

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
FY 2019 Appropriation Congressional Directives**

Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
Departmental Activities				
OBPA	Spending Plans	P.L. 116-6	Requires submission within 30 days of a detailed spending plan to the Committees on Appropriations by program, project, and activity for all the funds made available under this Act, including appropriated user fees.	Within 30 Days of Enactment
OBPA	Status of House and Senate Report Language	House Report 115-706	In addition to updates provided to the Committees, the Department is directed to include in its fiscal year 2020 Congressional Justification, as a single exhibit, a table listing all deliverables, with a column for due dates if applicable.	With the FY 2020 Budget Submission
OBPA	Pilot Programs	House Report 115-706	USDA implements numerous pilot programs, some of which have long surpassed the intended length of operation. When creating a pilot program, the intent is to test a new program for a specific amount of time and then determine whether or not the pilot has achieved the desired outcome. Those pilots with merit should be considered for broader implementation, and those without should end. The Secretary is directed to provide a report to the Committees and make it publicly available on the Department's website detailing the number and type of pilot programs currently active within each agency during fiscal year 2018, how long each pilot has been operational, and a recommendation on which pilots have proven successful and which have not.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
OBPA	Organization Chart	Explanatory Statement	OBPA is directed to provide an organizational chart for each agency funded by this Act to the division and subdivision level, as appropriate, by March 1, 2019.	March 1, 2019
OBPA	Staff Years and Employees	Explanatory Statement	The conference agreement directs OBPA to provide the Committees with the number of staff years and employees on board for each agency funded by this Act.	Quarterly

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
OCIO	Transferring Funding to OCIO	P.L. 116-6	None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be transferred to the Office of the Chief Information Officer without written notification to and the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both houses of Congress.	As Necessary
OCR	OCR Allocations	P.L. 116-6 & House Report 115-706	<p>No funds made available under this heading for the Office of Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency.</p> <p>The Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate on the allocation of the funds provided to the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations by USDA agency, along with an explanation for the agency-by-agency distribution of the funds.</p>	Within 30 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
OSEC/ TBD	Establishment of a Working Group and Report	P.L. 116-6	<p>(a) The Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator of NOAA, shall establish a working group—(1) to study how mangroves, kelp forests, tidal marshes, and seagrass meadows could help deacidify the oceans; (2) to study emerging ocean farming practices that use kelp and seagrass to deacidify the oceans while providing feedstock for agriculture and other commercial and industrial inputs; and (3) to coordinate and conduct research to develop and enhance pilot-scale research for farming of kelp and seagrass in order—(A) to deacidify ocean environments; (B) to produce a feedstock for agriculture; and (C) to develop other scalable commercial applications for kelp, seagrass, or products derived from kelp or seagrass.</p> <p>Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the working group shall submit to Congress a report that includes—(1) the finding of the research described in subsection (a); the results of the pilot-scale research described in subsection (a)(3); and (3) any policy recommendations based on those findings and results.</p>	Establish a Working Group Report Due: Within 2 Years of Enactment
Farm Production and Conservation				

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FSA	FSA IT Plan for Expenditure	P.L. 116-6	That not more than 50 percent of the funding made available under this heading for information technology related to farm program delivery, may be obligated until the Secretary submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and receives written or electronic notification of receipt from such Committees of, a plan for expenditure that (1) identifies for each project/investment over \$25,000 (a) the functional and performance capabilities to be delivered and the mission benefits to be realized, (b) the estimated lifecycle cost for the entirety of the project/investment, including estimates for development as well as maintenance and operations, and (c) key milestones to be met; (2) demonstrates that each project/investment is, (a) consistent with the FSA Information Technology Roadmap, (b) being managed in accordance with applicable lifecycle management policies and guidance, and (c) subject to the applicable USDA capital planning and investment control requirements; and (3) has been reviewed by the Government Accountability Office and approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.	Before more than 50% has been obligated for farm program delivery IT
FSA	FSA IT Plan for Operational Projects	P.L. 116-6	The agency shall submit a report by the end of the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2019 to the Committees on Appropriations and the Government Accountability Office, that identifies for each project/investment that is operational (a) current performance against key indicators of customer satisfaction, (b) current performance of service level agreements or other technical metrics, (c) current performance against a pre-established cost baseline, (d) a detailed breakdown of current and planned spending on operational enhancements or upgrades, and (e) an assessment of whether the investment continues to meet business needs as intended as well as alternatives to the investment.	September 30, 2019

