



NORTHEAST REGION

- Ashtabula County is now the leading energy crop producing county in the country—the USDA’s Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) has resulted in the more than 3,000 acres of Miscanthus production (a perennial energy crop which grows on marginal lands).
- Many companies in the Cleveland-Akron area are taking advantage of the USDA’s “Bio-Preferred” labeling program—a seal which USDA approves for products such as cleaners, solvents, paints and industrial additives which are sustainably produced and bio-degradable. The Farm Bill re-authorizes the program and promotes government procurement of listed products.
- Reauthorization of the popular Farm Markets and Local Foods Promotion programs will provide an impetus to existing local foods and urban agriculture initiatives such as those in Cleveland, Wooster and Youngstown.

NORTHWEST REGION

- The REAP (Rural Energy for America Program) is reauthorized and the application is streamlined. In addition to providing funding for small wind, solar and biomass projects on farms and in small towns, the program is now available for certain greenhouse operations, even if they’re located in the “center city.”
- The Rural Utilities Service has completed its environmental review for the 49.9 megawatt Turning Point Solar project, which is now awaiting approval from the PUCO. If approved, the project developers have announced plans for a solar panel assembly plant in Napoleon, which will provide more than 300 new, hi-tech jobs in the NW Ohio “solar cluster.”
- Re-authorization of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Innovation Grants will help farmers in sensitive watersheds in NW Ohio (including Grand Lake St. Marys) to comply with regulations and adopt best conservation practices on their farms.

SOUTHWEST REGION

- The bill reauthorizes and streamlines certain Rural Development loan and grant programs that have provided assistance for small and mid-sized Ohio towns. For example, the Energize Clinton County initiative is now reaching out to local businesses in the areas hardest hit by the 2008 DHL closings in Wilmington.
- The bill reauthorizes the USDA’s Biorefinery and Advanced Bio-fuels programs. Last month, GE Aviation met with, USDA, my staff and other biofuel stakeholders from around the state to discuss the possible purchase of up to 5 million gallons of aviation biofuels—produced here in Ohio—starting in 2015. GE wishes to use the biofuel for test burning in their aircraft engine plant in Cincinnati.

SOUTHEAST REGION

- The bill authorizes USDA to provide loans and grants for expansion of broadband service in underserved areas of the state, particularly in the Appalachian region of the state. It also provides competitive grants and loans for distance learning and telemedicine projects.
- The Rural Utilities Service has completed its environmental review for the 49.9 megawatt Turning Point Solar project, which is now awaiting approval from the PUCO. If approved by the state, Turning Point would be constructed on reclaimed strip mined lands in Noble County and provide construction jobs for some 300 locally trained solar workers. Once on line, it will be the largest solar power facility in the U.S. (east of the Rockies).