastrous blizzards more often than we would prefer. The most disastrous storm I've ever experienced was storm Atlas. I sat inside my house with no power and no idea of whether or not my livestock would live to see the next day. I imagined the sleet, snow, and wind all flying towards my cattle, drowning them. I could hear the lightning striking the ground only miles from our home. When the storm came to an end, I found that my family had gotten lucky enough to lose only a bull and two calves. My neighbors on the other hand, were not so fortunate. Only ten miles away from my house, there were dozens upon dozens of cows frozen to the ground, their ice covered faces showed the pure terror that they had experienced in the last moments of life. As the week

went on, the ranchers assessed exactly how much they had lost during the storm. They began digging huge holes in which they buried hundreds of dead cattle. My community was incredibly distraught; a majority of them had lost over half of their herd. In many cases, the Farm Bill Program through the USDA, the Livestock Assistance Program, made the difference between going under and surviving.

Not only does the Farm Bill support agriculture producers but it also supports the Tribal members of my reservation. My community is located in one of the poorest counties in the nation. The Farm Bill funds the food programs that feed the majority of our Tribal members. The budget for food programs is a very large portion of the Farm Bill. In my research, I found this portion is crucial and cannot suffer a budget cut, as these food programs feed a majority of the people on my reservation. This means, these food programs are feeding thousands of hungry children who without food stamps and commodities would not have food on their plates. Although our reservation relies on agriculture, we live in a food desert, with no access to fresh food. Without the food programs, many people would not have the money to go to the store and purchase fresh produce.

Although I have always tried to be involved and active with learning about every aspect of agriculture, I know that there is a plethora of things I have yet to know and do to help my community. One of these things would be to ensure my community is represented in the 2018 Farm Bill. To make certain this happens, I will continue to further my education on the Farm Bill. Additionally, by finding what is most crucial to my Tribes, I will be able to give these topics my full support, and also educate my reservation about how important the Farm Bill is so they also provide this support as well. If Indian country voiced just how important the Farm Bill is to our well-being, maybe the government would take more concern in the budget cuts they are considering.

The two steps my chaperone and I could take to achieve an active role in ensuring my community is involved in the Farm Bill are already in action. My dad is on the FSA county committee, and is also on the board for the Tribal land committee. One thing he and I could do better is calling our senators when we have agriculture related concerns and influencing their votes. My uncle, Troy Heinert, is a South Dakota State Senator and Rosebud Sioux Tribe member, and I could take a more active role by being his page and sitting in his sessions. This would allow me to become more involved in our government and educate me on the agricultural issues that are affecting our Tribes by national decisions.

My mother always says, "You have to put your boots on before I can help you out." By this, she means you can't expect a handout without first putting forth the work that is required. In closing, our country is in dire need of this farm bill, and also strong leaders who have a vision. As the Lakota Sioux warrior Crazy Horse once said, "A very great vision is needed, and the man who has it must follow it as the eagle seeks the deepest blue of the sky."

Farm Bill

By Khadija Lapahie, Navajo

The Farm Bill seems like a huge thing. This impacts the Indian Agriculture by not giving the land to the people who need it to put out their farms. The farm bill is a congress thing. The people don't know

what to do with it when they hear it. Natives have to get together with non-natives to get their voices heard. About 50 percent of the people directly access and participate in feeding and producing food which all leads back to the farm bill. The food products are a subject to trade and that is being affected by the farm bill, by trade and so on. Food products are being charged for having to own their own land. To farmers and ranchers, the land means a lot to us. Native Americans were forced to be farmers; they were forced to plant certain food. The people say that the government are the ones who are wanting to feed us. But they don't know that it is the people who have been feeding themselves with their culture foods and needs.

Some programs in my community would be the ones who have helped with finding people who don't have access to food. Basically like shelters and programs that want us people to start eating healthier. The ones who always come around asking if these foods are good for the children, do we know where the food came from. The programs that are wanting to help our community a better place, wanting to help. Some groups that have to deal with sovereignty are the main programs in the community. To take an active role in this, you would have to be interested in it. Some things that could be done is going to the farmers, ranchers, etc. and asking them if they feel affected by the farm bill. See what they think of the farm bill, get together as a group and go to the chapter and tell them how we feel and say we need to get involved in speaking up during the farm bill meetings. Us the people need to speak up. We need to go to the main office or protest telling them showing them that we don't like what is being done. Start off small then slowly start to build it up. Get involve with councils that are talking about the farm bill. For example, with the IAC they like to hear the youth's thoughts of this farm bill. Having kids stand in front of the big people of the government and tell them what they think of the farm bill. There are some ways to be active in the community first is what I just explained getting more minds together and mention it to the chapter. Another thing that could happen is that getting with a teacher of agriculture and tell them what should be done to the farm bill. Tell them this is something we should do to help with the farm bill. Getting more farm lands open, growing more crops, and getting involve in chapter meetings. What my chaperone and I have to do is, get together and talk about going around and asking the farmers and ranchers if they know about the farm bill and asking them for their thought on it. We would need to get to talk with our chapter officials and tell them what is going to happen for the next month or so. So we can get the community involve. The second step to reaching our goal is to go and ask other chapters around our community and ask them if they know what is going on with the farm bill and what it is doing to the farms and the food. What we could also do is start our own farm and ask the school if we could get more farming lands around the school. Help our local stores get more food that is naturally grown and see how that goes. Start by growing corn and the basic foods that our people grew before they were told to star growing more things that did not involve to our culture.

Those are some things that could be done, to get the community involved in the farm bill. Having our thoughts being heard about the upcoming farm bill, so it could go out and get more farmers and ranchers involved. I'm not a farmer or a rancher, no one in my family owns a farm. So I wouldn't know what it could do. The people who are deep in care, the people who farm for a living need to be heard in

the farm bill. People farm and ranch for food, for clothes, for their living. Farmers and ranchers need to know what is going to happen to their life with this farm bill. But to the people who do own a farm. I would want them to learn more about this farm bill. That's all I got to say about this year's farm bill. It is a good thing as well because it provides jobs, researches, health and nutrition. When Obama signed the 2014 farm bill into law it became a huge help to the people. It helped them get jobs, helped them get the right nutrition's and the foods became healthier for the people who may need healthy food. Each title in the bill are important to the Indian country, because every title comes to the way they are farming and what they are farming for and what foods are being made out of their crops. It's our Indian tribe duty to get with the higher people and talk about the farm bill. They are wanting to turn our people into food. Deep into the farm bill we are invisible to them all. But back in 2012 39.2 percent were American Indian and Alaska natives. Shows that we are the highest out of all the other native groups. Tells us that we farm more than any other groups, that we are the ones that may be effected by the bill more than the others. Just a thought of this year's farm bill.

2017 Indian Alliance Essay

By Kimberlee Ann Marie Harris, Northern Arapaho

The agriculture Act of 2014 (also known as the 2014 U.S. Farm Bill), formerly the "Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013" is an act of Congress that authorizes nutrition and agriculture programs in the United States for the years of 2014-2018. The bill authorizes \$956 billion in spending over the next ten years. The bill passed in the United States House of Representatives on January 29, 2014, and the United States Senate on february 4, 2014 during the 113th United States Congress. Former U.S. President Barack Obama signed the bill into law on February 7, 2014. The bill was considered two years late, since farm bills are traditionally passed every five years. The previous farm bill, Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 expired in 2012. In the United States, the farm bill is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the federal government. The comprehensive omnibus bill is passed every five years or so by the United States Congress and deals with both agriculture and all other affairs under the purview of the United States Department of Agriculture. It usually makes amendments and suspensions to provisions of permanent law, reauthorizes, amends, or repeals provisions of preceding temporary agricultural acts, and puts forth new policy provisions for a limited time into the future. In 1973, farm bills have included titles on commodity programs, trade, rural development, farm credit, conservation, agricultural research, food and nutrition programs, marketing, etc. The farm bill was first created during the Great Depression to give financial assistance to farmers who were struggling due to an excess crop supply creating low prices, and also to control and ensure an adequate food supply.

The first 2018 in the field farm bill listening session by the House Agriculture Committee was in Gainesville, Florida. June 24th, where the committee heard publicly what needs changing, but most importantly, what doesn't need messing with in the next bill. To the backdrop of multiple years of suppressed prices for traditional farm bill commodities and farm incomes cut in half across much of the U.S. farm landscape, opening session "Conservations in the Field," House Agriculture Committee

Chairman Mike Conaway, from Texas, made a few points to the gathering: The next farm bill will come with harder choices to make and will have fewer resources in which to fund it than the 2014 legislation. There will not be the direct payments, which were done away with in the last bill. So, they will not be able to harvest that money back into the system again. He and the committee are driven to get the next farm bill done on time. The current farm bill expires Sept. 30, 2018. The decisions that need to get made for September 2018 will not get any easier in October of 2018.

Quoting Mr. Conaway, he said "We're just going to have to go ahead and make them. We hope to get it done on time, right, wrong or indifferent, to let you know what you have to live with the next five years: the producers, bankers, creditors and equipment dealers."

The Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 farm bill) transformed many of the agriculture programs from the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 farm bill). The new law altered many of the commodity (Title I) programs that are tied to historical acres and yields. For example, the 2008 Title I programs included the direct payment program which paid constant amounts regardless of economic conditions. This program came about with the Freedom to Farm Act (aka the 1996 farm bill). The 2014 farm bill eliminated this type of payment so that programs are more reflective of market conditions (for example, not providing a payment when prices and producer revenue are high. While the end of the 2014 farm bill in 2018 seems far off, it is likely debate will begin sooner than later. Considering conditions today and looking at different farm bill options from the 2008 and 2014 legislation will provide useful information to inform that debate. To evaluate changes to land use and government costs, we started by using the FAPRI model to evaluate what would happen with no farm programs at all. We then consider Title I programs and Title XI (crop insurance) programs as well as the conservation reserve program. To isolate the effects of those programs under the two different farm bill vintages, we start by allowing Title I programs, followed by then allowing Title XI programs and finish by allowing CRP enrollment and payments. The 2008 farm bill contained multiple programs. Direct Payments (DPs) were a fixed, annual payment rate for covered commodities. Counter-Cyclical Payments (CCPs) were made when the price of a covered commodity fell below a fixed level. Both of the programs were tied to historical production through base acres and program yields. There are approximately 242 million base acres in the United States, or 92 percent of total planted acres. The 2014 farm bill eliminated all of the 2008 programs except marketing loans. Instead, producers had to choose between Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) for each commodity on a farm.

The bill includes cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but also commonly referred to as "food stamps". According to The New York Times, the \$8 billion in cuts meant that 850,000 households lost \$90/month in benefits. However, the bill increased funding to food banks by \$200 million. SNAP is the largest portion in spending in the bill. The \$8 billion in cuts comes from setting a minimum of \$20 per year for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to receive the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deduction. On February 4, the Senate passed a farm bill by a vote of 68-32 that calls for \$8 billion in cuts to the SNAP food-stamp program over the next decade; the Senate vote followed a 251-166 affirmative vote on the same bill in the House January 29th. It's a smaller cut than the

\$40 billion House Republicans passed last September, but still big enough to have Indian food nutrition specialists worried about the net result. According to federal statistics, SNAP in 2008 served an average of 540,000 low-income people who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native alone and 260,000 who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native and White per month. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) says that 20 percent of American Indian/Alaskan Native households receive food stamps. For me to take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 farm bill, is to attend meetings related to my community so I am informed and know what needs are being discussed. By attending meetings, I would know what to look forward to for the upcoming years. I would seek out leaders for information. Asking questions and getting my questions answered. I would also write and call Legislators to express the community needs. And become involved in educating others.

The two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community are, making phone calls and designate time devoted to this. Making phone calls are important, especially if you're trying to get your community in the farm bill. Devoting your time is key. We want to be able to help our community and ensure needs are being met. My name is Kimberlee Harris and thank you for taking time to read my essay.

Farm Bill

By Kylvne Woodward, Muskogee Creek

The Farm Bill impacts our Native Agriculture in all twelve titles. There are several different points in every section about our effects on the Native Agriculture, a lot about what seems to have the most attention and impacts, nutrition. This is section five, which contains commodities, food stamps, and all the food distributions. The Farm Bill pays for the mandatory costs every five years it renews; the nutrition takes up more than half the money for the bill. Nutrition is paid with \$189 billion on all the food distributions such as SNAP, Farm Commodity Support costs \$42 billion, conservation at \$24 billion, and crop insurance at \$22 billion. This upcoming Farm Bill could come up to a total of \$1 trillion U.S. dollars for agricultural and rural development. Individual tribal members have found conservation, commodities, trade, credit, crop insurance, horticultural, and miscellaneous funds helpful in their agricultural, home, and financial progress. People who purchase any land, farms, and/ or livestock USDA will lend you funds that will allow you to finance these items. The community Wood Energy program allows small grants to ensure seed capital for biomass consumer cooperatives to build stronger markets for biomass heating products. Natives have a different mindset on agriculture with gardens, crops, and livestock and all of these are supported by the 2018 Farm Bill. We have been in the agricultural undertaking for thousands of years, before this land was occupied by immigrants from England. If this Bill passes it has the ability to create opportunities for Natives in this career wherever they live.

There is a variation of programs that have been impacted by the Farm Bill in my community and other local neighborhoods. For example, there is the SNAP program, which is one of several food distribution programs that provide food directly to tribal and a body of members. Nearly half of my community assists in food programs and with changes to the nutrition part of the Bill will affect many

participants because these programs help provide food for those who aren't making enough to provide it for themselves. I can say SNAP is an incredible program that provides many families the food that they qualified for. My family once had to receive commodities for years and it helped us a lot, I couldn't imagine what we would be going through at the time. These programs are under the Nutrition part which is covered by 67% (\$198 billion U.S. dollars) of the money that is provided every five years this bill is renewed. Around my community we are surrounded by corn fields. These farmers participate in the farm to school and farm to market programs to support crop income. You can receive a hoop house that extends the growing season for the crops. For how many crops are around my community, being in such a low grounded area, crop insurance is a big deal. This is an issue for all the flooding, strong storms, and droughts we get every year damaging the crops. Our community is reliant on crops and cattle around the area so the insurance is a main bullet point for local farmers and the many other provisions for loss that is included in the Farm Bill. In the near future, farming funds will allow us to create more superior programs for our communities.

Being a youth I can become a role model for the new generation and my own, there are many ways to be an active citizen and help my community. I could start by informing more unknowledgeable Natives and communities on the new Farm Bill. There are tons of ways to communicate with anyone in a short range from each other or all the way across the world. We can be the generation to inform others about the titles and why the 2018 Farm Bill is so important or any other important bills or conflicts in today's society. Social media can play a major role in spreading the word quickly or join local community meetings and participating in voluntary programs. It is our job as Native Americans to preserve our Native Agriculture in this Farm Bill. This isn't only up to us, we can't pass this bill alone, but we can expand our knowledge across America and work with senates and bring everyone on the same page to pass the Farm Bill. Being Indian gives us advantages living in Oklahoma, because we don't have reservations, this increases our native culture, we can own land anywhere in the state. We can start new Natives only programs and learning our most on Native culture and doing our most to provide as much as possible to maintain the crops and nature around us in the community.

