

CSPI has put together a summary of some of the nutrition provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill. Thanks to CSPI and their many coalition partners who provided these summaries. The summary is available [here](#).

Retail Food Stores (Sec. 4002)

This provision would modestly increase the requirements on what SNAP retailers must carry, known as “stocking requirements.” Retailers that participate in SNAP must typically offer a certain level of diversity in the food they offer, but current law does not define diversity. The conference agreement would require them to offer at least seven items in each of four basic categories (fruits and vegetables, grains, dairy, and meat) and to offer perishable items in at least three of these categories (up from the current requirement of two). Also, the conference agreement would shift, from the state to participating retailers, the responsibility for paying for the equipment used to redeem SNAP benefits on participant EBT cards. States could exempt certain types of retailers that provide valuable access but may not have the resources to purchase point-of-sale equipment, such as farmers’ markets, shelters, and group homes.

Improving Access for Homebound Seniors and Disabled Individuals (Sec. 4003)

Under current law, non-profits that purchase and deliver food to homebound seniors and disabled individuals may not accept SNAP benefits as reimbursement for those purchases. The conference agreement would permit these delivery services to accept SNAP benefits as payment from SNAP participants so long as they meet certain standards, such as not deducting a delivery fee from the SNAP account.

Technology Modernization for Retailers (Sec. 4011)

The conference agreement would establish a demonstration project to test the use of mobile technologies, such as a smart phone app, for authorized retailers. The demonstration would test whether such technologies improve access for retailers already using the technology and those that may find wired point-of-sale technology too expensive (like some farmers’ markets and farm stands). If the demonstration proves successful, USDA would authorize retailers using mobile technology. The conference agreement also includes a similar provision to test online benefit redemption.

Use of Benefits for CSAs (Sec. 4012)

In Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), consumers pay in advance for a share of a farmer’s production, allowing the farmer to raise revenue to cover expected costs prior to harvest. In return, consumers receive a share of the results, such as a box of fresh vegetables each week. Because payment is made in advance of the receipt of food, CSA shares have not been an allowable purchase under SNAP. The conference agreement would allow CSA operations to become authorized retailers and redeem SNAP benefits.

SNAP Nutrition Education (Sec. 4028)

The farm bill protected SNAP nutrition education (SNAP-Ed), with no funding cuts or harmful policy changes. State SNAP agencies receive federal funding to provide nutrition education and obesity prevention activities to SNAP participants and other low-income households. The conference agreement would add the promotion of “physical activity” as a permitted use of this funding.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for School and Service Institutions (Sec. 4201, effective upon enactment)

The conference agreement would reauthorize the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program through 2018.

Farm to School Pilots (Section 4202)

Provides authority for AMS to conduct a pilot project in 5 US regions (with no more than 8 participating states total) to provide states with the flexibility to use multiple suppliers and products and by allowing geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed fruits and vegetables for school nutrition programs (USDA commodity foods). USDA is already conducting pilot projects in two states (MI, FL) for the purpose of developing new methods for local procurement, including allowing schools to specifically request local products as long as competition is maintained. This is an alternative model to (re)build on the DOD Fresh model, and satisfy the growing interest in using commodity entitlement dollars for more regionally/locally produced foods, without creating carve-outs of commodity entitlement program by expanding cash-in-lieu.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (Sec 4203) extends this nutrition incentive program for low-income seniors through 2018 with \$20m per year in funding.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Sec. 4204)

The conference agreement would modify the Dietary Guidelines for Americans to include, by 2020, nutrition and dietary guidelines designed specifically for pregnant women and children from birth until age 2.

Healthy Food Financing Initiative (4206) authorizes USDA to provide up to \$125m over five years in grants and loans for the development of healthy food retail and infrastructure over the next five years. [HFFI](#) provides grants and tax incentives to encourage food retailers to operate in underserved communities in an effort to improve food access in food deserts. The program is implemented in coordination between the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Treasury. Current funding is provided through the Treasury Department. The funding is not guaranteed and must be secured through the annual appropriations process. In light of the sequester cuts and limited resources for critical discretionary nutrition programs, it will be difficult for HFFI to secure funding in the discretionary agriculture appropriations bill. However, HFFI is an initiative of the Obama administration, and if the administration chooses to make it a priority, some funding could be provided.

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (Sec 4208)

The 2008 farm bill authorized \$20 million for the [Healthy Incentives Pilot](#), a SNAP pilot project that tested whether incentives provided at the point-of-sale increased SNAP recipients' purchases of fruits, vegetables or other healthful foods. Building off of that initial program, the new farm bill authorized a permanent grant program to further test local SNAP incentives programs. There are currently 500 or so incentive programs operating around the country, typically with state or foundation funding (for example, the [Fair Food Network](#) and [Wholesome Wave](#) initiatives). These programs provide SNAP participants with additional benefits to be spent on produce when they purchase fruits and vegetables. While most such programs operate at farmers' markets, they are also being tested in the traditional retail grocery setting. The farm bill would establish a new grant program, providing \$100 million to support local incentives programs by covering up to 50 percent of the costs of local programs. The legislation does not specify that the grants must be used in farmers' markets, where most incentive programs have thus far taken place, so this is an important opportunity to test incentives in a retail setting. As USDA implements the new program, it will set parameters on the allowable foods and any preferences (for example location type).

Pulse Crop Products (Sec. 4213)

The conference agreement would authorize appropriations of a one-time sum of \$10 million for

the purchase of dried beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas for use in school lunch and breakfast programs. An evaluation and report would be required.

Pilot Project for Canned, Frozen, or Dried Fruits and Vegetables (Sec. 4214, pilot to operate during 2014-2015 school year)

Under this pilot, schools in five states would test the use of canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. An evaluation of the pilot project would be required. The conference agreement makes \$5 million available for the pilot project.