



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind: 'Farm Spending Priorities Are Out of Whack'

EWG Farm Subsidy Database Shows Family Farms are Losing Out to Big Commodity Producers, Underscores Need for Reform

Washington, D.C. – A new database launched today by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) makes a strong argument for reform in America's farm policies, Rep. Kind said today.

"This report clearly illustrates the way our farm policies direct the lion's share of subsidies to a few but very large commodity producers – and leaves family farmers behind," Rep. Kind said. "If America is going to meet our trade, environmental, nutrition, and energy challenges, we must get our farm spending priorities straight, and develop a more equitable system that realizes benefits for farmers and consumers in every region of the country."

According to the database, which was compiled by USDA information, ten percent of subsidy recipients collected 73 percent of all subsidies, while 67 percent of all farmers and ranchers do not collect government subsidy payments at all. Half of all crop subsidies from 2003-2005 were directed to just 19 congressional districts.

At the top of the federal farm subsidy food chain was an individual corn and wheat farmer in Colorado, who in 2005, collected nearly \$2 million in crop subsidies. In Wisconsin, the database showed that just 10 farmers collected nearly \$4.2 million in crop subsidies from 2003-05. Until now, information about individual recipients of farm subsidies has been obscured by their affiliation with partnerships, joint ventures, limited liability corporations, and cooperatives.

"These Dust Bowl-era policies were never intended to prop up million-dollar farm operations the way they are today," Rep. Kind said. "This information brings light to the vast inequities of our subsidy program and underscores the need for reform. With billions of American tax dollars on the line, we must ensure we are making the best investment possible in rural America, and if this database is any indication – we can do much better."

Rep. Kind, along with his colleagues in the house Rep. Flake (R-AZ), Rep. Crowley (D-NY), and Rep. Reichert (R-WA) will introduce legislation this week to forge a bold new direction for farm policy. *The Food & Agriculture Risk Management for the 21st Century Act (FARM 21)* will modernize the farm safety net by transitioning it to a more cost-effective, and trade-compliant system of farmer-held "risk management accounts" (RMAs) and revenue insurance tools.

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The savings realized by the transition payments in this reform bill (estimated at \$55 billion over ten years), would be redistributed to conservation, nutrition, specialty crops, rural development, and renewable energy programs that have widespread benefit.

See Environmental Working Group's Farm Subsidy Database here: <http://www.ewg.org/farm/>

Read more about Rep. Kind's plan for reform here: <http://www.house.gov/kind/press/070510-%20RMA.pdf>