My chaperone and I will put our greatest efforts into learning more about the Farm Bill and educating ourselves on the important role of being an active member with our communities. My Chaperone is a grant writer for Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. She has been represented with Rural Development funds for two different projects in our community, a commercial kitchen for a development project and a commercial aquaponics greenhouse. A grant that she has written was to create jobs and allows our tribe to economically develop a historic property, and the other creates jobs and give our tribe the opportunity to develop a food source that produces vegetables and fish. We will have a significant amount of opportunities to increase our passion of Native Agriculture. Both myself and my chaperone will benefit substantially from this experience to bring back with us to our communities and those surrounding. The more enlightened we are about the Farm Bill and all agricultural situations happening today and the upcoming years we can be more involved with our society back home and around the Country. We will gain a higher level of education to have a louder and more Impacting voice for all farmers, ranchers, and

all of the above to join the movement for agriculture. We need to be the ones to let our community know what the Farm Bill allows for our state as a whole, the Native Americans, the land, and a few benefits they may receive.

All together this Farm Bill impacts the Native Agriculture greatly and will continue to do so in the future. There are many ways to help our communities that are affected by the Farm Bill and the surrounding Agriculture. We can all be the start of new programs and being a voice for the bill to our neighbors. I aim to learn more about our Native Agriculture and the Farm Bill in Las Vegas for next year, to encourage others to participate in more programs to improve our communities.

My Future, Our Future

By Laura Bergman, Cherokee Nation

As a junior in high school, it's time to really buckle down and think about my future. Will I go to college? What colleges would I like to attend? Which colleges offer the major that will help ensure my future in agriculture? And the biggest question of all, how will I improve my life and my community. I'm happy to say, I didn't wait until I became an adult to try to help my community. I'm doing something about it now!

Eighty percent of the 2014 Farm Bill was dedicated to Nutrition, this includes the SNAP program, more commonly known as food stamp program. SNAP is designed to give people a hand up, to supplement their food costs at home. Native Americans made up just 1.1% of SNAP recipients in the 2015 fiscal year nationwide. It is believed that this low percentage is due partly in fact to there not being SNAP offices readily available to those that live on reservations and not enough authorized food stores in their area. Because of this another program to assist Native Americans was implemented, the FDPIR. This involves USDA foods shipped to tribes who then distribute these foods to qualifying families. As of 2016 there were 276 tribes receiving FDPIR assistance.

In our surrounding community it is estimated that 48% of the population receives one of these types of assistance. Think about that, nearly half our local population alone requires food assistance to feed their families monthly. If funding to these programs is cut like it's being speculated that not only impacts those families but the local economy as well. If there is less SNAP being distributed there are less people shopping at the grocery stores which in turn affects the stores' income which eventually could result in some of those same people being either laid off or let go from their job.

As I don't live on a reservation, I can't speak for Indian Agriculture maybe as well as those of you who do, however, I can speak about how it affects me personally to be a Native American who owns their own land and as a young person who runs their own business on that land. A few years ago I decided I wanted to start my own bucket calf operation. It seemed simple enough, start off by buying a few head of calves, raise them, sell them, then buy more. Simple enough, right? Wrong! I knew if I were to be taken seriously about obtaining a loan to start this venture I would have to have a rock solid business plan. I would have to show projected costs of land, equipment and of course, cattle. I worked on it for months, I asked my FFA adviser for help as well as my parents and once we all thought I had a plan that would

cover every aspect of the operation, my next move was to acquire a loan to make it all happen. Off I went to the local FSA (Farm Service Agency) office to get my loan with my business plan in hand only to be told they weren't even accepting applications for loans because all the funding they had to give out was already gone and I would have to come back next year earlier if I expected to be able to apply for a loan through them. Somewhat upset but not deterred off to the local bank I went with my business plan in hand once again. After filling out an application for the loan I was told they would contact me within three days. They did. Loan denied. The reasons? I had no job, and no collateral and even though my plan was that the calves I purchased would be considered the collateral, the bank had a different opinion of that plan. After trying to figure out my next move for another month I was given the opportunity to begin my business without having to acquire a large loan. I made a deal with a local rancher to get calves from him, raise them, then once sold I would pay him X amount of dollars per head. All I needed then was the money for supplies and feed. Luckily my parents were able to help with those costs and so I was finally in business for myself! This all worked out great for me, but not every young farmer or rancher is as lucky. There needs to be more funding allocated for the youth of this nation and more importantly for the young Native American population who want to make a difference not only for themselves, but for their reservations and communities.

This year I also helped my mother with a new venture that we are very proud of for our community. A food pantry. This food pantry had been in business for nearly 25 years serving a large region of Nebraska. The director was retiring and sadly there didn't seem to be anyone willing to take her place. In January of this year my mother decided it was something she wanted to do so that the pantry didn't have to close down and leave hundreds of clients behind that counted on the pantry. It took several months for all the legal aspects to be completed but once everything was completed the pantry was back on track. This pantry has no employees and is run strictly by volunteers. It operates on donations from the community and is able to purchase food at a lower cost through the USDA and Food Bank For The Heartland and provide those in the community in need with food baskets on a monthly basis. Nearly 50% of the clients are Native American though there are no reservations in Nebraska, there is a large population of Lakota Sioux natives that choose to reside in Nebraska instead of on their reservations in South Dakota. Without this food pantry, because these natives don't live on their reservations, they rely heavily on food pantries like the one my mother operates to provide food for their families. The pantry also provides free clothing, shoes, household goods and furniture completely free of charge to whomever may need it, no questions asked. There are no income guidelines, no proof of identity required and no copies of photo ID or any other confidential information asked for by the center. My mother puts in approximately 60 hours per week dedicated to helping those in need, regardless of their race, gender or religious affiliation. All of this funded solely on donations of items or money from the surrounding community. As a teenager going to school, I don't have as much time to volunteer myself now as I do during the summer months however, on the days that the center gets a food truck delivery she contacts the local high school which is only a couple blocks from the center and they are more than happy to allow high school students to leave class and go to the center to help unload the semi-trailer by hand and to

put the food away that is delivered. Those students earn credit towards things like the National Honor Society, Student Council and Athletes Excellence clubs which all require so many volunteer hours helping their community in order to remain a student of those clubs. Recently, several local churches began to help the center by donating various items of food or household goods or cash donations to keep the center operating which allows the center to help those families in need.

Because of certain laws pertaining to board members of the non-profit center, my mother and other board members are not allowed to conduct fundraisers themselves, however, if others choose to host a fundraiser and then donate the proceeds to the center that is allowable. Even though it is my mother that is the President and Director of the center, I myself can host a fundraiser and then donate the proceeds to the center. Being part of the National Honor Society, Sandhills Leadership group, and an officer of my schools FFA Chapter but most of all, living in a community that is always willing to help out others, I have already headed up two fundraisers along with my fellow students this school year and we were able to donate a total of nearly \$3000 to the center so far.

Someone had recently asked me that if my mother had not taken on the role of running the center, would I still be so passionate about conducting these fundraisers to help out the center. My answer was simple, yes! When asked why, I told them it was because I've personally felt the struggles of not always having food on the table every meal of the day. Even though we are in a better place now, there are several native families who are not as fortunate and that's who the Sharing and Caring Neighbors Center is there for to help ensure a better future.

The Farm Bill and Indigenous Agriculture

By Laurel Spears, Narrangansett

Under Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1933, the Farm Bill or Agricultural Adjustment Act was created. This allowed farmers to gain payments for limiting their production. Throughout the years, indigenous peoples have continuously been left out of the Farm Bill discussions almost completely. Currently, the Farm Bill holds countless USDA programs, but little to no programs made solely for Native Americans. Indian country is deeply invested in agriculture and has extensive farm land to be put to great use.

The Farm Bill provides very useful opportunities and resources that can help Indian country achieve our goals much faster and more efficiently. For example, The Commodities Title allows for the majority of indigenous income, however, it is not without large risks. This title requires an intense understanding of the tribe's production cost and marketing. If a tribe does not completely understand this title any damages to their crops or livestock can lead to the failure of their business. Also, the Conservation Title, natives have opportunities to practice traditional conservation. This can help improve traditional habits, our lands for agricultural use and our overall environmental conditions. In 2014 The Farm Bill was estimated to spend approximately 489 Billion dollars over the course of five years. With the money that was made in profits crop insurance, conservation, nutrition, horticulture, trade, research, rural development, forestry, energy and credit resources and programs would be funded. The Farm Bill has great potential to continuously impact Native Agriculture in a positive way, if there was more

representation for Indigenous peoples in the discussions that form the bill, so that we are heard.

I am part of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and we are very small community. Currently we are not in the best shape, in terms of agriculture on a tribal level. However, my uncle, Cassius Spears has started a food sovereignty program. Our tribe has owned a farm for a great deal of time that was basically abandoned, until he put it to use. My family together to rebuild the farm to get it to a level where we had a decent amount of crops and some livestock. The Farm Bill impacted us by allowing us to have access to opportunities within the Horticulture title such as, Tribal consultations on fruit and vegetable consultations. Also, as a northern woodland tribe the Forestry title within the Farm Bill, affects us greatly by providing us with resources like, the Improve the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Tribal Forestry Workforce Development and the Protection of Sacred Places.

Moving forward, in order to insure that my community is represented by the future Farm Bills I will start by becoming fully educated about the Farm Bill. Once I have a greater knowledge on the Farm Bill I will then be able to spread this knowledge throughout my tribe. The more people who have an understanding of the Farm Bill the easier it will be to continue spreading knowledge and to convince people to stand up and represent not only our tribe but our southern and western counterparts as well. I will advocate for our farm and bring more tribal members to participate in the farms growth. If I can join with a few other members of my community, we will be able to show the rest of our community how important it is that we represent ourselves within the Farm Bill discussions. I will most likely start with the youth, and although we are not the ones who are able to officially represent our tribe we have some influence over our parents as they want what is best for us and a future for us as a thriving tribe. To carry on their legacy. Hopefully, the youth is what convinces our parents and elders to step up and help represent us in the Farm Bill.

Reaching beyond my tribe I will continue to use connections with members from other tribes and spread my knowledge with them. An efficient way that i could get information across is social media. On social media not only is this information available for fellow natives it is also out there for non-natives to see and be informed about what we need, to then help continuing to spread the word. Information goes a long way. People say "ignorance is bliss", but really ignorance is destruction. Destruction of people, destruction of land, destruction of culture, destruction of society, destruction of life. Ignorance is what keeps us from moving forward. People want to stay sheltered from the negativity within the world or the wrong within the world, but that is what keeps us in the past. Freeing people from the lack of information allows important issues to be solved or at least in the process of being solved.

In order to effectively achieve an active role in our community, my chaperone and I have to make a plan and be persistent. To properly spread information and make a change a plan is needed. Most do not succeed without a plan because plans keep structure allowing for less stress and more efficient work. We will keep balancers and planners to document dates where we can host talks in the Farm Bill and how our community can help, plan in advance for possible posts for social media. In order to succeed on social media, we will have to construct posts that give information but are not too much and spread them out because it is easy for people to get bored of reading too much information at once. This will keep people

engaged and interested. The more structure we have the more successful we will be. Also, to gain an active role in our community we will never give up. We will continue informing and spreading word about the Farm Bill, as well as, getting more of our tribe to join the cause even though there will be difficulties. No triumphant person has ever given up. Persistence is key. If you are not persistent the work started will just go to waste and it will not impact anyone. We need to continue on our path to enlighten our community no matter what because being represented on the Farm Bill will bring us one step closer to the being represented on other Bills and in the country as a whole.

The 2018 Farm Bill and How it Affects My Tribe

By Lauren Thompson, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Háŋ mitakayapi, Lauren Thompson emáčiyapi. Mobridge South Dakota emátanŋaŋ. Maowapi Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Malákħota yeló. Wayáwa hemáča. Mobridge-Pollock owáyawa. Hello relatives, my name is Lauren Thompson. I am from Mobridge South Dakota. I am a Lakota and am an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. I am a student and I go to Mobridge-Pollock High School in South Dakota. I am currently in the 11th grade. I grew up in Mobridge and have been here all my life.

I recently attended the 2016 Intertribal Agriculture Council Youth Membership meeting in December and the 2017 Youth Agriculture Summit in Arkansas this last summer and I feel as though it would be beneficial for me to continue attending these meetings to strengthen my knowledge of the importance of agriculture and food sovereignty in our indigenous communities. While attending these meetings, not only do I gain understanding of agriculture related issues in our communities but I also get to interact with other Native American youth that share the same interests as me and want to do what they can to better their reservation communities in any way possible. My idea for what my community needs from the 2018 Farm Bill is something that will get our native community one step closer to becoming food sovereign. I think the 2018 Farm Bill could greatly assist my community and other reservation communities if they enacted a provision to dictate that funding will go to reservation communities to create local community gardens using the traditional foods of indigenous people along with education programs or classes on how to grow, use and store these traditional foods; this will help reservation communities to begin to grow their own foods and get one step closer to creating an active food system for their area. However, this won't be possible without the assistance that the 2018 Farm Bill has the potential to give Indian Agriculture.

"The Farm Bill is a fairly comprehensive, multiyear piece of legislation that governs a substantial array of federal farm, food, fiber, forestry, and rural policies and programs under the joint jurisdiction of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. (2016 SAFSF Policy Briefing)". To break that down a bit, the Farm Bill is basically a law, of sorts, that has many rules and regulations within it that show how the government is using its money for agricultural programs such as crop subsidies, food stamps, EBT and even school breakfast and lunch programs. The 2014 Farm Bill makes major changes in all commodity programs, adds new crop insurance opportunities,

streamlines or provides conservation programs, modifies almost all of the provisions of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and expands programs for specialty crops, organic farmers, bioenergy, rural development, and beginning farmers and ranchers.

On the Cheyenne River Reservation, the Farm Bill is used in the form of food assistance programs. On the other end of the spectrum the Farm Bill also impacts the producers on Cheyenne River. Throughout our reservation are over 300 range units. A range unit is just a faster way of stating that the reservation leases land to farmers and ranchers to produce foods. The Farm Bill should be assisting these producers by giving them the funding they need to ensure that they are providing quality products to our people and local businesses. Although the Cheyenne River tribe is eligible for some of these funding opportunities, it still isn't enough. We are all grateful for what we are getting but there is still so much more we could be doing to become a food sovereign community if we were given enough funding. I strongly believe that if the Cheyenne River tribe was given more opportunity through the 2018 Farm Bill, we could move toward starting an active food system in our community. As stated earlier, my idea for the funding from the 2018 Farm Bill is make tribal access to programs that would allow us to move towards starting a community garden that is filled with the traditional foods of indigenous people. Along with that, I think the rest of the money could be used to set up educational classes on how to care for and grow the traditional foods. This will only be possible if the 2018 Farm Bill recognized Indian Agriculture.

The plan that I have for the funding from the 2018 Farm Bill will greatly impact the lives of all Native Americans living on and near the Cheyenne River Reservation. My idea will help infrastructure development, cultural preservation and economic revenue. However, as mentioned previously, this won't be possible unless the 2018 Farm Bill acknowledges the importance of Indian Agriculture.

