

9/11/2008 Moran Introduces Legislation to Fix Farm Bill Flaw

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Legislation Allows Aggregation of Base Acres

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran introduced legislation this week to clarify language within a provision of the 2008 Farm Bill that could affect thousands of small farmers. H.R. 6849 will allow producers with farms that contain 10 base acres or less to maintain participation in farm programs. The legislation will fix the language in the provision so that producers whose overall land operations are larger than 10 base acres will not be denied farm program payments.

"This provision was added to the Farm Bill in conference committee as a way to increase administrative efficiency at USDA," Moran said. "Unfortunately, due to the way the provision was written, far more producers are being denied payments than was anticipated. This legislation will restore the original intent of the provision and grant farmers the ability to aggregate base acres from multiple small farms."

In the final version of the 2008 Farm Bill, enacted in June, Congress included a section in the Commodity Title that encourages a more streamlined administrative process, but also limits the amount of producers who are eligible to receive commodity program payments for their farms. It prohibits producers from receiving direct, counter-cyclical, or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program payments, if their farm contains 10 base acres or less. At the time the Farm Bill passed, many in Congress believed this section would allow producers with multiple small farms to combine base acres to avoid payment suspension. Following passage of the legislation, however, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) determined that the language in this section does not permit aggregation of base acres for producers with 10 base acres or less.

Moran's legislation will address the error contained in the Commodity Title. The legislation directs the USDA to allow aggregation of base acres and will allow producers to combine multiple farms into one farm through the reconstitution process.

Moran is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture where he serves as the Republican leader of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

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