

February 2021

4.6 Ideas for the Department of Agriculture



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President Joe Biden is in the midst of his first 100-day policy sprint.

In honor of the 46th President, we have come up with a “Four Point Six” memo. This is our set of 4.6 recommendations the Biden Administration should follow in governance to promote policies to restore fiscal balance, increase transparency and accountability, and reduce the deficit. These recommendations span government agencies from Defense to Agriculture, Interior to the Office of Management and Budget. You can read the full memo [here](#).

Why 4.6? We could have done 46 but we decided to begin with our top priorities, and we consider the “Point Six” recommendation to be the simplest place to start.

Read on.

Department of Agriculture

1. *Implement, Don't Undermine, the Farm Bill:*

The Trump Administration routinely flouted both the spirit and letter of the Farm Bill. Providing “emergency” income subsidies to [tobacco growers](#) (banned since 2004). Arbitrary changes in nutrition programs weeks after the changes [were rejected by lawmakers](#). Replacing trade with [federal aid](#). The Biden Administration would do well to eschew the shadow farm bill crafted in the Secretary’s office for the one passed by Congress.

2. *Narrow the Farm Safety Net to Focus on Needs:*

In ignoring the Farm Bill, the Trump Administration ignored Congressionally-set limits on farm subsidies enabling some farm operations to rack up millions in subsidies. The new administration needs to follow the will of Congress and eliminate subsidies for [millionaires](#) and those simply [farming the Treasury](#).

3. Promote Resilience not Dependence: Trade war bailouts, overly generous Farm Bill programs, and duplicative post-disaster “emergency” assistance pushed farm subsidies to **near record levels**, even before COVID-19. While some special interests want to continue this unsustainable subsidization, the administration needs to refocus on opening opportunities, not maximizing payments.

4. Increase USDA Transparency: An increasing **body of evidence** shows that adopting conservation practices can make farmers and ranchers more profitable. The USDA has valuable data on conservation practices and their effect on farm profitability, yet most

of this data is off limits to researchers and farmers. In future COVID-19 assistance the USDA should implement, or Congress should mandate, the creation of a data warehouse and procedures for granting access to data on the impacts of conservation practices on farming and ranching profitability.

4.6. DNR the CCC: The Trump Administration’s use of the **Commodity Credit Corporation** (CCC) as a political slush fund to side-step Congress and dole out billions in subsidies to favored interests could cause lasting damage to the farm sector and farm safety net. The Biden Administration needs to commit to making farm policy through farm bills, not by fiat.



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This is an excerpt. Read the full Four Point Six memo at
<https://www.taxpayer.net/budget-appropriations-tax/four-point-six/>



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