By attending all of the Youth-in-Agriculture summits and conferences my chaperone and I are already taking steps in the right direction to be able to promote the need for funding from the Farm Bill in order to initiate a program for a community garden. This project will include teaching community members how to plant, care for, harvest, and preserve indigenous foods to sustain a working food system for our reservation. By taking this first step of advocating my tribe's needs at the national level, I can then go and use the knowledge I've gained from these Youth-in-Agriculture summits and conferences and advocate for the importance of the Farm Bill and Indian agriculture to my tribal council to show them how important agriculture is for our people. If my tribe cannot see the immense importance of agriculture and food sovereignty for our reservation and Indian country as a whole, then the decisions made about the 2018 Farm Bill won't even matter. I need to convince my tribal council that agriculture can be a tool for infrastructure development, cultural preservation and economic revenue. If my tribe can see how important agriculture is, I can work with my tribal leaders in order to accomplish my goals of using the Farm Bill programs to create a successful community garden using traditional foods in my community.

The Farm Bill and My Community

By Liliyana Martinez, Navajo

Hello, I am Liliyana Martinez. I am from a small community within the Navajo Nation called

Kayenta, Arizona (Tó Dinéeshzhee' in my native language). Although my community is small, my tribe's reservation is the largest in the United States. We are rich in size, but we are poor. Many of our communities depend on our agricultural funding coming from the farm bill. The farm bill has an impact on our people like no other. The funding does not just affect the farmers or the land, but it affects our everyday people and their families.

The farm bill has a huge significance on Native American agriculture because most of our tribes depend on what the farm bill funds. Native farmers depend on the conservation programs to help grow and protect their crops. They need the land, fertile soil, and the water to grow the crops. In case of natural disasters, they need the protection of crop insurance. Not to mention those who raise livestock to sell. They need protection for their animals and business. The conservation programs not only help with farmers, but our sacred lands. Forests, monuments, national parks, and other land areas need the protection given from the farm bill. Our waters especially because they are what we need to survive. Many of my own people have to haul water for drinking, for livestock, and for basic water needs (such as showers or for dishes). The surrounding communities also receive water from these water sources. We cannot afford to lose our natural resources.

Just like everyone, we depend on our salary earned from our jobs. Many Native Americans get their income from energy sources, such as coal mines. Some tribes receive so much from these energy sources that they are able to give back some money to their people and communities. When the mines or other energy sources go down, the tribe will lose income and the money that took care of their tribe. All the people who had a job with those companies will be out of jobs and lose the salary that supported their families. Within my community I know families who work at the Peabody coal mine and when the coal mine shuts down in a few years they will be left jobless. This is another reason why the the farm bill has an impact on Native Americans.

The farm bill funding is split into several topics, the greatest of them being nutrition. Nutrition takes up eighty percent of the the funding and approximately twenty-five percent of all Native Americans receive some type of food benefit from it. I know from within my own community that these food programs are greatly impacted from the farm bill. Many of my people depend on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for food. Without food stamps, large numbers of families would not be able to afford dinner for their family. With food stamps being cut, it makes it a struggle to stretch the money out to last. Another food program is WIC, which is for mothers with infants. This food program contributes to the costs of the baby's food and their health. Not only do we use food programs at home, but we use it at school. My own school has a free breakfast and lunch program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We cannot afford paying for our own meals every day throughout the school year. The funding that covers these costs are very helpful and I am thankful for it everyday.

I do not want to complain about our food programs, but I have some recommendations. On the reservation, my tribe deals with diabetes, obesity, and other issues that are the result of not taking care of our health. If the food programs lean toward more healthy food choices instead of junk food, then maybe the overall health of our nation can improve. Such as with SNAP, I see people misusing it for things

like chips or soda, when instead they should be buying actual food. The program should have guidelines to prevent this from happening. At school I see the students not enjoying the taste of the food and throw it away. It is wrong, but I do recommend better food for the school meals we eat. If the food does not satisfy our taste buds, we are less likely to eat it.

After seeing what the farm bill was about and how much of an impact it has on my tribe, I want to be more involved. I've been doing some research and found groups or associations for people who are interested in these things. I want to start being more involved in the community events or chapter meetings about these topics. By going around and talking to people who I know are impacted from the farm bill, I could spread the word and open more people's eyes about the bill. I could try getting in touch with some of the tribe's leaders, store owners, farmers, and make sure they are getting the most out the farm bill. I could be more involved in my chapter's Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. To reach this active role, my chaperone and I have to start by becoming more aware of what is happening in the agriculture world. Next, we have to push ourselves into more public settings to get engaged with people. I want show my people and community what they are missing out on or what they didn't already know about the farm bill.

Before hearing about and researching the farm bill in my agriculture class, I had no idea it even existed. The interest of it grew in me after I discovered how much of an impact it had not only on my tribe, but to all the Native American tribes across the United States. After I learned about the farm bill I asked both of my parents if they knew about it, and I was surprised when they said "no." I look at my parents as people who should know everything about the real world and how things work in life. When they were clueless about something as important as the farm bill, I realized that there are probably way too many Natives who also do not know this exists or do not care to see how it shapes their world. These people should know just how much the farm bill affects them, their families, and their land.

What Standing Rock Needs in the Farm Bill From a Youth Perspective

By Maya Runnels, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Hau Maya Runnels imaciyapiyaye. Cante waste nape ciyuzapo. Hello, my name is Maya Runnels. I greet you from my heart. I am an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. I am a junior at Mobridge-Pollock High School. I also serve as the Secretary for the Standing Rock Youth council. I have traveled all over the country to speak out on issues that matter to us. What I enjoy most is the everyday work here at home that promotes positive changes. I do not come from a farming or ranching family but I do recognize the importance of Indian Agriculture, access to opportunity, food sovereignty, land conservation and how it stands to be impacted by the Farm Bill.

How does the Farm Bill impact Indian Agriculture?

Native Americans are the most legislated race in the United States. Because of this, we are often hindered by the very laws meant to help us. We continue to be ignored at the national level and resources are often given to the states. There are policies in place that often keep us from using any or many of the resources in the Farm Bill. The 2018 Farm Bill holds a lot of potential to either help Indian Agriculture or

to continue to fail the original inhabitants of this land. For the Farm Bill to have a positive impact on Indian Agriculture it must provide access to opportunity for tribal nations. That means Tribal representatives need to have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the Farm Bill. Often what happens with bills is you have a group of people who have never lived on a reservation making decisions without considering how it will affect them once it is passed. This must change.

The United States has trust responsibility to Native Nations, it is time they live up to that as it concerns Indian Agriculture. Native nations like my own are stuck in a never-ending cycle of poverty with no end in sight because we lack opportunity. The same is true of the Farm Bill. Historically Native Nations have not been adequately included in discussions around its formation. This must change. My reservation has an abundance of untapped natural resources. The reason many of it is untapped is because of the lack of access to opportunity and because of policies that hinder its development. This has caused my tribe to double down on a failing casino business that only contributes to the hardships of my people. If we can improve Indian Agriculture here then we can pursue real and lasting sovereignty while also improving health outcomes for my people. I would love to see a Farm Bill that provides opportunities to lift tribal nations out of poverty. My hope for Standing Rock is a bill that creates some sort of food sovereignty. I would like to see a bill that provides opportunities for building local food systems that promote health, create local jobs, and boost the economy, including but not limited to community gardens, farms, farmer's markets, ranches and co-ops.

What programs in my community are impacted by the Farm Bill?

I would say all our programs are impacted by the farm bill. Everything good or bad is interconnected. My tribal nation, Standing Rock, is home to some of the poorest counties in the United States. Poverty goes hand in hand with all social problems from addiction, suicide, high school dropout rates, trauma, to health problems like diabetes and heart disease. For tribal nations to be healthy we must first address the basic needs of the people here. One of the most basic needs people struggle to obtain is food. We have an abundance of natural resources here and unfortunately those resources do not benefit most tribal citizens. Many of our tribal members rely on commodities and SNAP benefits for their food. We also tend to pay more groceries because of our rural area so we get less out of our benefits. Since many families' lack vehicles, they also struggle to obtain their groceries and must sell some of the benefits to even be able to use them. If we had a Farm Bill tribal nation could easily utilize we could provide traditional foods and raise our food in our communities. The US Government can either continue to punish or hinder tribal nations by treating the symptoms of poverty and failed policy or it can start providing opportunities for them at its most basic level of agriculture.

How will I take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill?

I will continue to use my voice and position on our youth council to influence the 2018 Farm Bill. Often our tribal representatives are not informed and do not know how or where they can be involved. That is information I can take to our tribal council. I, along with my fellow youth council members, can meet with them to stress the importance of being involved in 2018 Farm Bill discussions. Also, because Standing Rock lies within two state borders we have access to double the number of senators as other

tribal nations. We can write letters, make phone calls and speak with our Indian Affairs representatives to also make sure the youth voices are heard by them.

What are two steps my chaperone* and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community?

The steps I would like to take are to first talk with farmers, ranchers, and tribal programs funded by the Farm Bill to see what they would like included in the Farm Bill. I would then take that information and everything I will learn, if I am selected, at the Intertribal Agriculture Council Annual Meeting to tribal and state leaders. If selected I will put forth my fullest effort to ensure our voices are heard in the Farm Bill. It would be an honor to represent my family, tribal nation, and youth council if I am selected to attend. I plan to attend the Youth Ag Summit next year to learn more about Indian Agriculture and how I can use my voice for these much-needed efforts!

2018 Farm Bill

By Miranda Cadotte, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Hello, my name is Miranda Cadotte. Although people tend to call me Mandy. I grew up in Eagle Butte, South Dakota until I was about nine, and then I moved to Mobridge, South Dakota. I've been going to Mobridge-Pollock High School since I was in third Grade. I am now currently a Junior, and I am a Lakota member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. My friends Calico Ducheneaux and Lauren Thompson showed me to this wonderful opportunity, and I'm so excited to be writing you today. Ever since I was little I was always wondering what more I could learn about my culture and what little I knew at the time. I obviously know more than I did eight years ago, but I still often find myself wondering what more I could know.

This would be the very first year that I will be attending the IAC Youth Membership meetings. I think this will be a great opportunity to let me learn about my culture and how I can help my people even more and still have fun while doing it. I also plan on going to the Arkansas Youth Agriculture Summit this year, and I think both would be a great opportunity for me to strengthen my knowledge of the importance of my culture and how it applies to agriculture. I feel when I do start attending these conferences and leadership summits, I will start to understand the importance of agriculture and the related issues that follow. I also think this will be an awesome opportunity for me to interact with other Lakota people, and get to know other people from different tribes all over the country.

So let's answer the big question--what does my community need in the Farm Bill? As a young person that grew up on reservations and urban areas, it's easy to wonder why we should care about the Farm Bill because they both seem so far removed from agriculture. The crazy thing about it is that the Farm Bill affects us as indigenous people more than we know, and it isn't just farmers who have to worry about the importance of the Farm Bill. It's important for us to voice our opinions and make sure we're heard on this very important topic because Native people need to be represented in the Farm Bill discussion. The Farm Bill is everywhere, there's no doubt about it. But without the new Farm Bill, universities will lose funding for important research topics like food safety, nutrition, etc. The next generation of farmers will struggle to put the future of America's booming exports if they lose access to critical programs. The

funding that goes to the programs that guarantees greater food security in both the United States through food assistance programs. These programs also affect the youth because we are the future of agriculture as producers and consumers.

All food programs are impacted by the Farm Bill. Whether it's SNAP, EBT or FDPIR, etc., they're all funded through the Farm Bill. Since Native people are heavily dependent on food assistance programs, we are deeply involved in the importance of the Farm Bill. This dependence on food assistance programs could also be helped by the Farm Bill as well. The goal of the Farm Bill was to provide a safety net for farmers. This was achieved by two major channels: the commodity support program and disaster assurance and crop insurance programs. The Farm Bill doesn't just concern itself with creating a safety net for the economy of farming, but also for the environment, farmers, and American families. All of these aspects have to do with Indian Agriculture.

I will take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill by helping to spread the word about the importance of agriculture more. Also, I can try to set up more help for the people who really need assistance with food security and food assistance, people who aren't currently getting the help they need. Giving the people who need the help immediate assistance and the knowledge I'll gain at this conference so they no longer have to be confused about food assistance programs or wait for months before they do get the necessary information. They deserve all the safety that we can provide them, and the Farm Bill needs to be involved for them to get the food assistance necessary. With all the resources being as tight as they seem to be these days, we're going to have to use our imagination to figure out how to spread that money as far as you can, and us youth have important ideas that need to be voiced to help the 2018 Farm Bill. So that's what I want to do, I want to figure out how to help my community in the best way that I can so that the money to go to the most important places that they need to go.

My chaperone and I will take the same steps to make sure we effectively reach this active role in our community. We will take the extra steps to make sure our community is more aware and we can solve the problems needed for the people who need the help. They deserve all the safety that we, my chaperone and I can provide for them. The Farm Bill is everywhere, and with everything being as small and the resources being as little as they are already then we will do everything in our favor to get everyone helped and their opinions heard.

If I get to go to this conference, I can talk with important people who are a part of this bill and tell them all the issues that are happening right now in Standing Rock. My tribe and I would voice our opinions in the upcoming Farm Bill. We could talk about how little food access we have, and the struggles we have faced for a lot of years and how we could begin to help them and how we can help them with the upcoming years. When I go back to my community, I will talk to the tribal council about what I learned over these five days with this amazing opportunity and what I think I could do to help the people who are struggling. I will tell my tribe about how important agriculture actually is and what we can do to improve this situation."

IAC Youth Essay

By Owen Gustafson, Three Affiliated Tribes (Arikira)

The Farm Bill impacts everyone who eats. Therefore, it impacts all U.S. citizens. Since federal food and nutrition policy can be traced to the United States government's early days, it is only right that indigenous peoples play an active role in shaping and benefitting from the 2018 Farm Bill. As stated by a spokesperson for former President Obama, "A comprehensive 2012 Farm Bill will build a better safety net for our farmers, ranchers, and families by building better farm, food, nutrition assistance, and energy policies for the entire nation." This statement is still true for the 2018 Farm Bill.

I would describe the Farm Bill as comprehensive, multiyear legislation that governs an array of federal farm, food, forestry, and rural programs under joint control of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

The Farm Bill has the potential to impact Indian agriculture in many ways. While it is true that the Farm Bill impacts everyone who eats, its impact on Indian Agriculture is amplified due to the rural nature of many of our tribal nations. Our rural economies are highly dependent on agriculture. We are also greatly impacted by the Nutrition title, as there is elevated use of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) due to high incidences of poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity in Indian Country.

Many programs in my community are affected by the Farm Bill. I will discuss this with each of the twelve major titles the 2018 Farm Bill.

1. Commodities: Our region's primary commodities are wheat and barley, and recently, pulse crops such as peas and lentils. It is important that our rural economy has a strong safety net for these "staple" crops to maintain economic stability. Native producers must weigh in on 2018 Farm Bill commodity programs to ensure they fit our needs. It is also crucial that we continue emphasizing and improving outreach and education for native producers to ensure we have full access to commodity programs.