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FSA	Emergency Response	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee directs USDA to produce a report outlining the average and longest length of time it takes USDA to provide reimbursement under the following emergency assistance programs: crop insurance; Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program; Livestock Indemnity Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; Tree Assistance Program; Emergency Conservation Program; and Emergency Forest Restoration Program. USDA is also directed to include in the report any barriers to implementing a more efficient reimbursement process and recommendations to the Committee on potential improvements.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
FSA	Foreign Land Ownership	House Report 115-706	The Committee directs the Department to provide a report that analyzes the impact (in conjunction with other USDA agencies) of foreign persons acquiring, transferring, and holding agricultural land on family farms and rural communities.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
FSA	CCC Reports	House Report 115-706	The Committee directs the Secretary to provide a report on November 15, 2018, and May 17, 2019, on planned uses of funding under the authorities of Section 4 and Section 11 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act.	November 15, 2018 May 17, 2019

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FSA	Loan and Grant Programs	House Report 115-706	The Committee directs the Department, through the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, to provide quarterly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate on the status of obligations and funds availability for the loan and grant programs provided in this bill. The Committee further directs that if an estimate of loan activity for any program funded in Titles II and III of this bill indicates that a limitation on authority to make commitments for a fiscal year will be reached before the end of that fiscal year, or in any event whenever 75 percent of the authority to make commitments has been utilized, the Secretary shall promptly notify the Committees in writing, through the Office of Budget and Program Analysis.	Quarterly
FSA	Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Obligations and Commitments	House Report 115-706 & Senate Report 115-259	The Secretary is directed to notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate in writing 15 days prior to the obligation or commitment of any emergency funds from the CCC.	As Necessary
FSA	FSA County Employees	P.L. 116-6	That none of the funds available to the Farm Service Agency shall be used to permanently relocate county based employees that would result in an office with two or fewer employees without prior notification and approval of the Committees on Appropriations.	As Necessary
FSA	Flexibility in Loan and Loan Guarantee Levels	House Report 115-706	The bill includes language to exceed by up to 25 percent the limitation on loan and loan guarantee levels without budget authority upon written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate.	As Necessary

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FSA	FSA Workflow Management	House Report 115-706	The Secretary is directed to fill vacant employee positions across FSA due to the current hiring freeze and attrition to ensure full customer service at county offices as provided through adequate funding levels in the current and prior fiscal years. Any changes to the FSA county office structure shall be done in consultation with the Committees on Appropriations and based upon a workflow analysis with objective criteria of producer and county employee needs and convenience.	As Necessary
NRCS	Program Duplication	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee directs NRCS to provide a report on actions it will take to eliminate program duplication as identified in IG reports.	Within 90 Days of Enactment
NRCS	Technical Assistance	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee directs NRCS to maintain a record of total technical assistance dollars for the past 3 years and annually in the future, and provide the data to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. This report should differentiate mandatory and discretionary allocations.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
NRCS	Conservation of Ocelots	P.L. 116-6	The Secretary shall submit a report to Congress describing the ways in which conservation programs administered by NRCS may be better used for the conservation of ocelots (<i>Leopardus pardalis</i>) and any action taken by the Chief of NRCS relating to the conservation of ocelots.	Within 180 Days of Enactment
NRCS	Staffing Levels	Explanatory Statement	The conferees are concerned about the number of staff vacancies at NRCS, as unfilled state-level positions are creating delays in application approval and the deployment of important conservation funding. NRCS is directed to provide a report updating the Committees on staffing levels at each NRCS office across the country, by location, including vacancies that have remained unfilled for more than 6 months, plans to fill those vacancies, and the workload analysis that demonstrates the total number of employees needed compared to the national staffing cap.	Within 90 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RMA	Tribal Crop Insurance	House Report 115-706	The Committee directs the Department to conduct a study on the applicability of current crop insurance programs, guidance documents, and outreach to tribal producers.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services				
FNS	Nutrition Research Coordination (Research and Evaluation FY 20 Plan)	House Report 115-706	In submitting the fiscal year 2020 budget justification, FNS is directed to provide its Research and Evaluation Plan simultaneously with its budget request. There is an expectation that this process will be followed in the future.	With the FY 2020 Budget Submission
FNS	Nutrition Research Coordination (Research and Evaluation FY 19 Plan)	House Report 115-706 & P.L. 116-6	The Committee seeks to bring more transparency and coordination to nutrition research and evaluation projects conducted by the Department. The Secretary is directed to ensure that both REE and FNCS coordinate and finalize the FNS Research and Evaluation Plan submitted in fiscal year 2019 to prevent duplication of efforts and resources. The plan submitted for fiscal year 2019 shall include a brief description of the projects FNS expects to pursue and whether or not it was mandated by law. Section 734 states that FNS shall not receive any funding for new research and evaluation projects in fiscal year 2019 until the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate receive the fiscal year 2019 Research and Evaluation Plan (developed in coordination with REE) and a period of 30 days beginning on the date of submission of the plan expires to permit Congressional review of the plan.	Before funding is made available to FNS for new research and evaluation projects

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FNS	Household Certification Periods	House Report 115-706	The Committee recognizes the certification period structure in the SNAP program attempts to balance administration effort with sufficient program integrity. States are granted significant flexibility in determining certification lengths and reporting requirements for certain households. Current regulation at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(3) requires that households with “unstable circumstances such as households with zero net income” should have certification periods “consistent with their circumstances.” There is concern that some households (excluding those with an elderly or disabled individual) reporting zero net income may have lengthy certification periods without a review to verify their income status. The Committee directs USDA to review the state practice of assigning lengthy certification periods of 6 months to a year to households with zero net income or that fit the “unstable circumstances” category described in regulation. The review and report should explore whether assigning lengthy certification periods is related to higher rates of inappropriate eligibility and overpayments.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
FNS	SNAP Report	House Report 115-706	Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Appropriations estimating the impact that using the low-cost food plan would have on reducing hunger among SNAP participants.	Within 12 Months of Enactment
FNS	SNAP Fraud	Senate Report 115-259	A January 2017 OIG report entitled “Detecting Potential SNAP Trafficking Using Data Analysis” found that FNS lacked methods to reconcile data discrepancies across their administration systems, and that retailers were providing benefits to individuals using fraudulent credentials. The Committee directs FNS to provide an update on the implementation of controls to address these problems, as well as data demonstrating whether the controls have reduced error rates.	Within 120 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FNS	Report on the Dietary Guidelines Process	P.L. 116-6	The Secretary of Agriculture shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress that includes a summary of the process used in establishing the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans published pursuant to section 301 of the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5341) and an explanation with respect to the decision to incorporate or exclude in such Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations from the report by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine entitled “Redesigning the Process for Establishing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans” and issued September, 2017.	Within 180 Days of Enactment
FNS	Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) Food Package	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee commends the Department for convening the FDPIR Food Package Review Work Group, which includes tribal representatives and staff from FNS, to increase the amount and variety of traditional foods included in FDPIR food packages and to increase the amount of foods purchased from American Indian and Alaska Native producers and businesses. The Committee directs the Department to provide a report detailing its plans to include a greater variety of traditional foods as regular components of FDPIR food baskets; its plans to identify additional Native American and Alaska Native producers of traditional foods, including wild salmon, caribou, reindeer, elk, and other foods; and its plans to purchase additional traditional foods from a greater number of indigenous producers and businesses.	Within 120 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FNS	Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) #1	House Report 115-706	OIG has been conducting an audit of the SFSP, publishing several interim reports describing food safety issues at some SFSP sponsor sites. The OIG's March 2018 audit report titled 'FNS Controls over Summer Food Service Program' found that FNS needs to strengthen its monitoring and oversight procedures of the States, improve its assessment of risk for improper payments, and reassess FNS' authority to grant nationwide waivers of SFSP regulations through policy memoranda. FNS generally concurred with all of OIG's findings and recommendations. The Committee directs FNS to provide a report describing how the agency will take corrective actions.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
FNS	Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) #2	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee recognizes that in many rural and frontier areas of the country where homes are widely scattered, children and youth are unable to access congregate feeding sites that participate in the Summer Food Service Program and that existing mobile food delivery efforts are not able to meet the need. The Committee supports the Food and Nutrition Service allowing State Agencies to enable Summer Food Service Program service institutions that serve such areas where eligible children and youth have barriers to access or limited access to a congregate feeding site to use their customary reimbursement payments to develop and implement innovative methods to deliver or otherwise make available foods to eligible children and youth by non-congregate means or in non-congregate settings. In addition, the Committee requests USDA submit a report within 1 year of enactment describing how many Summer Food Service Program grantees, in which states, put in place innovative methods of food delivery by non-congregate means and in non-congregate settings, what innovative methods were used, and how many additional youth were served as a result.	Within 12 Months of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FNS	Buy American	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee remains supportive of existing laws requiring school food authorities to purchase domestic commodities or products to serve in school meal programs. The Committee recognizes that despite this statutory requirement, there has been an alarming increase of foreign products served in our schools. The Committee encourages the Secretary to fully define and enforce all applicable Buy American provisions within the Secretary's jurisdiction. Further, the Secretary shall report on all actions taken to comply with this directive.	Within 180 Days of Enactment
Food Safety				
FSIS	Humane Slaughter	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee directs FSIS to continue to provide annual reports to the Committee on the implementation of objective scoring methods undertaken by FSIS to enforce the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
FSIS	Cell-Cultured Food Products	Explanatory Statement	The Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Food and Drugs shall enter into a formal agreement delineating the responsibilities of the two agencies for the regulation of cell-cultured food products derived from livestock and poultry. Such agreement shall be made public on the USDA and FDA web sites within one day of the completion of the agreement.	One day after completion of the agreement

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
FSIS	Rulemaking	P.L. 116-6	<p>Sec. 753 states that no funds shall be used to finalize the proposed rule entitled “Eligibility of the People’s Republic of China to Export to the United States Poultry Products from Birds Slaughtered in the PRC” published in the Federal Register on June 16, 2017 (82 Fed. Reg. 27625), unless the Secretary of Agriculture shall—(1) ensure that the poultry slaughter inspection system for the PRC is equivalent to that of the United States; (2) ensure that, before any poultry products can enter the United States from any such poultry plant, such poultry products comply with all other applicable requirements for poultry products in interstate commerce in the United States; (3) conduct periodic verification reviews and audits of any such plants in the PRC intending to export into the United States processed poultry products; (4) conduct re-inspection of such poultry products at United States ports-of-entry to check the general condition of such products, for the proper certification and labeling of such products, and for any damage to such products that may have occurred during transportation; and (5) ensure that shipments of any such poultry products selected to enter the United States are subject to additional re-inspection procedures at appropriate levels to verify that the products comply with relevant Federal regulations or standards, including examinations for product defects and laboratory analyses to detect harmful chemical residues or pathogen testing appropriate for the products involved.</p>	Before finalizing the rulemaking

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
AMS	National Organic Program (NOP)	House Report 115-706	There continues to be concern about fraud in the organic program, especially among imports. Therefore, the Committee provides an increase of \$1,500,000 for the NOP to strengthen enforcement of organic labeling. The Committee notes that an additional \$3,000,000 was provided for the NOP in the FY18 Consolidated Appropriations Act to focus on robust fraud detection and oversight within the program. AMS is directed to continue providing the Committee with timely updates on investigations of fraud in organic markets.	Timely Updates
AMS	Section 32 Authorities	Senate Report 115-259	Under the authority described in clause 3 of 7 U.S.C. 612c, the Secretary is able to direct funds from the section 32 account to increase the purchasing power of producers. This practice has been used on various occasions to provide direct assistance to producers when market forces or natural conditions adversely affect the financial condition of farmers and ranchers. The Committee notes the importance of the ability of the Secretary to utilize this authority, but believes that communication between the Department and the Congress should be improved when this practice is used. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to provide notification to the Appropriations Committee in advance of any public announcement or release of section 32 funds under the specific authorities cited above.	As Necessary

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
APHIS	Regional Biosecurity Plans	House Report 115-706	The Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate, at the time the President’s budget for fiscal year 2020 is submitted under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, a report describing the steps USDA has taken to implement the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii, as developed jointly by the Department and other federal and non-federal entities. The report shall include an update on previous and upcoming implementation activities, including estimates of additional funding to be used or needed for planned activities.	With the FY 2020 Budget Submission
APHIS	In and Out Bound Market Access Report	House Report 115-706	This Administration is focused on trade deficits and the imbalance U.S. trade agreements have created for U.S. workers. As trade negotiations and WTO decisions take years to show results, APHIS has the most influence on day-to-day market expansion for U.S. agriculture. U.S. commodities face a long list of barriers to trade in the form of phytosanitary, pesticide residue levels, and inspection. APHIS works hard to resolve non-tariff and phytosanitary trade barriers that can cost U.S. producers millions of dollars in lost exports. The U.S. is an attractive market for foreign suppliers and granting foreign market access to the U.S. is a key to trade relations and lower consumer prices. While expanding market access for U.S. producers, the Committee wants to ensure the U.S. is not unfairly creating an imbalance of foreign imports in the domestic market. To understand the cumulative gains and losses U.S. agriculture has had with USDA’s policy decisions, the Committee directs APHIS to provide a report of the last three years on U.S. out-bound and foreign in-bound agricultural market access. The report should include the date access was granted and the in-bound and out-bound volumes shipped by country and commodity.	Within 60 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
APHIS	Invasive Tree Pests	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee recognizes that the forests products industry and family forest owners are under increasing threat from a growing number of invasive forest pests. It is essential that APHIS carry out a comprehensive program to counter the spread of invasive species and work towards complete eradication of the Asian long-horned beetle. The Secretary is directed to report to the Committee regarding the steps being taken to eradicate the Asian long-horned beetle and spotted lanternfly and to minimize the spread of other pests such as the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
APHIS	Vaccine for Foot-and-Mouth Disease	House Report 115-706	Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease eradicated from the U.S. in 1929, but it is still a threat since countries around the globe continue grappling with the disease. This disease could cause billions of dollars in damage to the economy if unchecked. APHIS has publicly stated that the FMD vaccine bank is insufficient to deal with a large scale FMD outbreak in the U.S. and that a larger vaccine bank is needed. APHIS has also noted that expanding the current FMD vaccine supply is an expensive investment. Having sufficient quantities of vaccine rapidly available and deployable to control an FMD outbreak would appear to be a critical part of the USDA APHIS mission. Rapid control of FMD protects the security of the U.S. food supply, limiting the economic damage from livestock losses due to the disease, and also shortens disruptions to trade and commerce that would occur as long as FMD goes uncontrolled due to a lack of a vaccine. The Committee is concerned this potential vaccine shortage could result in the compromised management of an FMD outbreak in the U.S. In order that the Committee can better understand the budget implications required to address this vaccine shortage, APHIS is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate on contingency plans to develop an expanded vaccine bank and the estimated funding necessary for implementation and maintenance.	Within 90 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
APHIS	Livestock Crossing	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is concerned with the ongoing problem of the crossing of livestock from Mexico into the U.S. without proper inspection, which creates risk of disease and loss of forage for the U.S. ranchers in the Southwest border region. The Committee directs the agency, in consultation with other Federal and State agencies, to develop a plan of action to better prevent and reduce unauthorized international crossing of livestock on the Southwest border.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
APHIS	Inspection Reports	Explanatory Statement	The conferees direct APHIS to send copies of all inspection reports for current ARS facilities and newly covered ARS facilities, including pre-compliance reports, to the Committees.	All Inspections Reports
Research, Education and Economics				
ARS	Antimicrobial Research and Development	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee recognizes that successful mitigation of antimicrobial resistance in food and agriculture takes coordinated research efforts targeting animals and interaction with the environment. The Committee strongly supports enhanced research efforts to advance the development of alternatives to antibiotics used in animal production. The Committee encourages ARS to examine the role of nutritional alternatives/feed additives containing bioactives and prebiotics that may lead to reduced antibiotic use and boost immune response in livestock. The Committee requests that ARS provide an update on this effort in its fiscal year 2020 budget request.	With the FY 2020 Budget Submission

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
ARS	Public Health Research	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee strongly supports USDA research but is concerned about the use of cats in painful and terminal laboratory experiments at USDA's Animal Parasitic Disease Laboratory. The Committee appreciates USDA's responsiveness to concerns that have been raised and directs the agency to consult scientific and veterinary experts about the feasibility of implementing alternatives to the use of cats in public health research, and to develop a program to adopt out cats no longer needed in research. The Committee directs the Secretary to provide a report on its progress.	Within 90 Days of Enactment
ARS	Animal Welfare Issues #1	Explanatory Statement	The Committees have read the quarterly reports on animal welfare issues submitted by ARS. While providing helpful information, on some issues, ARS did not report a single specific negative finding by APHIS inspectors, despite the fact that numerous violations have been found involving the death of numerous animals and serious health issues of many more. The failure to report these problems to the Committees is unacceptable. The conferees direct ARS to submit a single report covering all violations found by APHIS to date and the specific actions taken to prevent them from recurring.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
ARS	Animal Welfare Issues #2	Explanatory Statement	ARS is directed to continue to submit quarterly reports that include all violations found by APHIS during that quarter and the specific actions that will be taken to prevent their recurrence. The quarterly reports shall also include each issue found by APHIS inspectors at the pre-compliance inspections of newly-covered research activities and the remedial actions taken.	Quarterly

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
ARS	Whitefly	House Report 115-706	The Committee recognizes that whiteflies are an emerging pest as a result of developing resistance to many pesticides making chemical control difficult and climate variability resulting in warmer winters and lower seasonal die off. The Committee remains concerned with the whitefly, <i>Bemisia tabaci</i> , epidemic which is severely impacting vegetable and cotton production in the Southeast United States. In FY 2018, the Committee directed ARS and NIFA, in cooperation with land grant universities located in impacted states to develop and submit a plan of action to address the whitefly problem.	June 21, 2018

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
ARS	National Bio and Agro Defense Facility (NBAF) #1	House Report 115-706	<p>The Committee provides resources for planning and start-up costs associated with the preparation for the transition of NBAF from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to USDA. While the Committee concurs that NBAF activities more closely align with the USDA mission area, there remain concerns on the projected operational and maintenance costs and research funding needs associated with the NBAF facility. The Committee expects ARS to responsibly plan for the facility operations and under no circumstance enable the transition of NBAF to undermine ARS' ability to fully address its mission and leave the four national program areas (nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; crop production and protection; and natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems) vulnerable to potential funding reductions due to the funding needs of NBAF. The Committee directs ARS to continue supporting the four national program research areas towards developing solutions to agricultural problems of the highest national priority. The Committee directs ARS, in collaboration with other USDA agencies and in consultation with the DHS, to report to Congress with an estimate of the funding needed for each of fiscal years 2019–2023 to support: operational costs and maintenance; workforce needs and recruitment efforts; equipment; and research start-up costs. The report should also include strategic research goals based on NBAF's enhanced capabilities and plans for stakeholder engagement. The Committee strongly encourages USDA to explore cost-effective mechanisms for public-private partnerships with the academic research community and industry that will leverage federal investments in NBAF.</p>	Within 120 days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
ARS	National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility Transition #2	Senate Report 115-259	<p>The Committee understands that the Department proposes to transfer the responsibility for operational planning and future operations of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) to USDA. With the transition of responsibilities from DHS to USDA in process, the Committee directed DHS in fiscal year 2018 to maintain the ability to readily execute a management, operations, and research support contract through the end of fiscal year 2018 if DHS or USDA determine that its utilization would expedite or enhance NBAF's ability to be fully operational by December 31, 2022. While the Committee appreciates that the joint DHS/USDA transition team is working to identify and outline transition activities to address all requirements for the timely operational stand-up of NBAF, the Committee is concerned that the full breadth of transition activities remain undetermined and have not been delivered to Congress. As such, the Committee directs USDA to submit a report to the Committee detailing the transition activities, business plan, and critical milestones to reach the full operational capability of NBAF by December 31, 2022. The report shall include specific information on workforce development such as efforts to rapidly recruit and hire talented personnel, the number of positions that must be filled at each critical milestone, and requirements for each position. Further, the report should include specific details regarding USDA's potential plan to seize control and utilize current contract mechanisms under DHS, and the funding associated for such utilization, while remaining within the bounds of Federal Acquisition Regulations. Without a transition plan to provide greater fidelity, the Committee is concerned that neither DHS nor USDA will be able to complete commissioning activities and on-going planning activities at the outset of fiscal year 2019 and remain on-schedule absent a support contract that DHS anticipated executing to carry out such efforts.</p>	Within 60 days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
ERS	Breastfeeding Study	Senate Report 115-259 & House Report 115-706	The Committee recognizes the important role of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in encouraging breastfeeding. Breastfeeding can be an important preventive measure in infant and maternal health, and WIC offers multiple services and supports to mothers to help achieve optimal breastfeeding. As Congress looks for ways to reduce Federal healthcare spending, it is important to understand the preventive impact of breastfeeding and WIC's initiatives within broader healthcare spending. The Committee requests within 12 months an updated study from the ERS on the economic benefits of breastfeeding, including its potential cost-savings for Medicaid and the WIC program. The Committee awaits ERS' update to its 2001 Jon Weimer study of the economic benefits of breastfeeding.	Within 12 Months of Enactment
NIFA/ ERS	Relocation	Explanatory Statement	The conferees are concerned about the unknown costs associated with the proposed move of NIFA and ERS to a new location outside of the National Capital Region. In submitting the fiscal year 2020 budget justification, the Department is directed to include all cost estimates for the proposed move of the two agencies, as well as a detailed analysis of any research benefits of their relocation. There is an expectation that this process will be followed in the future for any other potential proposed agency relocations by the Department.	Within the FY 2020 Budget Justification

