



Take Action!!



November 7, 2005

Urge Senators to Support Family Farmers at Home and Abroad

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: This week the Senate is scheduled to vote on the 2006 federal budget. Unfortunately, the Senate Agriculture Committee did not include agriculture subsidy limits in the bill that they completed and that will be voted on this week. **The opportunity to change this will occur when it comes to the Senate floor in the next two days. Limiting these payments will help target relief for farmers where it is needed both at home and abroad.**

Senators Grassley (R-IA) and Dorgan (D-ND) are planning to offer an amendment to the bill that would impose a payment limit on subsidies to farmers of \$250,000 per family and tighten the eligibility requirements to qualify for payments. The resulting savings will likely be used to restore funding for conservation and environmental programs, which was cut by the Senate Agriculture Committee.

USCCB/CRS Position: The U.S. bishops support measures that address the needs and interests of small and moderate-sized farms and farm workers—both at home in the United States and overseas.

As the Bishops stated in their 2003 agricultural pastoral, *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food*, limited government resources for subsidies and other forms of support should be targeted to small and moderate-sized farms, especially to help them through difficult times caused by changes in global agricultural markets or weather patterns that destroy crops. Capping federal farm payments and targeting them to those who need them the most would save money and help family farms be more competitive in a volatile market.

The bishops' support for targeted subsidies and other programs for small and moderate-sized farms in the United States is coupled with the recognition that greater access to local, regional, and international markets is essential for agricultural development in poor countries. Limiting U.S. farm supports would increase the possibility that poor farmers around the world would be able to sell their products and support their families.

TAKE ACTION NOW! Please call your senators today at 202-224-3121. Ask them to support the Grassley-Dorgan amendment to cap subsidy payments, and direct the savings to protect important farming practices that help conserve our farmland for future generations.

Call especially if your Senator is:

Clinton and Schumer (NY)

Gregg and Sununu (NH)

Collins and Snowe (ME)

Chafee and Reed (RI)

Dodd and Lieberman (CT)

Craig and Crapo (ID)

Feinstein (CA)

Roberts (KS)

Visit the CRS website, www.crs.org/actioncenter.cfm, to send a message to your members today.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP: The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty (www.usccb.org/globalpoverty), a joint effort by USCCB and CRS, encourages Catholics in the United

States to learn about the issues of aid, trade and debt, how they affect our brothers and sisters worldwide, and what you can do to advocate for U.S. policies that promote economic and social development for people living in poverty.

For more information, contact: *Andrew Rivas, 202-541-3190, arivas@usccb.org; Fr. Andrew Small, OMI, Policy Advisor, USCCB, 202-541-3153, asmall@usccb.org; Kathy Selvaggio, Catholic Relief Services, kselvaggio@catholicrelief.org*