2. Conservation: In our region, a large portion of the land base is native range. Conservation programs that protect these native grasslands and their water resources are crucial. Some of the conservation issues we face are overgrazed rangelands and noxious weed infestations. The Conservation title must be responsive to our needs and continue to improve native enrollment in conservation programs through outreach, education, adequate funding and cost share differentials for beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged producers. A key component of 2018 Farm Bill negotiations is ongoing consultation with tribes and native producers to ensure that our needs are met, and that programs such as CSP, LIP, LFDP, WHIP, EQIP and CRP work efficiently on reservations. With the recent tribal purchases of fractionated interests through the Cobell Settlement, it is now more important than ever that tribes can effectively utilize the Conservation title to improve their lands.

3. Trade: All successful economies are dependent on trade, both domestic and foreign. This title gives native producers a unique opportunity to promote our goods as an important component in feeding our local communities and the world.

4. Nutrition: SNAP is a crucial element and a significant monetary component of the Farm Bill. Food security is especially important to economically disadvantaged communities. Many of our native residents

rely on SNAP and other food aid to meet their families' nutritional needs. There is a growing national movement to remove food aid from the Farm Bill. Many people, including myself, believe that food production, food consumption, and rural economic development cannot and should not be separated. Additionally, as rural populations shrink in relation to urban populations, the Nutrition title is an important way to engage and inform urban politicians and citizens about agricultural issues.

5. Credit: Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans for land, equipment, livestock and operating are essential to our strong economy. Due to the additional (and sometimes burdensome) steps necessary to secure financing on Trust lands, we must have a stable, secure lending source. We must also emphasize lending programs that work for young, beginning farmers and ranchers, limited resource producers, and socially disadvantaged producers. Because so much of our local economy is dependent on Indian Trust lands, we must always be vigilant in ensuring USDA, BIA and the Department of Interior work closely with native producers and tribes to ensure that credit is readily available to producers on Trust lands.

6. Rural Development: For native producers to run efficient agricultural operations, our rural areas must keep improving and developing. It would be detrimental for my community to fall behind in infrastructure and not be able to efficiently move our goods out of the area to sell to the rest of the world.

7. Research: I feel that Rural Development and Research go hand in hand. We must remain on the forefront in advocating for research and development that is pertinent in Indian Country and that will benefit our local economies. As such, it is important that native individuals and tribes are consulted with to determine what research and development fit our regions. Our Blackfeet Reservation Extension office is a key component in this area. It is crucial that the Extension programs are adequately funded and maintain their robust and beneficial presence. Extension not only benefits adult producers through outreach, education and other useful programs, but also provides invaluable resources in developing home grown agricultural leaders through 4H and other youth programs.

8. Forestry: Our forest resource is smaller in scope than our farming and grasslands resources, but it is still significant. It is crucial that tribal and tribal member interests are represented in drafting the Forestry title of the 2018 Farm Bill.

9. Energy: The Energy title deals largely with developing biofuels and alternative energy sources. With the recent protections afforded to the Badger-Two Medicine area, we must remain vigilant in protecting certain areas, and in continuing to develop alternative fuel sources, especially those that are beneficial to rural economies. I have a special interest in energy issues since I am enrolled at Fort Berthold, which sits on the Bakken formation. My family has enjoyed many advantages of this oil boom, but our land and my relatives' agriculture operations and home communities have been greatly impacted, sometimes negatively, by this boom.

10. Horticulture: Due to our arid climate and short growing season, horticulture is a minor title for our area. However, we need to keep looking at native food sources and their relationship to a healthier community.

11,12. Crop Insurance and Miscellaneous: These titles encompass broad areas. It is crucial that crop insurance (especially NAP coverage on rangelands) is workable and provides affordable risk management

for native producers.

The first step I must take to help ensure my community's representation in the 2018 Farm Bill is to be informed. The time I have spent researching this essay, and the knowledge I have gained during that research has been an invaluable first step. It is now imperative that, armed with information and knowledge, I take the next step and engage in the Farm Bill discussion. If chosen for this program, I look forward to furthering my knowledge and becoming a valuable spokesperson for Indian Agriculture by attending and participating in the 2017 Youth Conference and IAC Membership Meetings, and then returning home and furthering that participation.

I have gained knowledge of agriculture, experience in public speaking, and the desire and ability to advocate for agriculture through my 4H career. In 2016-2017 I took a year off from 4H to concentrate on High School, UIRA, and INFR rodeo tours. However, after being inspired by this essay contest, I am eager to re-enroll in 4H, continue my beef breeding project, and incorporate discussions of the 2018 Farm Bill and its' importance to our native communities into my 2017-2018 4H activities. I am also interested in attending Blackfeet Stock Growers meetings, and have been an active youth participant in the Marias River Livestock Association. Next week, I will attend the NILE for the first time. While there, I will look for future opportunities to promote the issues I have discussed in this essay.

My chaperone and I must commit to staying engaged in the Farm Bill conversation and be proactive in promoting items that will benefit our community. I hope to gain valuable tools to go forth and do this at the IAC Membership Meeting sessions. I have been an active public speaker in 4H, Student Council, Student Government, and in High School Rodeo through being a District and State Student Event Director and a spokesperson and District Coordinator for ReACT Tobacco Free Rodeo. I am eager to add advocating for a 2018 Farm Bill that benefits native producers to my speaking and leadership activities.

My chaperone, Colleen Gustafson, has been a past FSA County Committee member, past Glacier County Weed Board member, past Blackfeet Reservation Extension Advisory Committee member, is an active 4H leader, and has recently been elected to the Glacier Electric Cooperative board and the Farm Credit Services Local Advisory Committee, and looks forward to attending Blackfeet Stock Growers meetings. She is passionate about agriculture and maintaining strong rural communities. With her assistance I will begin contacting our legislative delegation on matters important to native producers as the 2018 Farm Bill debate begins.

Farm Bill Effect on My Community

By Preston Goss, Blackfeet

Oki nisto nidoniko ki spipime ikidopi . Hello my name is Spotted Horse Rider. My English name is Preston Goss. I am an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Tribe and live in Browning Montana on the Blackfeet Reservation. I was born in Great Falls but grew up in Browning. I am currently a junior attending Browning Public Schools. I am a cattle rancher, enjoy playing football, and love competing in rodeos as a contestant.

1.) How does the Farm Bill impact Indian Agriculture?

The farm bill has an impact on Native Agriculture by all of the families who produce food could face bankruptcy, say if a natural disaster was to strike. The government would normally give money for insurance to families/farmers who grow crops, that may have been destroyed by a natural disaster, and also to ranchers who may have lost loss of animals. If sufficient funds for these types of programs aren't allocated in the 2018 Farm Bill? Then the Rancher/Farmer would go bankrupt because of lack of payments.

It affects all, for example the locals, farms, government and, even the grocery stores. Mostly because if a disaster happens, like right now as Florida is flooding and a subsidy from there is everyone's favorite which is oranges. It affects the community by the prices of the oranges are going to skyrocket. So the locals of my town aren't going to buy overpriced Oranges. Mostly because I live in a high poverty town. Most of the families depend on food stamps because of our high rate of unemployment. Not a lot of people will buy the products and will probably end up being wasted and thrown away. So it makes the grocery stores lose money, also the market and the government. So it not only affects the store it affects everything.

The farmers around my area are ranked as the small guys?? so they are only entitled to just a 25% cut of the insurance mostly the bigger corporations get the money up to 75%. So it takes a massive toll on the little guys' smaller operations because even if they're making a lot of crops, such as wheat and flour. Just because there not a big farm there not making as much as the larger farms. But the bigger corporations need more money so they can harvest their crops. So they use their money on their equipment. Like diesel, farms need diesel to run there monster machines. But because Due to??? of natural disasters the price for diesel went up. So no diesel means they can't transport their crops and they can't get shipped out of the country to other places. So they're losing money and taxes aren't getting paid so middle class taxpayers pay for it . Most community members and my parents are paying for it. It affects my life to for example fuel is essential to prosper and it gets you from point A to point B .

2.) What programs in my community are impacted by the Farm Bill?

One way the Farm Bill impacts my community is, like the schools, hospitals, and small businesses that sell vegetables and crops. So for the schools it would affect the meals because of overpriced fruit and for the hospital, pretty much the same thing. My town is not the wealthiest place, so they aren't going to be extra and buy pricey fruit or food. Like my school for example, there always being cheap and doing budget cuts. But it's to get great teachers so we do have a great education program but on the food side not so much. So that's why we got a good education. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

3.) How will I take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Bill?

As a community member I feel that I have a good background and awareness because of my active and participation in the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. I was selected to represent my school my freshman year. I gained awareness of agricultural practices.

Also generations and myself are ranchers. So I have a lot of experience. Being a rancher takes a lot of

planning, land, time and money. If it was easy everybody would do it. Especially in the winter. It's tough, and you can only do so much. Like last winter Montana got a lot of snow and more than the past couple of years, up to 6-8 feet in my area. So that meant a lot of shoveling, and I'm not just talking about shoveling your driveway or deck off. Even though me and my siblings did do that, All too often in fact. I got use to shoveling so much I end up getting calluses on my hand's. Also having to dig out are vehicles and four wheelers which I end up getting stuck, a lot.

The worst part about last winter was I end up losing one of my best horses, literally he was part of the family. His is name was Cassidy and he was older than dust. It doesn't sound believable but he lived to be 40 years old, he finally was ready to go up in them grassy hills above along with my baby jacket, the winter has its tolls on all ranchers in America. That's why there's only so many good ones these days.

On the positive side and the highlights of this past year is I had a great and odd experiences such as my cow end up having twins, another one of my cows had an albino and the other one had a red angus. Also I saved 15% on my car insurance. But that was just a joke so my essay aint as boring.

4.) What are two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community?

To ensure my chaperone and I reach an active role in our community is we will raise awareness by educating our schools and community with what new information we acquired from the IAC-Youth Agriculture Conference. A few ideas that we could do undertake are maybe an informational talk with student body after school or short commercial on our local radio station. Another idea might be presenting to our Blackfeet Tribal Business council and also to the Browning School Board.

The next generation is me and I want to be a part of changing my community and creating awareness for my tribe. I want to play an active role in ensuring our native voice is heard in the 2018 Farm Bill. With the knowledge I have already gained about agriculture and ranching I am confident that I can carry their message farther than ever before.

"Food Sovereignty through the Farm Bill"

By Randa Delainey Shaw , Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Breaking ponies. My great great-grandfather, Frank Anukytubbe, born in Indian Territory, was a tough entrepreneur who chose raising livestock and breaking ponies versus coal mining in Colgate, Oklahoma, up until his death in 1927. The now rare breed of Choctaw ponies, those curious, sturdy, intelligent ponies, that walked along side my ancestors on the Trail of Tears, symbolized wealth, honor, and prestige for him in the Choctaw culture.

I look often at the photos of my young Great Grandmother. Little Ruby shuffling her old boot heel on the dry dirt, rope in hand, watching her father break the ponies in the corral. My ear always turned to listen to her stories of lazy days dreaming under the shade of cottonwood trees near a creek bottom. In her husky voice, she would describe following the livestock to the old oaks on rocky hilltops, the trail markers, and the narrow winding ridges separated by narrow valleys.

After his death, the children, educated in distant Indian schools, lost much of the cultural,

traditional ties and livestock training needed to ensure their economic survival. The escalated poverty felt as a Dust Bowl refugee, left disoriented and tired children that endured those problematic Native issues of diabetes, heart disease and alcoholism. As consequences of my great uncles' public intoxication and the theft through local law enforcement, the family land was lost. Collectively, the loss of land, the loss of livestock, and the loss of language, dispersed my family like howling winds from California to Florida.

The last photo of my great grandmother's youth shows her covered in the brown bits blown around Ada, OK while making her way through the tall grass prairie while hot tears ran down her cheeks. She left the Choctaw Nation two days later.

These ancestral images bring me from the turn of the century Choctaw Nation to the cold breeze of Washington, D.C., September 2016. As an invitee to the White House, I had the opportunity to enjoy a round table discussion with Chief Gary Batton and other Chahta youth.

The Native youth discussed the need for youth in tribal leadership, elder care taking, hunting and fishing rights and the '100-year plan'. The warmth and wisdom displayed by Chief Batton that night confirmed my passion and commitment to securing the sovereignty of the tribe. The warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico no longer seemed like home. I had a guttural pull to move back to the land and people of the Choctaw Nation.

The Choctaw Nation, located in Oklahoma is one of the heaviest Native farm regions in the U.S. It has successfully supported "lifetime legacy projects" of conventional land use while preserving the natural land by creating six cattle ranches with 2100 head on 36,080 acres and a pecan farm with 4300 trees on 1500 acres producing one hundred and fifty thousand pounds annually.

It has also supported conventional land use by building a hunting lodge and establishing a Choctaw seed bank.

As a land-based tribe and a Promise Zone, the Farm Bill has assisted my tribe with agricultural farm loans and grants (reengaging fifty to one hundred thousand tribal acres), senior food markets, livestock shows and providing food distribution centers through FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations), and the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

While attending the Native Youth in Food & Ag Leadership Summit 2016 at UARK, I learned the Farm Bill effects 56,092 farmers and ranchers on 57 million acres of tribal land that produce 3.3 billion in product.

To regain food sovereignty through the Farm Bill, tribal nations have complex needs that should be addressed in the subgroups of Specialty crops, Commodities, Trade quality over quantity, Energy, and Crop insurance premiums.

The private-based business and ag-focused economy successes on rural Indian reservations assist with the Farm Bill's plan to deliver nutrition through food distribution, research, education, and grants. Tribal nations advocating federal and trade policy as a group, much like the EU, are stronger combined. Parity + Participation + Producers = POWER.

At UARK, I also learned to use advocacy and engagement to further the Native initiatives of parity,

opportunity and consistency in the Farm Bill.

After meeting empowered female Native leaders such as, Sarah-Jane Smallwood, Director of the Choctaw Nation Promise Zone, and Janie Simms Hipp, Director for the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at UARK, I discovered that along with my passion for law, I will need to use strategy, public policy, regional and town hall meetings, tribal, state and local governments and a long-range policy to effectively produce results. I plan on being involved in those meetings and making sure the voice of Native youth is heard.

Currently, there is an exciting trend in agri-tourism (food and nature). Although there are liability risks and compliance issues, it is a modern business plan that may recruit Native youth into agriculture and nutrition careers. Removing urban place limitations, waiver delays, in the FDPIR may open up trendy markets in specialty crops such as Native-owned bison and traditionally harvested wild rice and salmon. My chaperone and I hope to foster youth engagement through social media about the potential markets of agri-business, including agri-tourism and land grants while collaborating with other native youth about small business ideas utilizing the land grants, thereby, increasing the tribe's opportunities.

As advocates, we plan to lobby the house and senate agricultural committee to support a standard dialogue and establish liaisons integrated between tribes and the federal government. I will also request them to support existing, established programs of Native youth agriculture education and engagement, tribal nutrition improvements, strong economies and employment growth currently in the 2014 Farm Bill. Personally, when possible, my savings and earnings (one day soon), will be used to invest in Indian land so my Choctaw family has a home near the tribe even after venturing off the reservation. This will have taken three generations, some dust clouds and sunlight, to make this possible.

