



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Food and Nutrition Legislation

Susan L. Pollack
(202) 219-0696

The 101st Congress, which convened in January 1989, adjourned October 28, 1990. Myriad food and nutrition bills were introduced over the 2-year session. The following summary briefly describes the major food-related bills that became law during that time.

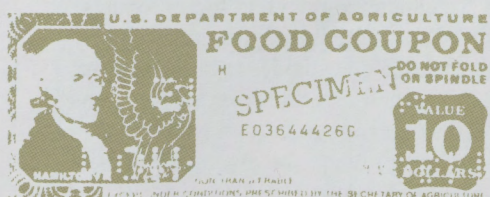
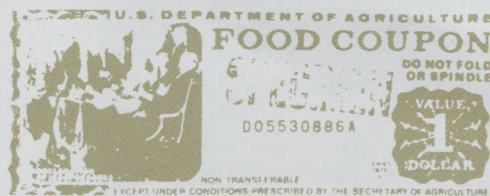
Food Assistance

P.L. 101-147

This law reauthorizes the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Commodity Distribution, School Breakfast, and Nutrition Education and Training Programs through fiscal 1994. It also permits private, nonprofit organizations to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program in areas where no public sponsor operates such a program. Private sponsors can serve no more than 2,500 children and have no more than 5 sites in urban areas or 20 sites in rural areas. Other provisions of the law include:

- Establishing demonstration projects under the Child Care Food Program to provide year-round food service for homeless children under age 6 in emergency shelters.
- Setting up statewide demonstration programs to permit private, for-profit child care centers to participate in the Child Care Food Program if at least 25 percent of the children in the facility are from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty line.
- Requiring State education agencies to provide information to school boards and

The author is an agricultural economist formerly with the U.S. Agricultural Policy Branch of the Agricultural and Trade Analysis Division.



The 1990 Farm Bill simplifies the Food Stamp program rules and imposes additional penalties for fraud and misuse of the coupons.

officials about the benefits and availability of the School Breakfast Program.

- Requiring that people at nutritional risk who are eligible for food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program benefits, or Medicaid be automatically eligible to meet the income test to qualify for WIC.
- Requiring State WIC offices to promote breast-feeding.

P.L. 101-330

The WIC Services Restoration Act allows States with surplus WIC program funds to return them without penalty. Currently, the following year's funding level is reduced in States that return surplus funds. WIC provides food assistance to people determined by local health professionals to be at nutritional risk due to inadequate income and nutri-

tion. Program funding is allocated to States based on a formula rather than on participation. Under P.L. 101-330, the returned funds will be redistributed to States experiencing shortfalls through the WIC formula. The law will also temporarily raise the spending ceiling for States with shortfalls.

P.L. 101-445

The law is designed to improve national nutrition monitoring. It requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to prepare and implement a 10-year plan to assess the dietary status of the U.S. population, support research and development of nutrition monitoring, foster national nutrition education, and establish dietary guidelines.

Food Safety

P.L. 101-205

The law amends the Federal Meat Inspection Act to allow meat that was inspected and determined to be wholesome for human consumption but condemned, to be distributed to charities and public agencies.

P.L. 101-500

The Safe Transportation of Food Act prohibits hauling solid wastes, including medical and hazardous wastes, in refrigerated vehicles and bans cargo tanks used to haul loads of hazardous materials or wastes from carrying liquid foodstuffs, such as fruit juices and cooking oils. The law also directs the Secretary of Transportation to conduct a study to determine if additional regulations are needed to en-

Farm Bill Establishes New Programs, Standards

The new farm bill, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-624), became law November 28, 1990.

The law contains several provisions related to food and nutrition including:

- Establishing the first Organic Labeling Program. The program sets national standards for "organically grown" products and requires USDA to set regulations for production, materials, handling, and testing of products labeled organic.
- Establishing promotion programs, funded by producer paid assessments, for soybeans, pecans, mushrooms, and limes. A generic fluid milk promotion will be funded by processors if it is approved in a referendum.
- Establishing a fruit, vegetables, and marketing title to evaluate grade standards for their effects on pesticide use. The title also establishes a program to accredit labs to test for chemical residue and a 2-year pilot program that requires products to be labeled by their

country of origin. It also requires that specific imported commodities comply with domestic marketing order regulations.

- Reauthorizing the Food Stamp Program (FSP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (including WIC), and the Temporary Emergency Assistance Program (TEFAP). The FSP rules are simplified, additional penalties are imposed for fraud and misuse of food coupons, the electronic benefits transfer program is encouraged instead of food coupons in grocery stores, and food stamp use in soup kitchens and restaurants is made permanent. TEFAP is a permanent program and will be renamed the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The program is now based on authorizations rather than required purchases.

Other programs in the farm bill which would affect food products include requiring farmers using restricted pesticides to keep records of their use, and several provisions to encourage farmers to reduce their reliance on chemicals in their production.

sure the safety of food products hauled in other types of vehicles.

P.L. 101-535

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 requires all manufacturers of packaged foods to provide complete nutrition information concerning calories, fat, salt, and other important ingredients about their products. For fruits, vegetables, and fish, nutritional ingredient information must be made available through signs and brochures. The law also:

- Gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to make regulations concerning terms such as "light," "high," and "low." Manufacturers will be prohibited from using these terms in a way that is inconsistent with the FDA definition.
- Prohibits disease claims, such as "fiber prevents cancer," unless the FDA finds such claims are supported by scientific data.
- Prohibits States from adopting different standards once the Federal standards have been established. ■