

Farm Bill Side-By-Side Video Script

Senator Tom Harkin: Today as Chair of the Senate House conference committee on the farm bill, I am happy to announce that the principal farm bill negotiators have produced a final conference agreement on the Food, Conservation and Energy act of 2008.

Senator Saxby Chambliss: Today is the culmination of about three years of hard work on the part of the Senate Ag Committee as well as the House Ag Committee.

Narrator: Welcome to ERS Side-By-Side comparison of old and new farm legislation.

Kitty Smith: Farm bills set priorities for farm and food related policy for periods of five years. The 2008 bill covers a wide variety of issues, from wetland conservation to wheat farming; from biofuels to honey bees; from rural business opportunities to food stamp programs.

ERS offers a unique internet product; a side-by-side comparison of the 2008 bill with previous farm legislation.

Who uses this? Attorneys, journalists, congressional staff, researchers, government agencies, interest groups, anyone who needs information on the farm bill and its' many, many provisions.

Ralph Grossi: After the new farm bill is signed into law, the very arduous task of rule writing and implementation will begin, and the ERS side-by-side will be a very useful reference tool as we begin that process.

Bob Young: We use the side-by-side in-between years for example: when we're, ya know somebody asks a question about how did the last piece of legislation, or had did the last farm bill deal with this issue?

It is very nice when you can pull that up and say "well here are the loan rates for example that were in the old bill. Here are the loan rates that are in the new bill"; or "here is specific provisions of how EQIP happens to operate".

Narrator: From any page on the ERS farm bill site you can access each of the titles. For each title of the bill, there is a list of key provisions and subtopics. You can reach ERS publications related to farm policy. For the 2008 bill we have added some new features to make the site even more useful. There is a search feature within the farm bill site, an alphabetical listing of topics, and printer friendly pages. If you have any questions about any of the features, we invite you to go to our users guide.

Kitty Smith: In 2002, this internet product was viewed by tens of thousands of people within the first week of its' posting. We hope that will be the case for this year as well.

Ralph Grossi: We're really not aware of a comparable product. It is a very useful and unique site for us to be able to access - as we both develop policy and implement the new farm bill.

Bob Young: It is just a nice place to go, a nice one stop shop if you will, to go to for information about all the stuff that's in that very large piece of legislation.

Narrator: Like the many other visitors to this site, we hope you'll find it to be a reliable reference.