Nourish a nation, conserve a culture. In the future, my Choctaw children will learn about "dust bowl days" and the need to protect tribal land ownership. The independent spirit fighting for sovereignty today will ensure they all once again will wander the wooded hills, camp along the small creeks chasing ponies and look up to the sky through the black walnut trees. Yakoke!

Farm Bill

By Rebecca Lynn Hatathlie, Navajo

I am a student at Monument Valley High school named Rebecca Hatathlie. The purpose of this essay is to explain the impact of the Farm Bill has on my community and on Indian Agriculture. It will also say how my family and I can and will ensure an active role in our community. Another thing would be to spread the knowledge of the Farm Bill due to the fact the not many people on the Indian reservation have little to no knowledge of this bill. So, shall we continue with the essay to get a better understanding.

As many of us know that Native Americans like to go things to same money like haul firewood, own livestock, grow their own crops, and haul water to keep the crops and animals alive. Many of these things we do are associated with the Farm Bill. Wood hauling and pinion picking is a common thing Native's do and would tie into the title eight: Forestry. We would have to have permits to do so but many don't or they get wood that's on their own property. Livestock and crops would be in title two: Crop

Insurance and title ten: Horticulture because these two protect our traditional foods/plants and ensures that if anything were to happen to these we will get help, not many have this. Finally, water in title five: Rural development where we can't have our own water source when we basically use it in our daily lives but some of us don't have running water at home and we have to drive far distances to the nearest water source. Navajo petroleum would be in title nine: Energy that must be mined by miners which most Natives have jobs in.

Speaking of jobs reminds me of the lunch lady at school which has SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which gives us breakfast, lunch, or snacks that farmers or ranchers produce for us to keep our brains working and staying healthy. Schools have water to wash our hands, restroom, clean, and to give water to the animals which comes from the NTUA. You heard animals right so, what I mean by that is my school has an Ag. Building that has a program called FFA. This program has animals that we must take care weather as for it is a family pet or a show animal during rodeos and because of that we will have to abide by all eleven titles in the Farm Bill. Food stamp would be one because they give some money to help you buy food if you need it. These are the programs in my community that I can think of that is involved and affected by the bill. Again not only are programs are affected but the consumers are as well. Without the consumer there are no programs so they play a big part too.

In my community, we can make sure that most people have a wood hauling permit, so they don't have to get the wood they worked hard for get taken away. This can also help when elders or the disabled need wood for their home as for warmth and sometimes families don't have propane to cook food on. People who do have a permit can help in bringing firewood for them. Another thing would be when families have animals and crops to have insurance due to the recent destructive weather that has destroyed/eliminated the products they grown for generations. If the surrounding neighbors are willing to help and donate some excess food from their crops to eat. This will only come true if they want to do so but, instead of being pushy on the subject let them warm up to the topic. Otherwise we need to inform them on the Farm Bill and how it will benefit them in their daily lives as a farmer, rancher, or producer of their own food or as a whole community.

In order to do that we need to inform our representative of this problem or to our Navajo county to at least held a meeting of the Farm Bill. Another thing would be to be more understanding and fluent of the bill otherwise the people will look down upon this bill and claim that we don't have any purpose for it. Most of all we need to prepare on what could happen if we introduce the bill. Weather the people will accept it or it could backfire. For example, many claim that they don't have much time on their hands to attend meetings and will not want to stay in it for very long. In order to solve this we will have go straight to the point and imply parts that are mandatory for Native Americans to know. Finally, we will probably have to translate this bill into the Navajo language unless they have a translator or family member that could. My reason for saying this is because we still have elders that are fluent in the language. Other than that we have to make sure the younger generation get the idea of the Farm Bill.

To sum it up we need to take charge of our Native community and become involved in helping each other. This is what i think that the Farm Bill could help us and how it could help make us more

informed on how we take care of our animals. It can also inform other producers about the bill if they do not already know about it. This would also be my way to inform you of the current problems we have on our reservation. This may sound like an impossible task but I hope that many of these issues will be solved in the near future if not we try and try again until we open their eyes and try to understand the problems we have now. I will try to help accomplish this because this is what I think this is what our people need help in.

Regaining Our Food

By Robert Baldy, Hupa

The Farm Bill provides important congressional authorization and direction on the health of forests. Tribal forests and woodlands are critical assets that contribute to the lives, well-being, and economic vitality of tribes across the country. The Intertribal Timber Council supports additional tools in the Farm Bill reauthorization to help tribes manage their forests and woodlands, while protecting them from wild re, pests and disease.” (PHIL RIGDON President Intertribal Timber Council) “Much like the 2014 Farm Bill, which was projected to spend \$956 billion over a 10-year period, the 2018 Farm Bill will be one of the largest non-defense funding authorizations to be considered in the history of this country. Since the Intertribal Agriculture Council’s inception, we have struggled to rally the support of tribes to effectively advocate for greater Native inclusion in previous Farm Bills. This document will serve as a new foundation for our ongoing e orts, working in partnership with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, the SMSC’s Seeds of Native Health campaign, the National Congress of American Indians, and the Intertribal Timber Council to ensure well-crafted, effective, and thoughtful agriculture and nutrition policy; and a soapbox from which tribal voices can be heard in creating of that policy.” (ROSS RACINE Executive Director Intertribal Agriculture Council)

What programs in my community are impacted by the farm bill. in the document Regaining Our Future in Title IV Nutrition and in Title VI Rural development. And so The farm bill will help more programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamps it will promote healthier foods for the people to buy and in my community the food stamps program most people depend on their food stamps to survive and most of the time it is not healthy foods that they buy with their food stamps and that will lead to people with health problems with all native communities. Also the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) it is also said in the document that they are promoting more healthy foods and also more traditional food to give to the people who live on the reservation will have healthy food that they get in commodes and so it will prevent health problems for the native communities I can already see the benefits from the 2014 farm bill because the food distribution on my rez is starting to give out buffalo burger meat and also they give us wild rice and blue cornmeal and salmon from Alaska and most importantly they give us fresh fruit and veggies and it is a blessing to see that in my community. Finally, the rural development program will start to get more help and funding which is huge for native people more so for the native people who live on the rez. It will really be helpful for my reservation because our rez only has a gas station that sells food. So the farm bill will help for use

to get a store that will hopefully will sell and promote healthier foods instead of selling bad foods that will cause health problems and also it will help out the local RCD to have more funding which will greatly help our communities.

How does the Farm Bill impact Native Agriculture? In the document Regaining Our Future in Title IV Nutrition and in Title VI Rural Development and in Title XI Crop Insurance. So the way the farm bill is impacting native ag is it will greatly help native ag. One way it is helping native ag is the (FDPIR) promoting healthier and native food so that means that there will be a bigger market for more native farmers and more need for native ag. And also for rural development with helps native ag buy having more programs and more funding for native farmers and also people trying to start up a native foods farm or something of that sort. And also for the crop insurance which will help native people and anybody else also but it will make it to where it is less of a risk to start a farm or a garden so that means that give native farmers more reasons to start to their own ag project and for them to start selling native foods that they can also give back to their communities.

How will I take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill? The way I am taking an active role in my community is going to the IAC conferences and taking what I learn and I can start to help my community to help them to regain our health and our foods and our traditions. And through the farm bill I can learn new ways to help my people and it give everybody an chance to help themselves and to help their communities. Also through the Restoring Our Own Traditional Sustainability (R.O.O.T.S.) group were we are trying to promote people to start to go down the path of ag and feeding ourselves and living a healthier life and a healthier life style and also going back to our traditional foods and by doing that we can regain our culture and the way our ancestors live and there life through foods. And also with doing a lot of stuff through my community with my mom and doing workshops on ag related thing and also how to feed yourselves with your traditional foods and also how to preserve your food to be more food sustainable. And also I try to help and encourage other communities to start getting into your traditional foods by presenting at the IAC conferences and showing them that it is possible.

In conclusion i think that the 2018 farm bill will help many people and it will help the native peoples a lot and I hope that everybody will take advantage of this great opportunity that the farm bill is giving us in ag native ag and also helping out small communities and reservations with native peoples. I know that I will be taking advantage of this great opportunity and try to help my community more and more in the coming years. So this is the end Hayah No:ntik.

Farm Bill 2018

By Savannah Jo Gohde, Blackfeet

"The 2018 Farm Bill will be much like the 2014 Farm Bill, which was projected to spend \$956 billion over a 10-year period. The 2018 Farm Bill will be one of the largest non-defense funding authorizations to be considered in the history of this country. Since the Intertribal Agriculture Council's inception, we have struggled to rally the support (Indian Ag Link, 2017).

History of the farm bill

The farm bill was first created during the Great Depression to give financial assistance to farmers who were struggling due to an excess crop supply creating low prices. It was also designed to control and ensure an adequate food supply (Abbott, 2016).” The first farm bill, known as the Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA), was passed by Congress in 1933 as a part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal” (Abbott, 2016). This bill allowed farmers to receive payment even when they didn’t grow enough food it was based on a percentage of their land as allocated by the United States Secretary of Agriculture (Abbott, 2016). This bill also enabled the government to buy excess grain from farmers. This grain could then be sold later if bad weather or other circumstances negatively affected output. The AAA also included a nutrition program, the precursor to food stamps (Abbott, 2016). In 1938, Congress created a more permanent farm bill (the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938) with a built-in requirement to update it every five years (Abbott, 2016). It is important for us all to know where it all started so we have a better idea of what has worked and what has not. We can add to what has worked and fight for better ways.

Hello, my name is Savannah (Gohde) Day Chief. I am the daughter of Christy and Grinnell Day Chief. I live in this mystical beautiful place along the Rocky Mountain front called Heart Butte Montana. I am a Junior in High School, I take part in student leadership within my school, OPI and Native Youth Leadership. I am also the student board member on the school board. I believe the youth are the future and it is important for our voices to be heard. We need to be loud, proud and positive. This is my first time having anything to do with the farm bill. I believe I would be an outstanding youth candidate because I believe Native youth and all youth need to take a stand for what is right. We are the future generation and we need to start now.

What’s for dinner? The farm bill has a big impact in answering this question.

In the United States, the farm bill is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the federal government (United States Farm Bill, 2017). This comprehensive omnibus bill is passed every 5 years by the United States Congress it deals with both agriculture and all other affairs under the purview of the United States Department of Agriculture. Starting in 1933, farm bills have included titles on commodity programs, trade, rural development, farm credit, conservation, agricultural research, food and nutrition programs and marketing (United States Farm Bill, 2017). “ Farm bills can be highly controversial and can impact international trade, environmental conservation, food safety, and the well-being of rural communities” (United States Farm Bill, 2017). The Agricultural Act of 2014 funds farm programs through 2018, so now is the time to get our future plan put together (United States Farm Bill, 2017).

What does this mean for Indian Country?

We could see cuts in our food stamp program and possible our school food program. These are both programs that many of us rely on and desperately need. If there were cuts to these programs my community would suffer because of the lack of employment available. If we could create jobs people would rely on the food stamp and school meal program less.

The following are programs impacted by the farm bill. Title I-Commodities, Title II- Conservation, Title III- Trade, Title IV- Nutrition, Title IX- Energy, Title V- Credit, Title VI- Rural-Development, Title VII-

research, Title VIII- Forestry, Title X- Horticulture and Title XI- Crop-Insurance. My community is impacted by all the issues address in the Farm Bill, but to save time I am only going to talk about my community's top 3.

Forestry-Tribal forests and woodlands make up one third of Tribal lands held in trust, and provide resources, jobs, and economic development opportunities for many tribal governments (Indian Ag Link, 2017). Our forest is so important to us for cultural reasons, native plants and for the jobs that they create for our people.

Credit-Many tribal communities are located in "Credit Deserts," where access to fair and reasonable credit terms is limited or non-existent (United States Farm Bill, 2017). Because we are in the middle of know where it is harder for us to be able to get loans. This needs to be made fair to us.

Rural Development-The Rural Development (RD) programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are essential for rural and reservation tribal communities to develop and improve declining infrastructure systems while spurring economic development and job creation in tribal communities (United States Farm Bill, 2017). There are many places on the reservation that would be great for development and opening new businesses. By doing this we would create jobs and we would be building relationships with others. The only way to get over hatred and racism is to get over the past and start building relationships.

In-order to take an active role in my community I will need to do more research when it comes to the Farm Bill 2018 than I have for this paper. It will be helpful to know how the bill has been ran in the past. Having more knowledge on the subject will help me to better educate the youth and adults back in my community. Knowledge will also help me stand up for what is right.

Other youth need to get involved and I feel that it is my responsibility to not only educate them but to also get them involved with the bill. If we can all band together and put our minds together I know we can come up with solutions to help Indian country. The future is depending on us and it is our time to show them they can count on us.

My chaperone and I need to act, we can't be all talk. There is only one way to get things done and that is going out and doing it. One way of getting the word out is through social media. We plan on setting up an account on Facebook and getting the word out and updating it every day. By doing this will be able to reach out to youth all over the world. Getting the word out like this will show everyone that we are serious and it will also help us get ideas from others.

High School Basketball events are huge in my area, during the games we plan on handing out flyers and talking to people about joining our cause. The more people that get involved the better things will be. It would be a great idea to put an ad in the local paper about our cause and let people know we are free to meet during basketball games and to also get the word out about our Facebook page. The only way to make change is to stand up for what you believe in and make a change.

2018 Farm Bill Opportunity

By Sequoyah Osborne, Blackfeet

The Blackfeet we were once nomadic people who followed the season and the buffalo heard.

Today we are no longer living a nomadic lifestyle. After centuries of assimilation and starving from our food resources being taken away so we are forced to sign treaties, never again will we be oppressed. On the other hand, we still are affected by government policies, bills, and legislation. One of the more prominent legislative acts is the Farm Bill. "The farm Bill is a multiyear piece of legislation that governs a sustainable array of federal farm, food, fiber, forestry, and rural policies and programs under the joint jurisdiction of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. (SAFSF Policy Briefing 2016)" This affects the whole nation but has a unique impact on Indian country's agricultural infrastructure. The vast majority of reservations are agriculture or have a population that primarily relies on a food assistance program. Indian countries food development, policies, economic development, food security, and over-all health of American Indians are on the line. These major factors in every Indian community over the nation have the potential to thrive and prosper given the right guidance from the 2018 Farm Bill.

While Indian countries agriculture faces numerous dilemmas, many communities issues are more president and unparoled. In 2015 Glacier county which holds the bulk of the Blackfeet nation was the highest poverty stricken county in the state of Montana. The Blackfeet reservations elderly population primarily relies on the Commodities Supplement Food Program and the Federal Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help them make ends meet. Struggling mothers can also benefit from the Woman Infants and Children's Program (WIC). The nutrition portion of the bill helps families afford health nutrition packed meals. Youth of my community participate in the Kids Eat Free program provided in the summer for children who wonder where their next meal is coming for when school lunches are unavailable. Not only the summer months but as well as after school snacks from the Healthy Kids Montana programs for youth to take home for that extra boost of nutrition. With the diabetes rate hitting an all-time high plaguing our people. Thus, making these programs that provide healthy options to a food dessert stricken community vital beyond comparison. Not only is the health of my community affected the native producers feel the ripple effect in their operations as well. Indian producers on federal trust land being able eligible to apply for USDA programs and having the lease dates match up.

