



A Farmers Market Advocate's Guide to

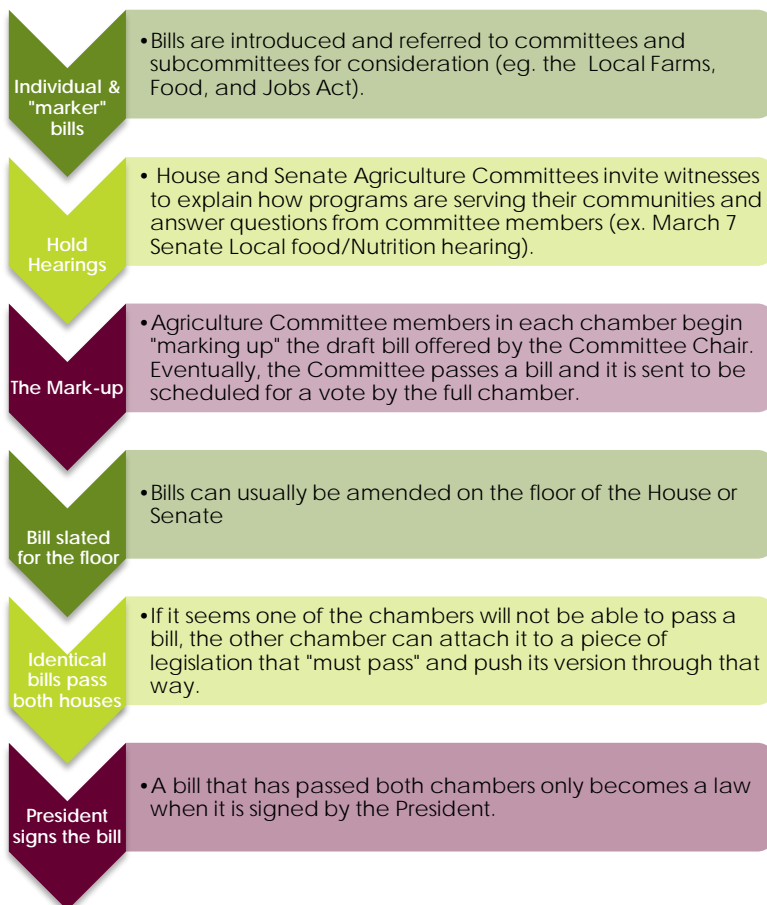
The Farm Bill (Part 3 of 3)

A primer on the Farm Bill process, and how you can get involved

The Farm Bill is the name given to an omnibus piece of legislation written every five years that provides policy for farm production, conservation and credit, agricultural trade, rural development and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). The current farm bill expired on September 30, 2012, with the House and Senate unable to reconcile differences in their two bills. As the principal legislation that directs American farm policy and authorizes SNAP, the nation's largest food assistance program, there are strong incentives for local and regional food system advocates to push for the passage of a Farm Bill as soon as possible. The Farmers Market Promotions Program, for example, is one of 37 programs left unfunded in the continuing resolution, on hold until/unless specifically reauthorized by the Farm Bill.

What is the process?

Over the past year, the Agriculture Committees have held a series of Washington DC and field hearings to gather information about the needs of farmers and low-income consumers and to gauge how well current programs are working. The deficit reduction process complicated the 2012 Farm Bill process because there was not a clear "baseline" dollar amount that both the House of Representatives and the Senate agree is the amount that can be spent on the bill's provisions over the next ten years (federal legislation receives a 10-year budget "score" that projects what the bill will cost taxpayers over the years). Generally, legislation follows the process outlined below.



Farmers Markets in the Farm Bill

This is the time to let your Senators and Congressperson know that you want them to pass a farm bill this year that includes [FMC's main priorities](#):

- Expand funding for the Farmers Market Promotion Program and Specialty Crop Block Grants, with up to 10% of total FMPP funds available for administration and technical assistance.
- Increase SNAP participant access to local food by offering wireless EBT machines to farmers markets & farmers, and supporting SNAP education and outreach at farmers markets.
- Expand the Farmers Market Nutrition Program to meet demand growing for fresh, nutritious, foods from farmers markets to low-income seniors and WIC participants.
- Support the provisions in the [Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 \(S. 679 & H.R. 1414\)](#).

Take Action Today!

Call or email your Senator and House members to tell them about your priorities as an FMC member. Call the Capital Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Senator or House member. A full listing of Senators' and Representatives' names and direct numbers can also be found by simply typing in your zip code at Congress.org.

Other Resources

- <http://sustainableagriculture.net/category/farm-bill/>
- <http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/advocacy>

