

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2756

To amend the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 and the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to direct the Agricultural Research Service to expand organic research, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself and Mr. BRAUN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 and the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to direct the Agricultural Research Service to expand organic research, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Streamlining Organic
5 Research Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. COORDINATING AND EXPANDING ORGANIC RE-**
 2 **SEARCH INITIATIVE.**

3 Title IV of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and
 4 Education Reform Act of 1998 is amended by inserting
 5 before section 404 (7 U.S.C. 7624) the following:

6 **“SEC. 401. COORDINATING AND EXPANDING ORGANIC RE-**
 7 **SEARCH INITIATIVE.**

8 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 “(1) INITIATIVE.—The term ‘Initiative’ means
 10 the Coordinating and Expanding Organic Research
 11 Initiative established under subsection (b).

12 “(2) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
 13 the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary
 14 for Research, Education, and Economics, in con-
 15 sultation with the Office of the Chief Scientist.

16 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
 17 lish, and appoint the members of, an initiative, to be
 18 known as the ‘Coordinating and Expanding Organic Re-
 19 search Initiative’, to coordinate and expand the resources
 20 that the Agricultural Research Service, the National Insti-
 21 tute of Food and Agriculture, the Economic Research
 22 Service, and the National Agricultural Statistics Service
 23 dedicate to organic agricultural research.

24 “(c) DUTIES.—The Initiative shall carry out the fol-
 25 lowing duties:

1 “(1) Coordinating all research conducted by the
 2 Secretary that is applicable to organic agricultural
 3 producers and transitioning-to-organic agricultural
 4 producers.

5 “(2) Reviewing and assessing the completed
 6 and ongoing organic and transitioning-to-organic ag-
 7 ricultural research of the Secretary.

8 “(3) Developing iterative strategic plans for fu-
 9 ture organic and transitioning-to-organic agricul-
 10 tural research of the Secretary.

11 “(4) Conducting the surveys and submitting to
 12 the Secretary the reports under subsection (e)(1).

13 “(d) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall appoint
 15 not fewer than 12, and not more than 18, members
 16 to the Initiative.

17 “(2) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for appoint-
 18 ment to the Initiative under paragraph (1), an indi-
 19 vidual shall—

20 “(A) be in the competitive service or the
 21 Senior Executive Service (as defined in sections
 22 2102 and 2101a of title 5, United States Code);
 23 and

1 “(B) have expertise in organic agriculture
 2 from a science, research, or technical assistance
 3 division of a Department agency.

4 “(3) REPRESENTATION.—In appointing mem-
 5 bers to the Initiative, the Secretary shall ensure
 6 that—

7 “(A) not fewer than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the members are
 8 appointed from each of—

9 “(i) the Agricultural Research Service;
 10 and

11 “(ii) the National Institute of Food
 12 and Agriculture; and

13 “(B) not fewer than 1 member is ap-
 14 pointed from each of—

15 “(i) the Office of the Chief Scientist;

16 “(ii) the Agricultural Marketing Serv-
 17 ice;

18 “(iii) the Economic Research Service;

19 and

20 “(iv) the National Agricultural Statis-
 21 tics Service.

22 “(4) CHAIR.—The Secretary shall designate a
 23 member of the Initiative appointed from the Office
 24 of the Chief Scientist to serve as the Chair of the
 25 Initiative.

1 “(5) TERM.—A member of the Initiative—

2 “(A) shall serve for a term of 5 years; and

3 “(B) may be reappointed to the Initiative.

4 “(e) SURVEYS; REPORTS.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years
6 after the establishment of the Initiative, and every 5
7 years thereafter, in coordination with the roadmap
8 for agricultural research, education, and extension
9 described in section 7504 of the Food, Conservation,
10 and Energy Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 7614a), the Ini-
11 tiative shall—

12 “(A) conduct a survey of all research relat-
13 ing to organic agriculture of the Secretary; and

14 “(B) submit to the Secretary a report con-
15 taining the findings of the survey conducted
16 under subparagraph (A), which shall include
17 sections relating to each of the 4 agencies de-
18 scribed in subsection (b).

19 “(2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Initiative shall
20 include in each report submitted under paragraph
21 (1)(B) recommendations relating to—

22 “(A) expanding the research conducted by
23 the Secretary that—

24 “(i) is applicable to agricultural pro-
25 ducers that adhere to the requirements

1 under the national organic program estab-
2 lished under the Organic Foods Production
3 Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.); and

4 “(ii) would explore the new or en-
5 hanced research opportunities that could
6 lead to new discoveries, foster innovation,
7 improve technologies, and promote inte-
8 grated systems approaches to assist—

9 “(I) organic agricultural pro-
10 ducers;

11 “(II) consumers of organic food
12 products;

13 “(III) organic marketing and dis-
14 tribution channels;

15 “(IV) transitioning-to-organic ag-
16 ricultural producers, including with
17 respect to barriers to transitioning to
18 organic production and producers who
19 have considered transitioning to or-
20 ganic production but decided not to
21 do so; and

22 “(V) the organic food industry;

23 “(B) strategies to increase the coordination
24 and effectiveness of projects carried out by the
25 Secretary that are applicable to organic produc-

tion and that would improve the efficiency, productivity, profitability, and ecosystem services of organic crop and livestock production, including strategies relating to—

“(i) developing new public plant cultivars and livestock breeds that are regionally adapted and appropriate for organic production;

“(ii) expanding the applicability and cost-effectiveness of integrated, ecologically based pest, weed, and disease management for crop and livestock systems;

“(iii) developing integrated organic production systems that—

“(I) enhance ecosystem services relating to organic crop and livestock production; and

“(II) optimize agricultural resilience to the impacts of climate change and other stresses, including soil conservation and soil health, biodiversity, water management, carbon sequestration, and greenhouse gas mitigation;

“(iv) improving the remote sensing and monitoring capabilities for ecosystem

1 services relating to organic crop and live-
2 stock production, including soil conserva-
3 tion and soil health, biodiversity, water
4 management, carbon sequestration, and
5 greenhouse gas mitigation;

6 “(v) developing grazing, pasture, for-
7 age, and livestock manure management
8 techniques that are regionally adapted and
9 appropriate for organic production;

10 “(vi) enhancing irrigation and water
11 management techniques used in organic
12 crop and livestock production;

13 “(vii) enhancing food safety relating
14 to organic crops and livestock products, in-
15 cluding guidance on compliance with the
16 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21
17 U.S.C. 301 et seq.);

18 “(viii) developing new products and
19 new uses of organic crops and livestock
20 products;

21 “(ix) enhancing the quality of organi-
22 cally produced food, including taste, ap-
23 pearance, and nutritional value, after being
24 processed into organic crop and livestock

1 products, through genetic, processing, and
 2 related research topics; and

3 “(x) other similar, relevant topics, as
 4 determined by the Initiative; and

5 “(C) the development of data and applied
 6 research-based information useful to organic
 7 and conventional crop producers, associations of
 8 those producers, and other interested bene-
 9 ficiaries in evaluating the organic and conven-
 10 tional crops industries from a regional and na-
 11 tional perspective.

12 “(3) REVIEW OF PRIOR REPORT.—The Initia-
 13 tive shall include in each report submitted under
 14 paragraph (1)(B)—

15 “(A) a review of the recommendations de-
 16 scribed in paragraph (2) included in the prior
 17 report submitted under paragraph (1)(B); and

18 “(B) the actions taken by the Secretary to
 19 implement those recommendations.

20 “(f) CONSULTATION.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this sec-
 22 tion, the Initiative shall engage in consultation, in-
 23 cluding with—

24 “(A) the National Organic Standards
 25 Board; and

1 “(B) land-grant colleges and universities.

2 “(2) ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL INDUS-
3 TRIES.—In preparing each report under subsection
4 (e)(1)(B), the Initiative shall consult, on an ongoing
5 basis, with a diverse array of—

6 “(A) organic and conventional farmers,
7 ranchers, handlers; and

8 “(B) organizations that serve those farm-
9 ers, ranchers, and handlers.

10 “(g) CONSIDERATION BY SECRETARY.—In preparing
11 the annual budget recommendations for the Department,
12 the Secretary shall take into consideration the findings
13 and recommendations contained in the most recently sub-
14 mitted report under subsection (e)(1)(B).

