

## 09-20-04 Two New Action Alerts!!!

Although these days the news from Washington is dominated by the upcoming election, Congress is meeting soon to discuss two important bills that promote sustainable agriculture and school nutrition. Your focused help can make these bills a reality. Thanks to the Rodale Institute and the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture for this information.

### **Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act**

Kids going back to school this fall are one step closer to eating healthy lunches made from the freshest produce available. After overwhelming support in both branches of Congress, the Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act was signed into law this summer, advancing the link between small scale farmers and their local school cafeterias. The new program would provide a one-time grant up to \$100,000 per school district or non-profit organization to upgrade cold storage, food preparation, and serving facilities (such as buying more refrigeration or salad bars for fresh produce). Funds could also be used for initial labor costs for setting up systems to purchase from local farms, planning seasonal menus based on regional products, or training staff. Districts could even use the funds for hands-on nutrition education linking local agriculture to healthy diets through school gardens, visits to local farms, and field trips to farmers' markets.

Although the Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act is incredibly popular, it is about to face its toughest challenge: Congressional funding. If we are serious about connecting our children with their food and changing modern perceptions that food comes from a shelf in the grocery store, we must make sure that Congress funds this program. The Senate is back in session to iron out next year's appropriations so the time is now to let your Senators know that the Farm-to-School program is important to you.

### **What can you do? Contact Sen. Hillary Clinton (202) 224-6542, and Sen. Charles Schumer (202) 224-6542 before October 1!**

Call Sen. Clinton or Sen. Schumer and thank them for their support of the Leahy-Spector bill S.1755: Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act, and encourage them to set aside funding in the upcoming appropriations bill to adequately fund this important legislation. For more information or instructions about how to write a personal letter or email message, go to [www.newfarm.org](http://www.newfarm.org) and click on the "Take Action Now" link.

### **Conservation Security Program (CSP)**

CSP was one of the most promising aspects of the 2002 Farm Bill. It was created in response to traditional agriculture subsidies that have tended to reward agribusiness farms for overproducing a small number of grains, encouraging farming techniques that overuse the soil, contaminate ground water, and depress prices for farmers across the globe. CSP's aim is to shift subsidies to reward land stewardship and sustainable farming practices. If widely implemented, the Conservation Program would provide financial and technical assistance for the conservation, protection, and improvement of soil, water, air, and biological diversity on America's farm land.

### **What can you do?**

For more information about CSP, and for help drafting a letter to key members of Congress, go to [www.sustainableagriculture.net](http://www.sustainableagriculture.net), and click on the "Action Alerts" link.

**Please act before October 5!**

