



U.S. Congressman Jimmy Panetta

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The Agricultural Fairs Rescue Act

Congressmembers Panetta (D-CA), Long (R-MO), Levin (D-CA), Newhouse (R-WA)

Senators Tina Smith (D-MN) and Roy Blunt (R-MO)

Supported by the International Association of Fairs & Expositions, the Western Fairs Association, the California Fairs Alliance, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)

This legislation provides grant funding for agricultural fairs through state departments of agriculture.

Fairs' Importance to Agriculture

- State and county fairs are a primary source for the promotion of U.S. agribusiness.
- Fairs promote and market U.S. agribusiness products and services, develop and administer programs to assist agribusinesses in expanding, and contribute to the development of agribusiness by conducting educational programs, demonstrations, contests, and exhibits.
- Fairs also encourage and develop the next generation of America's food producers by cultivating a passion for agriculture in students and supporting beginning farmers and ranchers.

Economic Impact:

- Prior to the pandemic, each year the operation of agricultural fairs resulted in \$4.67 billion for the U.S. economy and supports thousands of jobs. About 2,000 fairs were held in North America each year.
- Fairs, like so many other industries in the U.S., have suffered tremendous financial losses as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. IAFE estimates a loss of revenue exceeding \$4.5 billion to fair organizations in 2020 based upon the cancellation of facility events and annual fairs.
- For the period of March through May alone, a survey of IAFE member fairs reported a loss of \$22 million per month because of the cancellation of events at their facilities.
- 98% of the fairs across America were not held in 2020.

The legislation:

- This bill provides \$500 million in Agricultural Fair Rescue Grants to agricultural fairs, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
- AMS will provide the grant funding to states or state departments of agriculture based on the loss of attendance those fairs have experienced in 2020 when compared to past years.
- The states or state department will then be required to make grants to fairs, prioritizing those that have faced the greatest financial hardship.
- Grants must be used to assist fairs to continue events that are drivers and promoters of agribusiness.
- Eligible fairs are local, county, or state fairs that helps farmers promote their products or expand agricultural markets through conservation programs, agricultural research, educational programs, or other events that encourage agriculture, horticulture, and the domestic arts.