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2025 Farm Bridge Assistance Program Payment Guesstimate Rates

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In August 2025, officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began discussing the idea of a temporary “bridge” assistance program to help farmers through the period leading into the 2026 crop year. The assistance was described as a way “to help farmers make it into 2026,” pointing to the timing gap created by recent changes to commodity programs under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). Although higher reference prices under OBBBA are expected to increase Agriculture Risk Coverage & Price Loss Coverage (ARC/PLC) payments for the 2025 crop year, those payments will not be delivered until October 1, 2026. In the meantime, market disruptions and higher production costs have continued to pressure farm cash flow, leading the administration to consider temporary aid packages to help producers manage that interim period (Brasher, 2025).

On December 8, 2025, USDA announced up to \$12 billion in bridge payments to farmers to offset production losses in 2025. Up to \$11 billion is assigned to the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program, which is intended to provide support using a “simple and proportional” formula tied to modeled economic losses (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2025). Under the program design, national per-acre losses are estimated for covered commodities, and producers receive a uniform per-acre payment that compensates for a portion of those losses. USDA has indicated that the program will apply to row crops, including corn,

sorghum, soybeans, and wheat, as well as certain additional commodities such as oilseeds and pulses.

The remaining \$1 billion authorized under the bridge assistance package is reserved for commodities not covered by FBA, such as specialty crops and sugar. FBA payments will be financed through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Eligibility is determined by reported 2025 planted acreage in covered commodities, with a reporting deadline of December 19, 2025. Payments are expected to be issued beginning in late February 2026. At the time of writing, commodity-specific FBA payment rates have not yet been announced and are expected to be released in late December 2025.

Table 1 provides context for the magnitude and distribution of potential FBA payments following the structure of the 2024 Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP), which applied a uniform national formula to estimate per-acre losses and paid a fixed share of those losses as assistance. This approach does not presume that FBA will replicate ECAP exactly, but it provides a consistent basis for illustrating how the announced funding could translate into per-acre payment rates across major commodities.

Five scenarios are considered to illustrate how alternative assumptions and program constraints affect projected FBA payment rates for the nine major field crops with published Economic Research Service (ERS) cost-of-production estimates. Under ECAP, these nine crops accounted for 98.3% of all payments, and total FBA payments are scaled accordingly.

- ⇒ **Scenario 1:** Uses 10-year average yields and projected December 2025 World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) prices, applies a uniform 26% coverage rate, and does not impose a PLC minimum payment.¹
- ⇒ **Scenario 2:** Maintains the Scenario 1 assumptions but applies the PLC minimum payment constraint. That is, the payment rate equals the greater of 26% of the estimated economic loss per acre or the PLC minimum payment rate defined as 8% of the OBBBA-updated PLC reference price multiplied by the PLC national average payment yield.
- ⇒ **Scenario 3:** Applies the PLC minimum payment constraint while scaling the coverage rate so that total payments align with the \$10.81 billion (98.3% of the \$11 billion) budget available for the nine major crops.

1. WASDE reports do not publish price projections for peanuts. For peanuts, we use the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) farmer stock peanut price of \$0.21 per pound reported in December 2025.

Table 1: Modeled Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Payment Rates under Alternative Scenarios.

Scenario	1	2	3	4	5
Coverage Level	26%	26%	Scaled (24%)	26%	Scaled (27%)
Yields	10-year	10-year	10-year	10-year	Current (2025)
WASDE	Dec 2025	Dec 2025	Dec 2025	Sep 2025	Dec 2025
Minimum payments	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Payments in \$/acre					
Barley	25.50	25.50	23.67	25.50	23.92
Corn	50.38	50.38	46.77	54.95	46.93
Cotton	106.65	106.65	99.01	97.47	102.07
Oats	85.58	85.58	79.45	85.58	81.99
Peanuts	98.63	98.63	91.56	89.91	99.51
Rice	114.65	114.65	106.44	96.98	119.07
Sorghum	49.80	49.80	46.23	51.53	42.61
Soybeans	28.10	32.70	32.70	34.67	32.70
Wheat	39.04	39.04	36.25	37.76	34.61
Total Payments					
Total in \$ Billions	11.08	11.45	10.81	11.85	10.81

Note: Yield and price assumptions follow the approach used in ECAP. Payment rates are modeled projections based on alternative assumptions regarding yields, prices, coverage levels, and minimum payment constraints. Yields and prices are based on WASDE reports. Cost-of-production estimates are from USDA's ERS. Scenarios 1, 2, and 4 apply a uniform coverage rate of 26% of net losses, consistent with ECAP, while Scenarios 3 and 5 scale payment rates to meet a \$10.81 billion budget constraint, reflecting the share of the national FBA budget allocated to these nine crops under ECAP. A minimum payment constraint is binding only when PLC minimum payments ($0.08 \times \text{OBBBA Reference Prices} \times \text{PLC Payment Yield}$) exceed 26% of economic losses.

Source: NDSU-ARPC calculations.

- ⇒ **Scenario 4:** Replaces prices with September 2025 WASDE projections while holding other assumptions constant. Differences in price expectations reflect earlier market conditions influenced by trade-related price disruptions.²
- ⇒ **Scenario 5:** Substitutes estimated 2025 yields for 10-year averages and scales the coverage rate to fully utilize the available budget (\$10.81 billion).

Across all scenarios, modeled FBA payment rates vary substantially by commodity. On a per-acre basis, cotton and rice consistently receive the highest payments, driven by larger estimated gaps between production costs and market revenue. In contrast, when payments are aggregated nationally, corn, soybeans, and wheat account for the largest shares of total FBA payments due to their extensive planted acreage, even though their per-acre rates are more moderate. Replacing 10-year average yields with estimated 2025 yields increases projected revenues and reduces modeled per-acre losses, causing the PLC minimum payment constraint to bind for barley, corn, and soybeans rather than only soybeans. This implies that fixed reference price guarantees become more relevant when realized revenues are higher. Overall, the scenarios illustrate that small changes in assumptions, such as the inclusion of minimum payment floors, alternative price projections, or realized yields, can meaningfully affect the distribution of per-acre payments across crops.³

References

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2. September NASS peanut price was \$0.26 per pound. Under the September price scenario, peanuts are the only commodity for which the PLC minimum payment constraint binds.

3. Estimates of potential bridge assistance payment rates reported by Dr. Hunter Biram are broadly consistent with the projections presented in this brief. See Dr. Biram's post [here](#).

About the Agricultural Risk Policy Center

The Agricultural Risk Policy Center at North Dakota State University conducts independent, evidence-based economic research to inform agricultural policy and strengthen the U.S. farm safety net. The Center's work focuses on evaluating risk management tools such as crop insurance and disaster assistance, analyzing market disruptions, and providing timely insights that support producers, policymakers, and industry leaders.

ARPC Briefs communicate the outcomes of this research by presenting data, methods, and findings in a structured format. Designed to make rigorous analysis accessible, these briefs translate complex economic issues into clear insights that enhance understanding and support evidence-based decisions, contributing to the resilience and long-term prosperity of U.S. agriculture.

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