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
NIFA	Centers of Excellence	House Report 115-706	In 2015, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act of 1890, USDA announced the establishment of three Ranches and Forest Landowners in high poverty areas, establish a virtual center to support the science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAM) pipeline of students to meet future workforce needs; and satisfy the nation’s need in the areas of international engagement and global food security. The Committee believes that these Centers were an important and necessary commitment to the 1890 Universities and requests that the USDA in collaboration with the USDA–1890 Taskforce prepare a report for Congress on how we can permanently establish these Centers and make them sustainable and fully functional.	Within 90 days of Enactment
NIFA	Organic Agriculture	House Report 115-706	The Committee encourages USDA to ensure that the needs of the U.S. organic sector are more fully addressed through AFRI. As USDA’s flagship competitive agricultural research grant program, AFRI funding should be reflective of the needs of all aspects of U.S. Agriculture, including organic. The Committee directs USDA to develop a plan for meeting this goal, including how the agency will ensure organic research conducted through AFRI is not duplicative of research conducted with mandatory funds through the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and other research programs and report back to the Committee.	Within 60 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
NIFA	Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	Senate Report 115-259	Section 7406 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 specifies priority areas within the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), including an emphasis on conventional (classical) plant and animal breeding. The Committee notes the importance of this requirement to provide farmers nationwide with greater access to cultivars that are locally and regionally adapted to their soils, climates and farming systems. Because of the agency’s lack of progress in prioritizing this effort, the Committee directs the agency to make regionally adapted, publicly held cultivar development a distinct funding priority within AFRI for fiscal year 2019, and directs the agency to take steps to improve its tracking of public cultivar projects within AFRI and report its progress in meeting this goal.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
NIFA	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is strongly supportive of the SARE program and directs USDA to ensure that research, education and extension activities carried out within SARE remain intact. The Committee believes that it is important for NIFA to evaluate the performance of each of its regional SARE Host Institutions on a regular basis; however the Committee is concerned that the recent change in practice for NIFA to broadly solicit competitive Host Institution proposals at least every 5 years may interfere with the ability of the regional Host to retain qualified staff, and to establish a stable operating base, hindering rather than enhancing SARE program delivery. The Secretary shall report to the Committees on Appropriations on whether frequent open competitions for SARE Host Institutions optimizes the delivery of the SARE program, as compared to previous performance reviews and competitive solicitations that were performed every 10 years.	Within 90 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
NIFA	Behavioral Health	House Report 115-706	The most recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found rates of suicide among farmers are the highest of any occupation in the United States. Our farmers and individuals working in agriculture feed and sustain the world. The Committee encourages the USDA to provide a report to Congress regarding actions the Department has taken to address high rates of suicide among farmers.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
NIFA	Farmer Stress Assistance Network.	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is deeply concerned by the high rate of suicides among agriculture workers, which is the highest overall suicide rate among all occupations according to the Department of Health and Human Services. The Committee provides \$2,000,000 in a general provision for a pilot program to provide competitive grants to State departments of agriculture, State cooperative extension services, and nonprofit organizations to carry out programs to address farmer stress and suicide. The Secretary is directed to submit a report on implementation.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
NIFA	Minority Outreach	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is concerned that extension service resources do not reach minority, socially disadvantaged, and tribal communities in proportion to their participation in the agricultural sector. All institutions that receive extension activity funding should seek to ensure that an equitable percentage of their overall extension work reaches minority, socially disadvantaged, and tribal communities. The Committee directs NIFA to evaluate distribution of extension resources to these three populations and report to the Committee.	Within 90 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
NIFA	NIFA Program Authorities and Consolidation Report	House Report 115-706	<p>The Committee notes that the FY18 Consolidated Appropriations Act and report contains fifty appropriated lines covering the entirety of the agricultural research, education and extension realm. In addition, NIFA administers the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program. The Committee is concerned that some of these programs are duplicative or can be executed under the broad authorities of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, Evans-Allen Program, 1890's Extension, and Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts. In addition, the Committee notes that USDA's annual budget submission routinely proposes the elimination of many of the smaller NIFA programs. Accordingly, the Committee directs NIFA to provide a report by September 30, 2019 that details the authority under which each funded NIFA program is administered and whether that program (its goals or priorities), or the challenges each program is intended to address, can be achieved under the authorities of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, Evans-Allen Program, 1890's Extension, and Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts or other appropriate programs.</p>	September 30, 2019

Rural Development

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RD	Loan and Grant Programs	House Report 115-706	The Committee directs the Department, through the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, to provide quarterly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate on the status of obligations and funds availability for the loan and grant programs provided in this bill. The Committee further directs that if an estimate of loan activity for any program funded in Titles II and III of this bill indicates that a limitation on authority to make commitments for a fiscal year will be reached before the end of that fiscal year, or in any event whenever 75 percent of the authority to make commitments has been utilized, the Secretary shall promptly notify the Committees in writing, through the Office of Budget and Program Analysis.	Quarterly
RD	Flexibility in Loan and Loan Guarantee Levels	House Report 115-706	The bill includes language to exceed by up to 25 percent the limitation on loan and loan guarantee levels without budget authority upon written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate.	As Necessary

