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Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 08/24/2005 07:08 AM CDT
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Question1:

Question2:

Question3: One of the most serious threats to the Pennsylvania environment is the loss of farmland to suburban sprawl and other land uses. We recommend these Farm Bill reforms so farmers may remain profitable, to continue farming and conserving natural resources.

Equitable funding: Funding also must be more equitable, across geographies and across commodities. Pennsylvania farmers rank near the bottom in terms of federal support for agriculture, receiving only \$0.01-\$0.03 for every dollar in agricultural production, quite a difference from states like North Dakota that receive \$0.17 on the same. Subsidies should be compatible with global markets: Funding for commodity programs should be shifted to programs that reward farmers for their conservation efforts without distorting global markets. Commodity program payments face growing pressure to be changed or eliminated to be compatible with global markets.

Question4: The next Farm Bill must maintain farmers' livelihoods, in a manner that also provides the necessary assistance for conservation efforts that will lead to healthy streams throughout the nation. It should address the following in an authentic and substantive way:

Support conservation practices to protect water quality: Pollutants such as excess sediment and nutrients enter Pennsylvania waterways through agricultural runoff. They compromise our aquatic ecosystems and weaken our fisheries. Farmers in Pennsylvania face growing challenges meeting the requirements of nutrient management plans, especially in areas where soils are saturated with phosphorus. These challenges may increase in the near future as state Tributary Strategies are developed for the 4,000 miles of Pennsylvania streams that are impaired by poor agricultural practices. The health of our streams and fisheries depends on strong Farm Bill conservation programs.

Increase in overall conservation spending: Conservation spending represents \$3.8 billion of \$29 billion in total Farm Bill payments to farmers in 2005. Conservation programs, especially the Conservation Security Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), require increased funding to reduce our nutrient and sediment contributions to local streams and downstream waters such as the Chesapeake Bay. Currently, four out of five farmers who wish to participate in federal agricultural conservation programs cannot because of insufficient funding to meet the demand.

Necessary financial and technical support for farmers: Farmers need support to establish conservation practices that help them remain profitable while protecting natural resources.

Question5:
Question6: