

## Get Food Stamps Out Of The Farm Bill

By: Veronique de Rugy – June 20, 2013

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This afternoon, the House defeated the farm bill. Hopefully this means lawmakers will now be willing to talk about real reforms. In my opinion, the first thing to do would be to get food stamps out of it. For years now, some 80 percent of the spending has been going to pay for food stamps, a program that arguably has no place in the Department of Agriculture.

This is disturbing for several reasons: First, as I have mentioned before, in its current form the farm bill would spend some \$80 billion a year trying to alleviate this high cost of food through food stamp, while some of the increased cost of food can be traced back to policies implemented in the farm bill, such as the US sugar policies.

Second, the irony of it all is that, while the impact of farm subsidies is at odds with the purpose of food stamps, the anti-poverty program's awkward location in the farm bill is a big help to the farm lobby in its quest for more taxpayer funds. As Cato Institute's Chris Edwards explained in a 2009 piece on agricultural subsidies, for years now "farm-legislators have co-opted the support of urban legislators, who seek increased subsidies in agriculture bills for programs such as food stamps." It is pure logrolling.

If we finally want to have a chance of to put farm subsidies on the path to elimination where they belong, it's time to get food stamps out of the farm bill.