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RD/FNS	Rural Poverty	Senate Report 114-82 & House Report 115-706	The Department has statutory authorities and programs designed to help break the multi-generational trap of poverty in rural counties. The Committee recognizes that USDA may utilize existing programs and funding within RD and FNS in order to assist families, create jobs, and develop a path towards self-sufficiency. Other existing resources such as the extension service and public universities can be used for coordination and outreach activities. As of May 2018, the Committees has not received the detailed plan required to be submitted by the Secretary which would detail all funding resources and bundled services to combat rural poverty. The Committee directs the Secretary to provide a detailed plan including all funding resources currently being used to combat rural poverty. This comprehensive plan should account for all Federal projects, programs, and initiatives and prioritize those proposals that take innovative and job-creating approaches to housing and home ownership among low and very-low income individuals and families; improve rural livelihoods through the use of environmentally and economically sustainable approaches to small-holder agriculture that provide access to critical nutrition, jobs and revenue; and community-wide outreach, education and healthcare services that address some of the most common health risks in rural America: heart disease, stroke, malnutrition, obesity, and diabetes.	April 16, 2016 (As stated in original directive)
RHS	Multi-Family Housing Preservation	Senate Report 115-259	The Secretary is directed to provide quarterly reports to the Committee on transfers between vouchers and the housing preservation demonstration program within the Multi-Family Housing Revitalization Program Account.	Quarterly

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RHS	Multi-Family Housing Preservation	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee directs the Secretary to provide a report to estimate the cost of providing rural housing vouchers to all low income households currently receiving USDA rental assistance and residing in a property financed with a Section 515 loan that are set to mature in the subsequent fiscal year and subsequent ten fiscal years.	Within 120 Days of Enactment
RHS	Multi-Family Rental Housing Loan	P.L. 116-6	That if Congress enacts legislation to permanently authorize a multi-family rental housing loan restructuring program similar to the demonstration program described herein, the Secretary may use funds made available for the demonstration program under this heading to carry out such legislation with the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.	As Necessary
RHS	Rural Housing	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is concerned that Rural Housing Service resources do not reach minority, socially disadvantaged, and tribal communities in proportion to their rural populations. For example in fiscal year 2016, of the 7,113 direct loans made nationally by the Rural Housing Service, only 12 went to American Indians or Alaska Natives on tribal land. The Committee believes that the use of Rural Housing loans or funding should support minority, socially disadvantaged, tribal communities, and all other eligible applicants, so as to ensure they have equal access to Rural Housing programs. The Committee directs the Secretary to work with tribal governments and native community development financial institutions (Native CDFIs) to better prepare American Indians or Alaska Natives applicants on tribal land. The Committee further directs USDA Rural Housing Service to report to the Committee on the distribution of loans and resources to these three populations.	Within 90 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RHS	Report on Properties	P.L. 116-6	RHS shall submit to Congress a report including—(1) a description of—(A) the number of properties assisted under title V of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 147 et seq.) that are reaching the end of their loan term; (B) the location of each property described in subparagraph (A); (C) the number of units in each property described in subparagraph (A); and (D) the date on which the loan for each property described in subparagraph (A) is expected to reach maturity; (2) the strategy of RHS to preserve the long-term affordability of the properties described in paragraph (1)(A) when the loan matures; and (3) a description of the resources and tools that RHS needs from Congress in order to preserve the long-term affordability of the properties described in paragraph (1)(A).	One Year After Enactment
RUS	Tribal Communities	House Report 115-706	The Committee notes that tribal communities continue to struggle with gaining access to broadband service. The Committee encourages the Secretary to provide a report that identifies the specific challenges Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) have in gaining access to broadband service and provide a plan for addressing these challenges, including how the Community Connect program can assist ITOs.	Within 60 Days of Enactment
RUS	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program Oversight	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee is concerned that the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program does not yet have performance measures in place, as highlighted by a 2016 Inspector General report. The Committee directs USDA to institute such measures prior to awarding any additional funding through the program, or no later than 180 days from enactment of this Act.	Within 180 Days of Enactment

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Agency	Title	Congressional Source	Description	Date Due to Congress
RUS	Broadband Infrastructure	Senate Report 115-259	The Committee recognizes the importance of access to high speed broadband to promote job creation and income generation in remote rural areas. For these reasons, a broadband infrastructure initiative was begun in fiscal year 2018. The committee recommendation provides additional funding for this initiative, and encourages the Department to implement the pilot program as promptly as is feasible. The Committee notes that it is the policy of RUS to avoid duplication of efforts when financing telecommunications infrastructure via its programs; however, the Committee is concerned that this policy does not extend to the deployment of broadband-capable infrastructure. In order to prevent duplication of services, the Committee directs RUS to implement operational changes and report back to the Committee on administrative efforts to eliminate duplicative or over building of broadband technology.	Within 120 Days of Enactment