Indian country and my community needs leaders to be a voice for this topic. Some steps I will take to assure we are represented in the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill are attending the 74th Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians in Milwaukee, WI. There I will get a deeper understanding of problems that my community as well as other reservations face. In groups in group discussions I will educate other on the importance of the Farm Bill specific to the Blackfeet nation. Continuing to build my connections to people who I can coincided with on other important topics relating to Indian agriculture in the future. My tribal elders who will most likely hear my preaching the most. I will set up a presentation about the issue and present it to my tribal leaders as well as anyone who is willing to listen and be enlightened. Already have I made a quick basic presentation but cover the major issues including the farm bill, food sovereignty, and Indians country agricultural infrastructure and shared it with my peers in the culinary art class.

I'm a firm believer that planning and goal setting are some of the major keys to success. Well I can

make a million plans and set very attainable goals its always better to have a support system to keep me in check. This is where my chaperone comes into play. Hopefully we will both grasp a more developed in depth understanding of agriculture issues in Indian country and the effects of the Farm Bill on every Indian community across the nation. I can also look to my chaperone for leader qualities and advice, which makes planning run smoother when you have mentor to guide you. We will outline the opportunities in which we can talk to our tribal leaders and government officials about the importance of the Farm Bill. We will be extremely nonexclusive about the leaders we reach out to. Reaching out to youth who are the future generation of Indian leaders who hopefully seek to be positive advocates for Indian agriculture themselves. Next steps we can take is setting attainable goals that we wish to accomplish in a measurable amount of time. These goals will stretch our abilities as leaders but are accomplishable and in reach when giving the perfect unwavering amount of effort.

In conclusion, the upcoming Farm Bill is an enormous opportunity for Indian agriculture to advance. As leaders and advocates for Indian agriculture it is vital for us to educate other on the precedence of the 2018 Farm Bill on every Indian community. For centuries Native Americans had little to no voice on areas that affect us the most, that must change and now is the time to make a better Indian country. Many companies and committees have put in tremendous countless hours to change the waves of Indian country for the better such as the Intertribal Agriculture council, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching, the National Congress of American Indians. Every section of this legislative reaches every American Indian in the United States of America.

2018 Farm Bill and Community Impact

By Shoshanna Cap Hall, Blackfeet

A new year brings new voices, and with me being a Native American youth I want my voice to be heard. Living on the Blackfeet reservation all seventeen years of my life I see how the farm bill impacts the whole reservation. It's one of the most critical pieces of legislation to many indigenous people. Many depend on the farm bill because living in today's society has gotten more pricey. Some people hardly have enough money to get by. Many of the people are more than thankful and don't go through troubling times because of this Farm Bill. So many natives are not starving because of this farm bill. Myself personally am grateful for the Farm Bill as well and I wanted to thank everyone for the Farm Bill, and for those people who cannot speak for themselves I will do anything in my power to speak up for those individuals. The Farm Bill is a multi-year law that governs the agriculture and food programs on the reservation. It is a set of 15 sections, and it usually lasts five years, but with it being enacted in 2014 the current farm bill will expire in 2018. The farm bill is a law that determines amount of money the government will allow for programs like nutrition, crop insurance, conservation, and farm commodity support.

With there being so many parts in the farm bill, agriculture is one of the key parts. Agriculture has an effect on my community in the way that it has helped our past native farmers, and I personally hope it will help with our future native farmers. The farm bill helps farmers to cover crop insurance, marketing,

labor, and regulatory standpoints. It doesn't just help with money, but with the farmer's production. Without the farmer's production some people would not be able to have food, so this help with people being able to receive good nutrition. The Farm Bill also affects food programs which include food stamps, food aid, and commodities. Half of the world's population relies on agriculture to make a living. Most of the people that live in poverty live in rural areas like the reservation, so agriculture reform is a primary means for alleviating poverty. Especially on my own reservation.

The Blackfeet reservation is impacted by some of the farm bill. For instance, many of the community members gets commodities each month or some type of food assistances. Native Americans receive help with food assistances, but some reservations are a high of 60-80% of Natives receiving food assistance help. There's also something called food stamps which is money given to the person that can only be spent on any types of food you want. The farm bill also protects the Blackfeet land and sacred places. The farm bill is basically helping the reservation preserve the land. Also, something important about the Forestry protection is more jobs are opened from the government and tribe to help protect the land. Also on our reservation there are many ranchers, and some farmers. The farm bill helps with the insurance for those ranchers, and farmers, which is good because the winters on the reservation are extreme which means animals do die, and sometimes it's hard for farmers to grow crop. A lot of the people struggle with having live-stock, but the farm bill makes it possible to do what those certain people love. There's many more reasons how the farm bill impacts my reservation, and for that the Blackfeet people have never been more grateful.

The farm bill has saved so many of the native people from starving, and from even nearing starvation, and yes, many of those people are from the Blackfeet Reservation. I personally wanted to make sure my community is represented in the 2018 Farm bill because it has the potential to help our people even more so. If we did not have the farm bill our reservation would be in turmoil. We would all be suffering without the Farm Bill, and another reason I would love our reservation to be represented is because I would want to do anything in my power to help my Blackfeet people, and I would not expect anything in return because the Blackfeet people look after one another. So getting my voice out there is important, and it would be especially important to get my own tribe represented in the 2018 Farm Bill. There of course are steps to help my community get recognized, and me and my chaperone have exactly two. The first step will be submitting my essay and get chosen to attend the IAC Annual Meeting and Youth Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Then the second step would have to be after I hopefully get chosen to attend the conference I would meet new youths from different reservations, and hopefully leave an excellent impression for everyone about the Blackfeet reservation, and how the farm bill has affected us. My steps should hopefully help me get my community recognized for not only the 2018 farm bill, but also help me recognize other reservations and how the farm bill affects them. I would also want to help encourage those individuals speak up for the 2018 Farm Bill, and how it affects them.

Without the money allocated to different programs through the farm bill the reservation where I am from would be in so much turmoil. There would be so many deaths from young to old, and so many people starving. Our land wouldn't be the same on the reservation. Which would most likely have our

way of life with mother nature and creator taken away from us. Many people would be struggling money wise, or in debt. Hundreds of people would lose their job, or would not even have a job without this Farm Bill. So this farm bill has a huge impact most Native Americans look at, and I know everyone is so very eternally grateful for it. Plus, this Farm Bill even impacts me personally, from my own home.

What Does My Community Need in the Farm Bill?

By Shyla J. Arredondo, Blackfeet

What is the Farm Bill? Well, the Farm Bill is a great deal of things. Let me name a few: commodities, conservation, trade, nutrition, and so many more. The Farm Bill helps out so many people in so many ways. It goes from Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT, to free breakfast and lunch at most schools. The Farm Bill helps us out a lot, and most of us don't even know it. We need to thank the Farm Bill for allowing us to have so many of these things. Without most of these possessions, people will be helpless. That's how important the Farm Bill is to us, and how much it helps us out. Some people probably don't care about the Farm Bill. I think they should. The Farm Bill is worth knowing. When I first heard of the Farm Bill I didn't want to know about it, but then the more I started reading, the more I got attached to it, and now I'm writing some information about it. I think the people who don't want to read about the Farm Bill, should read it. Like I said, the Farm Bill is important.

How does the Farm Bill impact Indian Agriculture? I can tell you, but that would just be boring, so I'm going to tell you in a more appealing way. The Farm Bill helps out just about everywhere. Here on the reservation, we have a lot of things going on. From growing crops, to hungry students. We need the Farm Bill and we may need to improve it. My grandma, or so'oh in Hopi, once said, "Water is life, and water can make life." Without water, we would have nothing. No crops to take care of and feast on, no animals, and so many more. We need the Farm Bill. How bad? Well, why don't we ask the people who are living off food stamps? My mom has eight kids, and we are the ones living off food stamps. We are one of the million people who need food stamps.

We never stop to think about how bad we need the Farm Bill. There is a lot of programs that are affected by it, which leads to my next question, what programs in my community are impacted by the Farm Bill? One program I can say that is impacted by the Farm Bill would be EBT, or food stamps. Food stamps lets people with low money be able to afford food. Of course, food stamps has a limit of how much you get a month. My mom has food stamps. I guess you can say that we can't live without it. My mom has trouble getting a job, so basically we need food stamps. Thanks to the Farm Bill, we are able to have it. Another program that is impacted by the Farm Bill would be the Women, Infants, and Children program, or WIC. WIC is another food supply program. WIC has a limit also, but it's only for healthy food, which is great. Healthy food makes a big difference in our life, and WIC is there for us. Sadly we can only have WIC for a limited time. You have to be a certain age to get off the program. I believe it was five years of age. My Mother is also on WIC. Do you see how important it is now? We really need the Farm Bill.

Our community has trash on the ground, and we need to do something about it, or else it will

affect our animals. So, how will I take an active role in insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill? Well, I can start picking up trash, but I can't do it by myself. I was thinking that more than one person can help me. We really need to do something with the trash, especially for our animals. The animals can eat the trash, and it won't be able to digest, therefore, killing the animals. It doesn't even have to be cows or horses. It can be birds, sheep, goat, and so many more. If we want to have our animals healthy, then we need to give our animals a healthy environment. We should view the world the way animals do. We not only have to take care of our animals, but mother earth as well. Not only can we pick up trash, but we can also teach kids, at a presentation, about how important the Farm Bill is, and how we can improve it. There are many more ways how we can take an active role in ensuring our community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill, but these were just a few ways.

To make sure that my chaperone and I take an active role in our community will be by actually pick garbage up. We can gather up a team to help pick up litter in our community. We can work toward t-shirts, and building our team up bigger and better. With the children, we can teach them in a more better way so they can understand, as in fun activities. If we do this and get them involved, they would learn much better about the Farm Bill. Then we can hope that they can tell their parents, so they can do something about it, or join our trash pick-up team. We can also take a role into the government, and go to most meetings and hopefully resolve this situation. We can go to the township to suggest anything to help out our community. This is what my chaperone and I can do to take an active role in our community. The Farm Bill if very important. We need it no matter what happens. Our lives are decisive and so is the Farm Bill. We basically can't do anything without it. We might even need to improve it. Sooner or later, everything is going to be under the Farm Bill. Then if the Farm Bill disappears, so will we. "As we approach the 2007 Farm Bill, we hope this marks the beginning of a willingness by congress to reevaluate U.S. daily policy to reflect today's ever changing- marketplace" by Chip Kunde. Hopefully he has something similar to say about the 2018 Farm Bill, and hopefully we can make it better and make a difference.

What Does My Community Need in the 2018 Farm Bill?

By Steven Antelope, Northern Arapaho

How does the Farm Bill impact Indian Agriculture? Well I have never really learned about the farm bill but I can try my best to learn. Well the Farm Bill has a tremendous impacted my community by raising the money on the land, feed, and livestock. I would like to know more about the Farm Bill because it will be more helpful for me to know how it will help my community. Although through programs covering everything from crop insurance for farmers to healthy food access for low-income families, from beginning farmer trainings to support for sustainable farming practices, this powerful package of laws sets the course of our food and farming systems. This is what I somewhat know about the farm bill that is effecting my community. the farm bill has changed in the last 70 years; its primary purposes are the same. Our food and farming system confronts new challenges today, but through citizen and stakeholder action for a fair farm bill, we can ensure the vibrancy and productivity of our agriculture, economy, and communities for generations to come. This is what I think how the farm bill effects my community.

What programs in my community are impacted by the Farm bill? This is our USDA has partnered with more than 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners on these conservation projects since 2009 – a record number. By protecting marginal cropland, preserving habitat and implementing environmentally-friendly production methods, these efforts preserve the ability of America's farmers and ranchers to continue producing an abundant food supply in the years to come. Conservation also strengthens outdoor recreation, which adds more than \$640 billion every year to our economy. The Farm Bill represents the nation's largest investment supporting the voluntary and successful conservation, restoration and management of America's working lands. A new Farm Bill would: Continue targeted conservation efforts through a streamlined Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This new program will continue efforts under existing programs like the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, Healthy Forest Restoration Program on the Wind River Reservation these programs need to help more Native Americans. I really care about my community and the farm bill has been ruining our chances to get more livestock and feed for the livestock. These programs are struggling with the farm bill because they barely have enough money to pay for feed and such. This is what the programs are having trouble with the Farm Bill. Also the Northern Arapaho Reservation is not active in agriculture but I do know a few people who grow alfalfa and other crops such as corn, sugar beets, vegetable gardens, and Angus beef ranches.

How will I take an Active Role In insuring my community is represented by the 2018 Farm Bill? First of all I would try to contact anyone from the USDA to get a loan to help my community represented by talking to other people that would like to help me to get my community noticed. I could try to make posters saying that our lands and livestock need more food during the winter because they raise the money bill on feed and rancher are trying to buy hay but it's too much to pay. Any other methods would help me like having people signing petitions or ask if they will help me get noticed by the government to helps us by help lowering the Farm Bill. I think my community really needs to get recognized by other tribal councils or the government to help us out with the farm bill and how Native Americans don't have any access to lands to get their lands or get their cattle out, I should also try to take out loans to get my community represented but I also think that it would be to hard but I should always try my best all the time that's why I try to get to these conferences or summits to get my knowledge about agriculture as much as I can, While am still young everything is hard for me but I try my best to get my community noticed to this farm bill, the reason I can't get my community noticed because I am young they don't think I'm serious about it. Many Native youth who aspire to these career paths, and the funding and programs in the Research Title must help support these goals. Greater attention must be given to whether the land grant extension system funding is being used appropriately or in such a way that tribal communities and producers receive the resources they need in relation to the proportionate formula funding distributed. This is what I also think about getting my community noticed by the 2018 farm bill in Wind River Reservation, Wyoming Area.

What are the two steps my chaperone and I would take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community? The first step me and my chaperone will take shall be That we will be able to talk to the other tribe about how we can talk about this Farm Bill, the other tribe is the Eastern Shoshone tribe

but at this very moment the tribal councils of the Shoshone and Arapahos they are not talking because of how much we have to pay for the lands that we have. As Native Americans we should try to work it out with each other. As this continues we barely have access to limited areas such as leases or Indian land that has been blocked off. Such as the dump areas where we can use to dump our trash but that has been blocked off by how much everything costed. The second step is that we could talk to the USDA where we live but it seems like they don't want to help us with a loans or anything about our lands and we can talk to other programs on our reservation but they are going through a hard time also well this is what I have to say about me and my chaperone are going to ensure our community.

Rural Development on the Navajo Nation

By Sunshine Tso, Navajo

Throughout my life in Indian Agriculture, there has been an increase in interest within my community. The Intertribal Agriculture Council has been a huge part of my interest in Indian ag and is the reason that I seek Sustainable Agriculture in higher education. With that, I would like to share a brief description of the 2018 Farm Bill with you and what it means to my community and I. How the 2018 Farm Bill impacts Indian Agriculture is very critical and important to have as a resource in Indian Agriculture. The impacts include Indian commodities, Conservation, Trade, Nutrition, Energy, Credit, Rural Development, Research, Forestry, Horticulture, and Crop Insurance. Although this is a very big handful of upcoming changes, I would like to take this time to identify the crucial issues that will impact my Dine land.

