

House proposes \$5 billion cuts to farm, food aid

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by Philip Brasher

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House Republicans are making the first bid as battles over the federal budget deficit heat up this week. President Barack Obama releases his 2012 budget on Monday. But Republicans have released plans to slash spending for the current spending year by \$61 billion below the 2010 spending level and \$100 billion below what the president had requested for fiscal 2011.

Those cuts include \$5.2 billion in reductions from 2010 levels at the Agriculture Department and the Food and Drug Administration. Some of the biggest cuts would be in domestic and international feeding programs. But the proposals also would also reduce spending for conservation, rural development and loans to farmers.

International food assistance would fall by 42 percent, or about \$800 million, to its lowest levels in a decade, if the cuts are enacted, according to the [Alliance for Global Food Security](#), a coalition of aid organizations. The reduction would eliminate assistance to nearly 18 million people, the group said.

The [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#), which tracks the USDA budget, says that the House GOP is going after some mandatory farm bill spending that's under the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee, not Appropriations, which is responsible for writing annual spending bills.

The cuts would hit among others the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which subsidizes the cost of farm pollution controls and conservation measures; the Conservation Stewardship Program, which rewards farmers for improved environmental practices; the Wetlands Reserve Program; and the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, a new measure that is supposed to subsidize the cost of providing new, non-food feedstocks such as crop residue for biofuel production.

Get a summary of the proposed cuts here: [FY2011CRSpendingTablesbySubcommittee](#)