

## **Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies** *Provisions Contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018*

**Genetically Engineered (GE) Salmon:** Since the FDA's decision to approve GE salmon for human consumption, Senator Murkowski has continued her fight for the health of both consumers and Alaska's fisheries. Senator Murkowski secured an import ban directing the FDA to not allow the introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of any food that contains genetically engineered salmon until the FDA publishes final labeling guidelines for informing consumers of such content.

**Seafood Advice:** Murkowski secured language which directs the FDA to review its January 2017 seafood advice and to make necessary technical corrections to ensure that pregnant and nursing women receive consistent and understandable nutrition advice, based on the most recent and complete science, on what seafood is safe and healthy to consume. It also directs the FDA to review its final seafood advice and to make such technical corrections as are necessary to ensure the advice is consistent with the FDA's scientific review of the net effects of seafood consumption.

**WIC Fish:** Murkowski was pleased the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine recommended, at her urging, that more WIC food packages include fish. This year, the committee report encourages USDA to consider the health and cultural benefits of fish as the agency uses those recommendations to update WIC food package rules. The report also encourages USDA to allow states to prioritize fish over legumes and peanut butter in implementing the National Academies recommendations and to submit cultural food package proposals to respond to the cultural preferences of WIC participants in states like Alaska.

**Agricultural Research:** Senator Murkowski again included language encouraging USDA's Agricultural Research Service to provide direct, place-based assistance to universities in states like Alaska that do not have ARS facilities to address priorities such as invasive plants and insects, aquaculture, and the development of crops to increase food security and expand farmers' marketing opportunities.

**Summer Food Service Program:** Understanding that in many rural areas, children who rely on school meals to avoid hunger are unable to access locations at which Summer Food Service Program meals are provided, either due to lack of transportation or lack of actual sites in their area, Senator Murkowski convinced her colleagues to express support for allowing innovative ways to ensure these children do not go hungry during the summer and school holidays, such as through non-congregate means and settings.

**Frontier States Rural Food Security:** Murkowski inserted language strongly encouraging Food and Nutrition Service to finalize and implement plans to work with stakeholders in frontier communities on locally-designed initiatives to increase food security in rural Alaska.

**Rural Broadband Program:** \$600 million to be prioritized to areas currently lacking access to broadband.

**Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions:** Maintained discretionary funding at \$3.194 million to help these institutions improve and expand their ability to prepare graduates for the food and agricultural sciences.

**Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (1994 Institutions):** Increased support payments and research funding and maintained Extension funds to help institutions prepare students studying at institutions like Ilisagvik College in Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) to contribute to and strengthen their communities.

**Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment for the Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) Program:** Maintained funding at \$1.996 million to help farmers in Alaska, Hawaii, and the Outlying Areas offset the high transportation costs associated with farming and getting their crops to market.

**Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA):** Funded at \$4.06 million for Extension outreach activities related to forestry and natural resources. Alaska RREA grants support educational activities of foresters; the Alaska Wood Energy Conference in Ketchikan, whose cooperative efforts with the Alaska Energy Authority uses biomass to heat community buildings; and foster education to teachers through the Project Learning Tree program.

**Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP):** Funded at \$3.039 million to build tribal capacity in the areas such as youth development, agriculture and natural resource management, and business development.

**Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment:** Increased funding to \$8 million to provide incentives to veterinarians to work in shortage areas. Alaska has a great need for veterinarians, especially those who specialize in large animal care.

**NRCS Soil Survey:** Funded at \$80.8 million to support the expansion of soil maps and surveys to inform farming and conservation planning.

**Agricultural Research, Conservation, and Extension:**

- Hatch Act agricultural research: Maintained at \$243.701 billion
- Smith-Lever cooperative extension: Maintained at \$300 million
- Agriculture and Food Research Initiatives (AFRI): Increased to \$400 million
- Agricultural Research Service: Increased to \$1.343 billion
- Maintains mandatory funding for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

**Food and Nutritional Service:**

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): \$74.01 billion to fully meet the needs of food-insecure working poor, seniors, military families and others
- Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations: Maintains funding at \$153 million
- Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC): \$6.17 billion to fully meet the needs of low-income women and children
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Commodities: Increased to \$288.75 million

- TEFAP Storage and Distribution: Increased by \$5 million to \$64.4 million
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program: Maintained at \$238 million
- Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Maintained at \$18.54 million
- Child Nutrition Programs:
  - National School Lunch Program: Increased to \$13.13 billion
  - School Breakfast Program: Increased to \$4.8 billion
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program: Increased to \$3.83 billion
  - Summer Food Service Program: \$563.81 million
  - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: Increased to \$172 million
  - School Meal Equipment Grants: Increased to \$30 million

**Housing and Water: Provides a significant increase in funding for affordable housing and community development programs at HUD and USDA.**

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits: 12.5% increase
- Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program: \$1.36 billion, the highest level in seven years.
- Tribal HUD-VASH: \$5 million
- Rural Utilities Service –Rural Water and Wastewater Disposal Program: \$560.2 million