As I stand as a concerned youth, I have the chance to view the issues that other youth are not able to see. Whether a topic is positive or not, there are certainly many things in my community that will be affected. The object of the Farm Bill will be geared towards Indian Ag but as well as a teaching tool to Native Youth across Indian Country. With the increase of urbanization within our Dine Nation, there is not a resource that youth can rely on. The idea of creating your own perspective of the Farm Bill is up to you. Since I live in a small Navajo community, there are many advantages as well as disadvantages that go along with the way of life that is shared within our community.

Although there are many changes in the farm bill, there are some positives that are also brought within our Native lands. One of The programs that are affected in my Native Community is the change in Rural Development, specifically Maintaining Rural Water Programs. As I said before, my small Navajo community is full of many livestock owners who depend a lot on irrigated water that is caught near the NAPI (Navajo Agriculture Products Industry) fields. I haul my small water trailer there on a daily basis for my horses and my plants. This irrigation water system has been used ever since I was small. After 20+ years of being used, it has leaks here and there but the pressure has been decreasing dramatically. During the winter months, my family and I have to reserve a great amount of time both in the morning before school and after school in order to get water. During the fall, usually at the end of October, the water is shut off. That leaves my family and I getting water from our own home and putting it in water containers. We fill up about 10 five-gallon water jugs and sometimes small gallon buckets in order to get water to the horses. On top of that, in the winter months, it's usually very cold and near freezing, we have to be

cautious about the amount of water we give the horses and the amount of water so that the water won't freeze in undesired places. This is a struggle that my family and my communities have been struggling with as well. The Chapter House usually shuts their water off as well to ensure that their water hoses do not freeze. This issue has definitely been the forefront in my community for many years. When I go to my paternal grandparents' ranch in Arizona, they too also have to haul water from their nearest water hole. To reduce the amount of time to take the cattle and horses to the windmill, my family always go to the chapter house where they have a water system. This water system is a community Development that is year-round and strongly used for the convenience of our people. This is one way that my community could adopt to decrease the amount of difficulties we face in the winter months.

Within the Rural Development Program, there is also other programs that have a very crucial impact on the Navajo Nation. Things such as Maintaining the Under Secretary for Rural Development Position. I feel that this is important because on the Navajo Nation, there is a lack of knowledge from both the parents and children in the Indian Agriculture Department. If the Navajo Nation Rural Development Program used Indian Ag knowledge and gave it back to the youth at fairs such as the Navajo Nation Fair or at the Southwest Regional Intertribal Agriculture Council Summit, there would be a great deal of interested responses and a demand for updates.

The role that I will take to ensure that my voice in the 2018 Farm Bill would be to keep advocating at Indian Agricultural events across the Navajo Nation. When an adult sees another adult advocating about a specific topic, it occasionally interests them. On the other hand, if a student advocates about a specific topic like this one, people listen. The real weapon to achieve the interest of people are though the youth. Youth are very sacred and crucial in the Navajo culture as well as others. When a child is given the opportunity to speak, adults will make sure they are heard. With that, in upcoming Navajo Nation Council Delegate meetings, I will be attending at a Eastern Agency and District 19 youth. On top of that, I will be running to earn the spot in the Navajo Nation Youth Council and advocate on the esurance in our Navajo Food Security.

The role that my chaperone and I will take is continuing to voice our opinions about our concerns. As I attend Chapter House Meetings and cultural events, there are many ways that I advocate on behalf of the youth. My father (chaperone) on the other hand is doing the exact same thing but on the Tribal Government level. I am extremely grateful that my dad advocates on behalf of him, our family, our people, and our way of life. When there is a problem that is detected in our community that involves our resources for our animals or crops, we are the first to raise concerns. As long as we are treated well along with our Mother Earth, we will continue to walk with reverence and beauty. Thank you so much for taking the time to review my essay. 'Ahee'héé'!

Change

By Tamiera Garter, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Today more than ¼ of Native Americans live in poverty, and the unemployment rates are higher than the national average. On the reservations, everyone as a community depends on government

programs, like housing and nutrition programs to survive. Back then, surviving was something else, we were such a nuisance, such wild children that caused the US to want to get rid of us; with everything from reservations, to controlling our food systems, massacres, broken treaties, etc. list goes on. smart I guess, however, we're still standing.

All things must come to an end, and after years and years of being lost time has changed and we're not that extinct, we've had all this time to think and we can't continue to accept this silence, they tore us down we lost hope and gave up. Yet we still have the right to have a voice, and a need to be heard. With the 2018 Farm Bill, we have a chance, a chance to no longer be prisoners, a chance for change, so the next generations don't have to deal with our problems.

I will follow the white man's trail. I will make him my friend, but I will not bend my back to his burdens. I will be cunning as a coyote. I will ask him to help me understand his ways, then I will prepare the way for my children, and their children. The Great Spirit has shown me - a day will come when they will outrun the white man in his own shoes." (Many Horses)

I like questioning everything, so where does this funding for programs like WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) , USDA Commodities (United States Department of Agriculture Commodities) come from, if you didn't know like everyone I asked, it's okay, but the answer is the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill, a law that governs an array of agriculture and food programs connecting the food on our plates to the farmers and ranchers who produce it, having a tremendous impact on how food is grown and how people get it whether laws or food programs to help support US citizens, or in our case how the Farm Bill impacts Indian agriculture.

The small town I live in is surrounded by farmers and ranchers one way and the other is the reservation and the closest town 11.3 miles away doesn't have a grocery store, according to the USDA making it a food desert. Since I also work a grocery store and know how expensive food is, and how the food people are buying is so extremely unhealthy, that there is no excuse to why we as a race have the highest rate of diabetes twice as big as whites. As for my community and what I think we need I have a list, different set parameters on nutrition food programs, and a program that could give federally recognized tribes money to use it to start gardening, setting up slaughterhouses, meat processing facilities, and having all tribes take food sovereignty assessments.

Gardening, we'd need probably a couple of greenhouses for that whole tribe and how many towns it's a part of and also using money on seeds and other gardening tools, and some source of water, hopefully growing traditional foods to our own tribe and as who we are then Plains and buffalo, Salmon with Arctic etc. with meat processing facilities and slaughterhouses. Producing more jobs, and hopefully in the near future self-dependent indigenous people. All of this in the Farm Bill could go under as Nutrition, Rural Development, and even possible Research, for our health and maybe even one day helping our health as a country be somewhat proportionately healthy.

Why? To bring everyone together, and to try to not lose any more history than we already have. My tribe had a nomadic lifestyle we followed the buffalo, we could care on some traditions, no one will wonder where their food will come from, people will have jobs, we'll be our own people no depending

on our next, EBT day, or unhealthy eating habits, we won't be lost.

We need to be self-dependent like our ancestors we need a wakeup call to remind us of who we are, we've been in this same pattern all these years stuck in a rut, becoming our parents, drunks, nobodies when we have all this potential to be just as equal as anyone else we still choose this, why, because it's what we know best? We still have a chance to change statistics and our own reputation, we won't let them bet us not again, we are warriors our ancestors survived long enough. I think it's time to change, that's why we need these things, that's why it's so imperative that they understand because I don't know what'll happen in the next four years.

Has your mom ever yelled at you to knock it off? In this case, Mother Nature is telling us to stop, with all the harm others are doing to Earth with pollution we need to this traditionally, gardening, and our own little programs that we make our own food, it'll take time. It may not be big but it's a start that I'm willing to take, it's better than what we have now. We need to become one in order for this to take place, we need to take a stand and realize that poverty isn't going to be the death of us not yet, at least not now.

We need food, health food to maintain a healthy lifestyle, I will make sure that this happens even if we get rejected I will be that one protester for a cause and I will make sure that before I die someone will know that, this isn't the end for Native Americans, life could be better, we just have to believe. Two steps we will take is spreading the word to our tribal council, and figuring out planning what it would look like and why it's important to us personally. This may be our last chance, to finally have a change and we shouldn't wait any longer.

The Impact of the 2018 Farm Bill

By Tayla Thorstenson, Cheyenne River Sioux

"Hihani waste. Tayla Thorstenson emaychiapi. Hi, my name is Tayla Thorstenson, and I am an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. I am sixteen years old and have lived on a ranch on the Cheyenne River Reservation my whole life. My hometown is Lantry, South Dakota. The Cheyenne River Reservation is located in north central South Dakota and encompasses Dewey and Ziebach counties. My Reservation is one of the largest Reservations at about 2.8 million acres or roughly the size of Connecticut. Agriculture has always been a big part of my life and my family's life. My family is generations and generations of farmers and ranchers. In my area agriculture is an immense part of how we live and earn a living. Without agriculture, many of the jobs and lives of people in my area would change dramatically. My Reservation is agricultural-based. An estimated 100 million dollars are gathered each year in the agricultural field on the Cheyenne River Reservation. This means that agriculture is our main source of income on my Reservation. This is why being included in the 2018 Farm Bill is so important to my family and my tribe.

One thing that the government does that impacts Indian Country is the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is legislation pertaining to all agriculture and everything else under agriculture. The Farm Bill is passed every five years by the United States Congress. Since the first Farm Bill was passed in 1993, Americans

and Native Americans all around the world have had to deal with the effects it has had on our trade, environment, food, and our rural communities. Growing up in an extremely rural area, my community has been impacted by the new laws and policies that the Farm Bill puts out.

In 2004, the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) donated money to Tribes in Washington State. Since then, the NRCS has furthered its funding to other Tribes in the United States. At the end of 2009 an estimated \$9,664,715 was put towards agricultural funding for Native American tribes by the NRCS (Rides 2012). They also lent a hand to the Native American tribes by helping them with various projects that were on their Reservations. Projects included the conservation innovation grants, the watershed project, and the fish passageways.

Today, there are many programs that are built around the Farm Bill that are intended to help youth and adults of all ages with their agricultural endeavors. It offers many different loans, project help, insurance, assistance, and grants for farmers, youth, ranchers, and anyone else who might need it to get involved with agriculture. However, although all these programs are available to Native Americans on Reservations especially the youth, they are still hard to use. For example, I have tried to utilize the FSA (Farm Service Agency) youth loan. But unfortunately I had many issues and was quite frustrated with the kinds of problems I had to deal with.

After I attended the 2016 IAC Conference, I came home and decided to put in for a youth loan through the FSA. My application was an out of the box idea and seemed to surprise the loan officers. I asked to receive a loan to help me buy a bred milk cow and two calves. However, after I put in for the loan it took what seemed like an unacceptable amount of time for anyone to get back to me on whether or not I would receive my loan. My proposal for one loan was broken into two separate loans by the FSA. In an effort to move forward, I agreed to one loan for a bred cow only, deciding to partner separately with my brothers for two calves. Once I finally was approved for my loan I faced the new challenge of finding a bred milk cow, but by that time all the milk cows were either dry or sold. This put me in a complicated situation considering the FSA wanted me to make my first payment in May, when by that time I wouldn't even have my cow yet. These complications today are still not all the way resolved but thanks to the IAC I have found a way to deal with them.

In order to fix this, I have decided to help my community insure that we are well represented in the up and coming Farm Bill. As a small community in a very rural area, we need to get ourselves out there so that we are not overlooked and dismissed by the Federal Government and its programs. One thing that I can do as a Native American youth who is trying to get more involved in agriculture is provide testimony on the problems I faced when trying to utilize the FSA Youth Loan program. Before we can be sure that we are involved in the Farm Bill we must first educate our youth on what the Farm Bill is. Which means we need to read it, study it, and learn it before we can truly understand it.

As a young Native American who is interested in getting involved in agriculture and helping out my community, I am planning on taking action. I would like to help the youth not only in my community but in surrounding communities get more involved in agriculture. My school, for example, does not have any classes to help prepare students who wants to be involved in agriculture. To fix this I would like to go

to my school board and ask them for the funding to give our youth a chance to learn about what is out there as far as agriculture. Also, I have begun informing my peers about all that the IAC has to offer for the youth in our community. I hope that they will take the internships, essay contest, and summits into consideration. Our producers are aging and we as the next generation are going to have big shoes to fill. My chaperone, will also continue spreading the word about agriculture and ways we can improve it in our community. I can share my story of my experience and offer it as testimony on how the Farm Bill impacts Native youth at the on the ground level. I can make my testimony my "elevator speech" and inform my Tribal Council, my state and my congressional delegates. My chaperone is willing to do the same and help me get my testimony out there. Together my chaperone and I will continue to work towards obtaining a FFA program in my school. All these actions together will help agriculture continue to grow.

We as Native people must come together to better life for ourselves. Educating our youth on the problems in our communities and agriculture is one of our top priorities. Together we can make our world livable and our communities can be heard. Working as one is the most important things we need to do. As Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce tribe said, "The Earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it."

2018 Farm Bill and My Community

By Taylee Dawn Ridesatthedoor, Blackfeet

What is the Farm Bill of 2018? How is it important to the Blackfeet to know what it is? The Farm Bill is legislation that occurs every five years and deals with the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2018 Farm Bill is what agricultural producers, rural economy and communities need for full funding which is split up into five parts, which are animal and plant marketing and trade, financial security and infrastructure, food regulation and environment and conservation. It's important to know because the Farm Bill gives access to the safest, high quality food supply which is essential to have for the communities health and well being.

The Farm Bill impacts Indian agriculture because of the heavy investments in livestock and commodities is around \$2 billion of the agriculture income. Also, \$1.9 billion comes from livestock production. With 50% of the \$3.4 billion is being used for cattle it's crucial to have the risk managements meet with the needs. With 75% livestock indemnity payments. Continuous improvements made to Farm Service Agency programs for addressing the availability, efficiency, and application of credit programs on the Blackfeet reservation and other county's. Indian Country is always hit more or less harder than most of the county because of the remote and isolated nature of farms and because of the state's "credit deserts," which the reservation is apart of. With the FSA lending 100 percent the cost of bred livestock, which increases the amount of debt secured by the same amount of assets, sometimes by as much as 25 percent. The decision would be made by a local commercial lender for annual production costs. In Indian Country, Agricultural risk management is critical for producers to look into. "100 percent tribally owned and operated insurance providers, begin the process of offering crop insurance products in Indian Country because it has significant experience offering and underwriting insurance needs in Indian Country and serves a national

intertribal audience.”

The 2018 Farm Bill affects the nutrition, crop insurance, conservation, commodity programs as well as research and the education of the communities. It consists of \$756 billion of food stamps with \$93 billion in crop insurance, \$56 billion in conservation, \$40 billion in commodity programs and \$7 billion on everything else. If you control a food supply you control the people in it, which kind of is what the Farm Bill does to most areas. As low as 25%-50% and as high as 60%-80% rely on the Farm Bill food funding. A lot of the elders depend and rely on that for their food source. This generation and younger control the future but they need the education first. Crop insurance is a way to help ranchers protect crops from financial losses. Also the livestock producers and crop producers must be afforded at the same risk protection. It affects 76% of the lands nutrition, 7% of commodities, 9% on crop insurance, 7% conservation, and 1% on other.