15 “(h) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—In the budget mate-
16 rial submitted to Congress by the Secretary of Agriculture
17 in connection with the budget of the United States Gov-
18 ernment submitted by the President under section 1105
19 of title 31, United States Code, for each fiscal year, the
20 Secretary of Agriculture shall include a report describing
21 how the Secretary addressed each recommendation of the
22 Initiative contained in the most recently submitted report
23 under subsection (e)(1)(B).”.

1 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON ORGANIC ACREAGE ON AGRICULTURAL**
2 **RESEARCH SERVICE STATIONS.**

3 Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment
4 of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through
5 the Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service,
6 shall—

7 (1) prepare a report describing the resources
8 needed to increase the research conducted on cer-
9 tified organic agricultural land, as determined by the
10 Administrator of the National Agricultural Statistics
11 Service; and

12 (2) submit the report prepared under para-
13 graph (1) to the Committee on Agriculture of the
14 House of Representatives and the Committee on Ag-
15 riculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

16 **SEC. 4. ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTEN-**
17 **SION INITIATIVE.**

18 Section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conserva-
19 tion, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925b) is amend-
20 ed—

21 (1) in subsection (a)—

22 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph
23 (1)—

24 (i) by striking “subsection (e)” and
25 inserting “subsection (f)”; and

1 (ii) by striking “2023” and inserting
2 “2028”;

3 (B) in paragraph (7), by striking “and” at
4 the end;

5 (C) in paragraph (8), by striking the pe-
6 riod at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

7 (D) by adding at the end the following:

8 “(9) facilitating the identification and adoption
9 of traditional ecological knowledge in accordance
10 with subsection (e);

11 “(10) developing cultural practices and other
12 allowable alternatives to substances recommended
13 for removal from the National List of approved and
14 prohibited substances under section 2118; and

15 “(11) identifying how organic agriculture can
16 reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build landscape re-
17 siliency, and facilitate other related ecosystem serv-
18 ices.”;

19 (2) in subsection (b)—

20 (A) in the subsection heading, by striking
21 “TYPES AND PROCESS,” and inserting “TERM,
22 TYPES, AND PROCESS;”;

23 (B) by inserting “(3)” after “Paragraphs”;
24 and

1 (C) by striking “(7 U.S.C. 450i)” and in-
2 serting “(7 U.S.C. 3157(b))”;

3 (3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the
4 following:

5 “(e) INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL
6 KNOWLEDGE.—Any grants made under this section for
7 the purposes of facilitating the identification and adoption
8 of indigenous traditional ecological knowledge shall be sub-
9 ject to the following requirements:

10 “(1) A 1994 Institution (as defined in section
11 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Sta-
12 tus Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law
13 103–382)) shall have the role of project director.

14 “(2) The free, prior, and informed consent of
15 any Indian Tribes (as defined in section 4 of the In-
16 dian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
17 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)) or Native Hawaiian organiza-
18 tions that possess the applicable indigenous tradi-
19 tional ecological knowledge shall be obtained.

20 “(3) Appropriate attribution to the sources of
21 the applicable indigenous traditional ecological
22 knowledge shall be identified.”; and

23 (4) in subsection (f)—

24 (A) in paragraph (1)(C), by striking “and”
25 at the end;

1 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking
 2 “\$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014
 3 through 2023” and inserting “\$15,000,000 for
 4 each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028”; and
 5 (C) by striking paragraph (3).

6 **SEC. 5. RESEARCHING THE TRANSITION TO ORGANIC AGRI-**
 7 **CULTURAL PRODUCTION.**

8 Title XVI of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation,
 9 and Trade Act of 1990 is amended by inserting after sec-
 10 tion 1673 (7 U.S.C. 5926) the following:

11 **“SEC. 1674. RESEARCHING THE TRANSITION TO ORGANIC**
 12 **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.**

13 “(a) COMPETITIVE SPECIALIZED RESEARCH AND
 14 EXTENSION GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of
 15 Agriculture (referred to in this section as the ‘Secretary’),
 16 in consultation with the National Agricultural Research,
 17 Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board,
 18 may make competitive grants to support research, edu-
 19 cation, and extension activities relating to the transition
 20 of nonorganic agricultural production systems into organic
 21 agricultural production systems for the purposes of—

22 “(1) overcoming barriers to transitioning to or-
 23 ganic agricultural production;

24 “(2) documenting and understanding the effects
 25 of organic agricultural production practices on eco-

1 system services, including soil health and fertility,
 2 greenhouse gas mitigation and sequestration, water
 3 management, biodiversity-related services, and pest
 4 management; and

5 “(3) developing improved technologies, methods,
 6 models, and metrics to document, describe, and opti-
 7 mize ecosystem services of transitioning nonorganic
 8 agricultural production systems into organic agricul-
 9 tural production systems.

