



Washington Update

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – June 3, 2022

As we head into summer, there are several developments in agricultural policy to note. The most prominent issues in the last five months have been the passage of fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations in March, the release of the President's FY 2023 Budget Request just a few weeks later, ongoing Congressional negotiations on the FY 2023 budget, and the official start of the 2023 Farm Bill process.

- ***FY 2023 Budget Request***

According to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, there are six main priorities: rebuilding rural America; supporting nutrition programs; combating climate change; supporting research and development; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and workforce development within USDA. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) would receive a \$187 million increase compared to FY 2022 and highlights the importance of capacity programs and would include another substantial increase for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).

- ***FY 2023 Appropriations***

Since the budget was released, Secretary Vilsack has testified in front of both the House and Senate Appropriation Committees and has emphasized agricultural workforce development and the accessibility of USDA programs. In looking ahead, it is likely the House and Senate will make some progress on FY 2023 appropriations this summer, but with the Midterm elections in November, a continuing resolution (CR) to funding the federal government after September 30th will likely be necessary.

With respect to the BAA's priorities, the Budget and Advocacy Committee leadership met with House and Senate majority and minority appropriations staff on the Unified Ask earlier this spring. Feedback has been positive, but once again we face limited increases to discretionary spending that will impact FY 2023 growth.

- ***2023 Farm Bill***

While the House has had Farm Bill hearings the last several months, the Senate's Farm Bill process kicked off with a "field hearing" in Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow's home state of Michigan on April 29, 2022. The topics discussed at the Michigan event, including climate change, increases to loan limits, and market challenges, serve as a preview for Chair Stabenow's 2023 Farm Bill priorities. Additionally, Cooperative Extension and the future of agriculture were highlighted. Many panelists mentioned the domestic and global effects of the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic on agricultural commodities and practices. A second field hearing is expected later this month in Arkansas the home state of the Senate Agriculture Committee's Ranking Member John Boozman. Both the House and Senate are expected to hold hearings on Title VII, which covers research and extension programs, but timing is uncertain.



The current Farm Bill expires in September 2023. The BAA's Committee on Legislation and Policy (CLP) leadership has met with majority and minority staff in both the House and Senate to ensure the BAA can be a resource for them and to talk about initial priorities. The CLP is actively working with FANR and Lewis-Burke to develop and finalize Farm Bill proposals to enhance and protect our signature priorities.

- ***Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill & USDA***

New programs funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal continue to rollout. On June 1, Secretary Vilsack announced the establishment of several of these programs, such as one, funded at \$40 million dollars, that will focus on workforce development in the meat and poultry industry in conjunction with land-grant universities and community colleges.