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| **Recorder Form** | |
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| Recorder: Karen Fierro | Date: 4/25/2018 |
| Session Title: Farm Bill Reauthorization | |
| Moderator: Henry Cagey, Councilman, Lummi Nation  Panelists: Ross Racine, Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council  Janie Simms Hipp, Director, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, University of Arkansas  School of Law  Phil Baker-Shenk, Partner, Holland & Knight LLP  Maria Givens, Policy Analyst, NCAI | |
| Summary of Issues and Items Discussed:  Ross Racine- Ask yourself, are you sovereign if you cannot feed yourself? It’s an opportunity for Tribal communities and impacts all levels of your lives. Indian Agriculture is selling $3.3 million dollar’s worth of produce fruits, vegetables, etc. But yet we are importing all of our food, why is that? 1990, was the first time Indians were mentioned in the Farm Bill. 50 years of conservation programs off reservation but 1990 was the first we were able to walk through the door. Every five years the Farm Bill is reauthorized, 50 years of exclusion was corrected. The land, the cows, and plows initiative and then the nutrition portion came into the picture. This Farm Bill we need to expand service and look at nutrition. The economist a healthy dollar rolls over six times in a healthy economic community. We have had factories, etc. projects dumped on us and why did they fail because they had to import all the goods. We should be looking at food to be a economic development, reduce health disparities’, it would lessen the carbon footprint. Montana Governor said and the meat product left Montana and came back in processing would have traveled 180 miles. So think about how food could be used as economic development. The Native Farm Coalition is about 130 Tribes have signed on and first time Tribes have come together on the Farm Bill and is powerful. It brings food programs to our reservation and it is the most universal item that affects us all: SNAP, Food Nutrition, etc. We cannot allow a decrease of funding, the 2014 Farm Bill, it came close to a $40 Million dollar cut that year,. The work requirement to receive SNAP is not right, there is a high unemployment rate and if there aren’t jobs available, there aren’t jobs available to the people. Priority to increase funding, the federally recognized Tribes program for agriculture program. The extension program was moved into competitive grant program and should be exempt from this requirement. Farm Bill Coalition established in October 2017 at the NCAI Annual Conference in Wisconsin.  Colby D- The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community commissioned an assessment of risks of opportunities for Native Communities. The Farm Bill best described by President Obama is like a ‘swiss army knife,’ there are health/nutrition and many areas that affect Tribal communities. Nutrition is 80% of the Farm Bill, other areas are commodities, crop insurance and conservation. The Farm Bill is a 5 year Bill at $489 Million, and will expire in September 2018. Why does the Farm Bill Matter, it is a $956 Billion dollar initiative, it represents rural and urban partnership that existed for over 40 years through Nutrition Title and Farm Programs. 20% (1/5)of rural households receive federal assistance and over 25% in Indian Country with some communities reaching over 50%, The 2018 Farm B ill Could Mean- $1 Trillion to Indian Country and Rural Areas. There are 12 areas of the Farm Bill 1. Commodities,  Native Run farms are twice the size of the non-native farms. Value added means more jobs and lower costs,3 steps would triple reservation economies.  Janie- The Nutrition Title, basics and upcoming issues, Within the Department of Agriculture a limited amount of understanding or anyone in the building have ever dealt with 638 contracts. You have to start somewhere; there is provision for forestry to go 638 and nowhere else in the bill. There are some areas where 638 is not going to work, but it can work for nutrition. USDA was supposed to do a study on the food nutrition study and the outcome was a strong desire from Tribal government to run the programs and manage the programs. The only thing holding it back is the 638 in the Farm Bill. We need to keep an eye on the about 25% of all Native people are dependent on food programs urban and rural reservations are dependent. Some are 40%, 60%, and 90% are on SNAP. It could go to the states and then sent to the states as block grants to Tribes and you know how that is going to go under a state government. In past Farm Bills, there was language of the encouragement to buy traditional foods for feeding programs such as Food Distribution on Indian Reservation Program, the reality of it, is that there isn’t enough traditional food to feed everyone. But we need to band together and we can get into that issue. It’s going to take a long time to build our food system. We have data behind us and how the work requirement can affect us. Every time, anyone rolls off the SNAP program they end up showing up at the food distribution areas. USDA buys the food; if you manage the program then you get to buy the food. Are you prepared to feed your people? Because if this happens then there will be those knocking on the door asking for food. Those provisions of the donation of traditional foods, section 4033 allowed traditional foods to be donated in residential child care facilities, child nutrition programs, hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and senior meal programs.  Phil- Please check out the Regaining our Future and link below. It is an election year and there is a lot of contesting for the House and the Senate…as well as the White House. There are only a few more weeks to look at the Farm Bill on the Hill. We are not too confident it will get done this year but they could get it past this year. If the house GOP Farm Bill gets their way and the able body work requirement for nutrition program. The want to Block Grant all nutrition to states and potential impacts to Tribes. We have a lot of allies on the Hill both Republicans and Democrats. Tribes decide their own future and what is in it. The want is, if they are going to do that and make these program state level then there should be a provision for 638 as an option for Tribes. SUTA, Substantially Underserved Trust Area, it only applied in the rural area, provisions give Rural Utilities Service areas new tools to finance improvement in electric, telecommunications, water, and sewer infrastructure in underserved Tribal communities. The Farm Bill is a GOP written bill and no Democrat participation in the bill, there are some provisions not agreed upon. The Senate side is where the majority of the Bill will be written, it is currently pending on the floor in the House, but have not heard anything from the Senate so far. | |
| Questions from the Audience:  Q: Is there an Alaska Rep on the Inter Tribal Council?  A: Yes, do not know name off hand.  Q: Reindeer Herding possibility, I am new to this topic and you say there are people buying Indian food overseas.  A: The import program, our job is to line up buyers and meet your production capacity. We have to set up realistically smaller contracts overseas. There is a cooperative agreement capability. We did build a reindeer plant, didn’t come to fruition because the lack of water to facility.  Q: The SNAP program, there are several Tribes that manage their own SNAP, through TANF program, seems like there is a vehicle already in place.  Q: Forest provision, need more information, and pertains to acres lost to the Klamath Tribe.  A: There is a pilot program available under TANF but under pilot projects it can go away tomorrow.  The Tribes have to do it through the states, and the states take the Admin money.  A: Add Tribes as eligible for Good Neighbor authority agreements. The Forestry Title permits Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to enter into 638 self-determination demonstration project agreements with Tribes to take over the management and functions of the federal government under the Tribal Forest Protection Act.  Q:If the Senate gets it done, what are the impacts to the Tribes  A: The one benefit of 638 it is already done, and if it is economic development then there will be grants associated to chase money.  Q: is there a Native Clearing house to trade amongst Tribes?  A: No, we don’t have a clearinghouse as such, producer co-ops either cattle or grain, we looked at opening a flour mill out west, but it will take several Tribes to do that. Beef production in Indian Country, they are not owned by Tribes, but by individuals, it will take a lot and needs to be built upon.  Q: Language for industrial hemp will there be any language in the Farm Bill  A: There has been a bill that has already passed, that legalizes industrial hemp. It has been overcome by the medical and recreational marijuana. The Tribal eligibility has been watched across the board. | |
| Follow Materials, Documents, Websites for Reference:  Regaining our Future:  <http://seedsofnativehealth.org/farm-bill-report-andtitle-summaries/>  Join the Native Farm Bill Coalition  <http://seedsofnativehealth.org/native-farm-bill-coalition/> | |