The role I can take charge in my community by making sure the elders and the children and all the people in the community are well taken care of with their food supply. That they are getting the right nutrients and the right food. By doing that I can do the summer food programs that go out and feed the elders, the children and the parents around the community. I can get the council and the board involved in the effects of the Farm Bill and how much we depend on it. I can show them the potential outlooks that could happen, by talking about how much the government funds the food supply of the blackfoot reservation. They all deserve to know how badly affected they are of the Farm Bill. I can let the people in my community know that the 2018 Farm Bill must continue to address the longstanding issue of credit access for tribal producers, by providing tribal-specific training and funding assistance on financial education and loan servicing by addressing the lingering administrative coordination issues experienced by tribal producers when seeking loans or loan servicing when dealing with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world” is a great quote to explain the role I must play in my community to take care of and protect our reservation. My mentor and I can work together in our community to ensure the community gets well preserved and organic foods is by looking into a community garden(greenhouse) to grow fresh produce for everyone. By doing that you can ensure that everything is fresh and non-contaminated with preservatives and that everything is organic and fresh, safe to eat by everyone who needs it. Community members can get involved, and it can be offered as community service hours for the high school student credits. My mentor and I can get more people involved with the effects of the farm bill, so more and more people can know whose hands their lives are being held in, and who can simply take away their food supply with a snap of a finger.

The 2018 Farm Bill affects the lives of Native Americans deeply. The people’s food supply depends on the reliable food resources of the Farm Bill. To get people evened out and not have that many people depend on the Farm Bill for food, we can make a garden, to give fresh produce to the community, for a fast and easy source instead of unknown produce flown in or dropped off on a truck. People need to know the affect the Farm Bill has their lives and the lives of their children’s children. They need to know the cause and effects of what would happen if the government stopped funding the Indian

agriculture. We need to be prepared if something like that happened because the funding from the government to our commodities, crop producers and the livestock producers are our main food source and losing that means no healthy food within a range of 30 miles or longer. There will be gas stations but they will only have unhealthy food that can lead to a shorter life-span.

My Community's Farm Bill Needs

By Ty Ducheneaux, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Hello, my name is Ty Ducheneaux; I'm an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. I reside in a little town on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation known as Timber Lake, South Dakota. I live in a rural community that doesn't capitalize on the potential that we have when it comes to agriculture. One of my biggest dreams is that one day, we capitalize on the amazing opportunity available. Currently, our tribal producers raise their cattle, only to sell them off the reservation, where they are then slaughtered, processed and packaged. The potential for jobs, economic growth and self sustainability are there, we just need to capitalize. The concept of an economy driven by such value added agriculture is a model which my past experience with the Intertribal Agriculture Council Membership Meeting has exposed me to.

The success stories of tribal producers capturing more value in their community's agriculture has demonstrated to me the steps necessary for my dream to become a reality. This year's IAC Essay Contest writing prompt has helped me to recognize that improving Indian agriculture does not solely happen as a result of what gets done throughout our reservations; so often impact on our industry happens to us - not for us - by the congressional body in Washington, D.C. Every four or five years the United States Congress approves a Farm Bill; essentially, an outline of the programs and services the USDA can provide to assist producers, communities, universities and businesses which keep our industry function, and help sustain rural America. Once the Farm Bill is passed, the USDA proposes a budget each year to carry out the Farm Bill initiatives. The Congress plays a huge role here, each house putting forward what its version of the agriculture appropriation bill. They do this based on the budget that the USDA has. Because the congress has two different opportunities to affect and implement food and rural development, it is that much more critical that we are proactive.

After reviewing the 2018 USDA Budget Proposal under the previous Farm Bill, its impact on my community's health, sustainability, and production will be tremendous, and devastating. This makes Indian Country efforts in the development of the 2018 Farm Bill to support healthy Tribal communities critical for our success in self sufficiency and food sovereignty.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs are just a few of the programs that are going to be crippled by the proposed spending budget. FDPIR provides food to families with incomes below the poverty line, residing on Native American reservations. SNAP is a program through the USDA that provides a monthly budget used to purchase nutritional foods. Lastly, WIC provides healthcare and nutrition to low income women whom are either pregnant, breastfeeding or have infants

and children. These are all government funded programs that help financially unstable families obtain everyday necessities, such as food, healthcare and opportunities, in communities which are extremely lacking. Without proper funding to these programs, people all around the country are going to suffer. Long term, this is going to hurt the producers just as much as the consumers.

The main objective of these programs is to give low income families the needed assistance to be able to buy or obtain foods made by the producers. An often overlooked benefit is realized by our producers who then, have a clientele to purchase their products in the form of the federal government; essentially providing a pricing floor. Therefore, if the programs that feed those in need are cut the producers lose out as well, further restricting our tribal economies which rely on agriculture.

A lack of consumers causes the market to swing, and without the nutritional programs listed above, there will be a good chance that some products will become difficult to sell. This will cause the price of the product to decrease, which then leads to even more market swings. With an unstable market, comes an unstable producer. An unstable producer leads to an unstable economy, which affects every single person in this country, and the world for that matter.

In addition to having a stable floor for production; affordable and timely crop and revenue insurance, also Farm Bill programs, are essential to mitigate the effects of market swings. These risk management practices can help minimize the impact of unrealized sales and production. This is yet another problem to address in the 2018 Farm Bill. If anything we should be developing more crop and revenue insurance tailored to suit family sized farms and ranches, instead of taking them away.

Our environment will be impacted in a similar way. The sustainability of our land largely depends on the conservation practices that farmers and ranchers all around the country partake in. With expected budget cuts to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), producers will face difficulty in seeking the funding, assistance, and expertise which currently keep their land in a productive state. Should operations eliminate conservation practices as a result of these barriers, improved lands will be in jeopardy of again, degrading. CRP is a program that was put into place by the USDA that gives a yearly "rental" payment to farmers and ranchers that agree to remove their "environmentally sensitive land" from production and plant crops that will improve the wellbeing of the land. CRP contracts are typically 10-15 years. EQIP provides assistance financially to producers who put in act the conservation methods EQIP offers. CSP is designed as a holistic management plan which implements conservation practices on a cost share basis.

After realizing the influence that this one bill will have throughout my entire reservation, I ask myself this, "Why is my Tribe not doing more to influence this legislation?" A harsh reality to face is that Tribal leadership has become accustomed to reacting to what's been done to us. The role that I play in the 2018 Farm Bill is inspiring my tribal leaders to not only be more active, but advocate for changes as well. I've thought long and hard about the question "What are two steps my chaperone and I must take to ensure we effectively reach this active role in our community?" The two most influential ways that came to me were calling our local and state representatives and giving our opinions, as well as advocating for the IAC and all of the good they continue to do on a daily basis and helping all of those involved by

examining the issues and proposing my own solutions.

Native American Agriculture

By William G Wayne, Navajo

Agriculture. It's in anything and everything people do everyday. Most don't realize it, but modern civilization is built upon harvesting crops and raising livestock. This is why it is very important, in our progressing world, to not forget about the security of our resources. With aid from the 2018 Farm Bill, all agriculturists, from the gigantic industrial farms with 40 acres of corn fields in Kansas to the smallest gardens and pastures with two acres of corn fields on Native American lands, will get much needed support to meet the growing demand. In other words, the Farm Bill will greatly impact the way everyone, even Native Americans, live and prosper.

With all things considered, Native American agriculture is small and on the decline. Contention for much needed resources such as water and land make growing crops and raising animals almost a burden. Also, finding a good buyer for these goods are sparse. This causes many to just take their investments for themselves and others to quit using their land altogether. However, the 2018 Farm Bill will greatly impact agriculture on Native lands. That is, as Title VI explains that water will be funded and distributed more efficiently, effectively, and cost-friendly. Title III explains that third party producers will be able to sell and trade with more options and opportunities. This will allow Native Americans, who are third party producers, to be able to grow and raise even more commodities than ever before to keep up with the growing demand. The world will be needing more food. It doesn't all have to be produced in Kansas.

However, the 2018 Farm Bill won't just affect agriculturists. Those living on tribal lands who aren't producing livestock or growing crops will also be changing their lives around for both the better and for the worse. Those who live off of EBT's and food stamps would have a much better quality of life. With more food supply from local Native American ranches, the food markets could cut the costs down lower and allow those who are struggling to have more opportunities to succeed and survive far greater than they have been in the past. That's not all. To power the nation, lots of energy will need to be produced. Title IX explains that bio-based energy will be added in the 2018 Farm Bill. This is in the effort to lower energy costs and electricity bills. In an added benefit, pollution rates will be lowered exponentially. The Peobody Coal Mine near Kayenta, Arizona is already in the process of shutting down. But, with the help of the 2018 Farm Bill, those miners and engineers will be able to find a new job somewhere else that supports bio-based energy instead of taking the path of being unemployed.

Living in Kayenta, Arizona myself, I will also be greatly impacted by the Farm Bill. I for one go to Monument Valley High School within Kayenta itself. It's the only high school nearby. I enjoy my studies here. However, when it comes time to eat lunch, I regret my choices to go to school here. So much has changed ever since Michelle Obama tried to make school foods healthier. Because of her actions, the food at Monument Valley High School may be healthy, but it, down to earth, tastes awful. Not only that, but the portion sizes don't leave anyone satisfied. Nothing is made right like it used to be. It may be

healthy, but in an effort to do so, no one wants to eat the food. Therefore, instead of achieving the goal of a healthier nation, students at school have developed the habit to skip lunch and starve instead of eating. Is this what we have become? To start the process of changing, we should take into consideration that about half the students at Monument Valley High School are athletes. Athletes always need more calories in their system than regular people. Right now, serving sizes are based on those with a 2,000 calorie diet. That leaves those who do eat unsatisfied and hungry. Therefore, we should up the serving sizes a little and leave it to the students to choose. Also, make sure everything is cooked, instead of heated in a microwave. This could happen by stepping up and speaking out. If that's what it takes to get better, high quality food in my belly, I'll do it.

But, I don't have to do this alone. My chaperone, Mrs. Elissa McBride could help me with this task. She agrees with me and the majority of the school that food here is bad. The students do get the food for free. She has to pay for it. It is only three dollars. However, she decides to get fast food at the local food parlors instead for twice the cost. Her reasons? She says that she'd "rather spend six bucks on something good than spend three bucks on something bad." With her help and support, along with the rest of the school's, the horrible food could be put to an end. Not only that, the entire nation could help. The food in other schools may be as bad or even worse than the food at Monument Valley High School. That much help and support could make sure that the healthy foods that taste horrible with no satisfaction will still be healthy, but they will taste far better and invite those who skip lunch to eat instead starving themselves.

In conclusion, the Farm Bill will greatly impact the way everyone, even Native Americans, live and prosper. Everyone who lives on Tribal lands will be affected by the 2018 Farm Bill. Farmers and ranchers will have a greater opportunity to make profits from their commodities. Even those who don't live the farm life will be affected. Bio-based energy supply will be in need to substitute coal mines that are shutting down. Finally, the Farm Bill could be a light in the fight to get better food at school. Who knew? Agriculture. It's in anything and everything people do everyday.

What My Community Needs from the Farm Bill

By Xandrea Bearsheart, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

I am Xandrea Bearsheart, a Tribally enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe from Mobridge, South Dakota personally believe that the (EBT) program should have different parameters to help those who truly need more help than others. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system that allows state welfare departments to issue benefits via a magnetically encoded payment card, used in the United States. Generally speaking, these cards are used to distribute welfare cash benefits like any other debit card, if your state determines that you qualify for food benefits they will send you an (EBT) card. You can use this card at the cash register to pay for food. Depending on family size and income is how they determine your amount you get on the (EBT) card.

I am a fifteen-year-old freshman in high school working at a local grocery store, I believe (EBT) does good in some way for families like single parents/grandparents, I understand if giving (EBT) to

parents/grandparents who physically can't work or who do work but don't get paid enough to support their family steadily helps in a positive way. A negative thing about (EBT) is that many people buy junk food leading to bad cooking habits this having a downfall of health risks like diabetes, obesity, and more. When given (EBT) cards you aren't allowed to cash the card for money this leading to people selling their cards or what is left of the card to others to get cash for different things that are not food products. Many Native Americans refuse to find work because of how much government funds they get.

My personal experience with (EBT) is that it made not only my life but my family's life less stressful since we didn't really have to stress out on having to live paycheck to paycheck every month. After my family got kicked off of (EBT) it was/is very hard to keep up with having to buy food and clothing for our everyday needs. This also includes dealing with bills and car insurance.

The Farm Bill helps us in many ways in this instance. It helps by connecting grown foods from farms or ranches, straight to our plates in many ways for us to consume. (EBT) is a program supported by the Farm Bill to help financially assist people who live close to poverty levels and to help people buy food. Without the Farm Bill we wouldn't have the assistance we have today with many of these programs. For instance, programs like Snap, WIC, and Commodities have assistance from the Farm Bill and have been very helpful throughout the years.

I can relate to most of this stated above and most stated below too. Most Native Americans have the struggles my family and I have every day on the daily basis. Many Native Americans are not able to have the help of the programs the Farm Bill provides since they work and make so much, but so little at the same time that they are barely getting by.

I believe that the government could help by changing some of the ways they tax foods. They could change the way they tax the unhealthy processed foods, if this could be done reservations would see a difference in the health department for everyone, not only by putting a tax on the unhealthy foods we could use the tax money to go towards a community center where not only kids but adults can feel safe in their community, this community center could be a safe place where people can play games.

An idea on how I think I can help my community is by starting a garden with my chaperone where community members would be able to go and pick vegetables and fruit to take home and cook a healthy meal for their family or if they can't come to us we would possibly bring them the foods from the garden. During the summer another idea that my chaperone and I would be able to start up and do is that we have a healthy cooking class where community members would hopefully be able to attend. With this class we would use foods from the garden. We would share foods that were made and give ideas on how to stay healthy and happy. When all classes are done we would give everyone a healthy cookbook with unique recipes to take home and try for themselves.

Going to the Arkansas Agriculture Summit has had a good impact on me and not only the summit itself but also the people who have attended. While I was at the Summit I listened to the ideas and thoughts people had come up with and what made them so successful. From listening to these speakers talk, I learned to think more outside of my comfort zone. It also got me thinking and looking for more ideas that would sound good for my community members. I thought about ideas the would pertain to all

age groups, not just older people, but younger people too. For example, a project that all generations, from grandparents to great-grandchildren, could work on together as a family. Learning how other Native Americans have figured out the problems in their communities and how they learned to address these issues, taught me how to figure out what were and are the real problems in my community and how I could try to fix them in a more mannered way.

In conclusion, I believe that (EBT) has helped in positive ways but has sadly, also had some negative outcomes which should and could be changed based on what I have listed and discussed above. Not only my community, but other communities would be able to use these ideas too and have the same positive outcomes. No matter how young, or how old the person is, there is always a way for you to be a part of your community and help out in a healthy and positive way.

For More Information, visit the Youth page on our website: www.IndianAgLink.com/Youth

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