10 “(b) GRANT TERM, TYPES, AND PROCESS; PROHIBI-
 11 TION ON CONSTRUCTION.—Paragraphs (3), (4), (7), (8),
 12 and (11)(B) of subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special,
 13 and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(b))
 14 shall apply with respect to the making of grants under
 15 this section.

16 “(c) PARTNERSHIPS ENCOURAGED.—Following the
 17 completion of a peer review process for grant proposals
 18 received under this section, the Secretary may provide a
 19 priority to the grant proposals, found in the peer review
 20 process to be scientifically meritorious, that—

21 “(1) would involve—

22 “(A) active partnerships with agricultural
 23 producers; or

24 “(B) the conduct of on-farm or consumer
 25 research; and

1 “(2) would involve active partnerships with—

2 “(A) 1862 Institutions (as defined in sec-
3 tion 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension,
4 and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C.
5 7601));

6 “(B) 1890 Institutions (as defined in sec-
7 tion 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension,
8 and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C.
9 7601));

10 “(C) 1994 Institutions (as defined in sec-
11 tion 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-
12 Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note;
13 Public Law 103–382)); and

14 “(D) Hispanic-serving institutions (as de-
15 fined in section 502 of the Higher Education
16 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a)).

17 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
19 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.”.

20 **SEC. 6. ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND MARKET DATA INITIA-**
21 **TIVES.**

22 Section 7407 of the Farm Security and Rural Invest-
23 ment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 5925c) is amended—

24 (1) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-
25 section (e);

1 (2) by inserting after subsection (c) the fol-
 2 lowing:

3 “(d) ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF ORGANIC
 4 FARMING AND CERTIFICATION.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting
 6 through the Administrator of the Economic Re-
 7 search Service (referred to in this subsection as the
 8 ‘Secretary’), shall conduct an economic impact anal-
 9 ysis of organic agricultural management conducted
 10 in accordance with the national organic program es-
 11 tablished under the Organic Foods Production Act
 12 of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.).

13 “(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The analysis under
 14 paragraph (1) shall—

15 “(A) take into consideration information
 16 about farming and ranching operations of a va-
 17 riety of sizes, with regional differences, and
 18 that have a diversity of production practices
 19 and methods; and

20 “(B) consider the direct and indirect eco-
 21 nomic impacts of organic agriculture on rural
 22 and urban communities, including—

23 “(i) the vitality of the local economy;

24 “(ii) the labor market;

25 “(iii) environmental quality;

1 “(iv) social dynamics;

2 “(v) land ownership; and

3 “(vi) any other information, data, or
4 analysis that the Secretary determines to
5 be necessary to make the analysis com-
6 prehensive, accurate, and useful.

7 “(3) PLAN.—Not later than 1 year after the
8 date of enactment of the Streamlining Organic Re-
9 search Act of 2023, the Secretary shall submit a
10 plan to conduct the analysis under paragraph (1)
11 to—

12 “(A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
13 tion, and Forestry of the Senate; and

14 “(B) the Committee on Agriculture of the
15 House of Representatives.

16 “(4) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 3 years
17 after the date on which the Secretary submits the
18 plan under paragraph (3), the Secretary shall sub-
19 mit to the committees described in that paragraph
20 a report describing the results of the analysis con-
21 ducted under paragraph (1).”; and

22 (3) in subsection (e) (as so redesignated)—

23 (A) in paragraph (1)—

24 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking

25 “and” at the end;

1 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking
2 the period at the end and inserting “;
3 and”; and

4 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(C) \$5,000,000 for the period of fiscal
7 years 2024 through 2028.”; and
8 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking
9 “\$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008
10 through 2023” and inserting “\$10,000,000 for
11 each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028”.

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