



# Agriculture and Food Policy

**Farm Programs.** The current Farm Bill expires in 2023. The Biden campaign did not provide great detail on farm program reforms, although it indicated strong support for existing **crop insurance “and risk management tools.”** The Biden Administration may promote **support for beginning farmers** (including an expanded microloan program), increased funds for farm operating loans, and the protection of patents developed at land grant universities.

**SNAP and Other Nutrition Programs.** Authorized through 2023, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest domestic food assistance program. The Biden campaign proposed **raising SNAP benefits by 15%.** Recent COVID-19 relief legislation also increased child nutrition programs by \$8.8 billion and granted broad authority for the Department of Agriculture and states to waive certain requirements. For example, meals under the school lunch program can be distributed and eaten at home for remote learners. The Biden Administration may extend waiver authority as the pandemic continues.

**WOTUS.** The Biden Administration will attempt to **reverse current regulatory definitions of “waters of the U.S.”** which defines which streams and wetlands qualify for federal Clean Water Act protection. A new Navigable Waters Protection Rule took effect in June. The Biden campaign indicated that the new rule would be reviewed, and “previous exemptions and exclusions upon which the agricultural community” relied upon will be maintained. However, attempts to expand federal jurisdiction may be challenged and end up before the Supreme Court.

**Ethanol and Biofuels.** The Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) requires that renewable fuels like ethanol be blended into the domestic fuel supply. Ethanol production has nearly quadrupled since the RFS was enacted in 2005, and currently about 40% of the U.S. corn crop goes toward ethanol. Small oil refiners can apply for waivers from the blending requirement, but the Biden campaign suggested that **fewer waivers would be granted** under the new Administration. Biden will also propose \$400 billion in clean energy research, part of which will be used to “develop the next generation of biofuels.”

**Agriculture and Climate.** As part of comprehensive climate change legislation, Biden has proposed establishing a “**voluntary carbon farming market**” to make payments for sequestered carbon, funding research for cellulosic biofuels, and expanding the Conservation Stewardship Program.

**Agriculture Labor.** Biden has expressed support for “compromise legislation between farmworkers and the agricultural sector that will provide **legal status based on prior agricultural work history**,” with expedited green card processing.

**Congressional Committee changes.** Sen. John Boozman (R-AR) will take over as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee.