



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Farm Bill: International Food Aid

The Senate and House of Representatives have recently passed their versions of the 2018 farm bill. This multifaceted legislation includes provisions for nutrition, rural development, environmental and land conservation, research and development, honoring indigenous land and international food aid. There are three international food-aid programs in the bill: Food for Peace, McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition, and Food for Progress.

The ELCA supports a farm bill that holistically addresses hunger and poverty worldwide. As members of Congress prepare to confer on the final version of the bill, we urge them to protect the core focus and effective elements of existing international food assistance programs by:

- providing sufficient funds for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program;
- reducing cargo preference requirements to decrease the cost and time required to ship food;
- removing the requirement to monetize commodities to prevent destruction of local markets and indigenous farming; and
- expanding investments in the Food for Progress program.

WHY SHOULD CONGRESS SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 815 million people go hungry worldwide and this number is projected to increase to 10 billion by 2050. The United States is the world's largest food donor, providing global aid through the afore-mentioned programs to people fighting food insecurity and malnutrition. More than 25 countries and 43 billion people have been reached through these programs, which also promote sustainable agriculture development, expand trade in agricultural products and improve literacy (USAID ¹ and USDA ²).

OUR FAITH

As the Bible tells us, "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?" (James 2:15-16). As Christians, God calls us to a faith that is active in love. One way we do this is to love our neighbor through advocating for solutions to hunger and proper allocation of resources. U.S. international food assistance programs save millions of lives. Our faith voice is critical to ensuring that they are funded and efficiently administered. save millions of lives. Our faith voice is critical to ensuring that they are funded and efficiently administered.

¹ USAID, "Food Assistance," U.S. Agency for International Development, July 25, 2018, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/food-assistance>.

² USDA, "Feeding Our Future," U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/infographic-feeding-our-future>.