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Kind calls for reauthorization of farm bill in 2011

For THE NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) with a bipartisan group of his colleagues sent a letter to House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson and Ranking Member Frank Lucas encouraging the committee to move forward with the reauthorization of the farm bill in 2011.

"We cannot wait to reauthorize the farm bill, it is essential to getting our deficit under control," said Rep. Kind. "We must reform the wasteful subsidies going to very few but large agribusinesses. They are not fair to the American taxpayer and not fair to family farmers."

The ongoing Brazilian cotton dispute, in which America provides millions in assistance to Brazilian agribusiness, the widespread recognition of inefficient and wasteful spending within American farm programs, as well as the affect this spending has on the deficit, prompted Rep. Kind and his colleagues to push for movement on the bill in 2011 rather than delaying action until 2012. They wrote,

The costs of delaying action on the reauthorization of the farm bill have a direct impact on our deficits and cannot be ignored... Every serious study of how to reduce the deficit includes proposals to save billions of dollars from agricultural subsidies. The Center for American Progress's "A Thousand Cuts" report laid out a series of options that would reduce direct subsidies between 50 and 75 percent, saving taxpayers \$7-\$11 billion by 2015. The CATO Institute's "Downsizing Government" project calls for an annual \$30 billion cut in farm programs. The Brookings Institute's Bill Galston and New America Foundation's Maya MacGuineas cut farm subsidies as part of their "The Future is Now" plan.

The subsidies are outdated and no longer providing a meaningful safety net for many farmers, as they were designed to do during the Great Depression. In fact, nearly 60 percent of farmers are not getting any subsidy at all. And of those who do get a

subsidy, just 10 percent end up receiving more than 60 percent of all the federal subsidy dollars, further showing the need for reform.

"Without reform, Americans will continue to fund wasteful farm subsidies," said Rep. Kind. "Reform now is necessary to ensuring the effectiveness of our farm programs and the appropriate use of taxpayer dollars."

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