



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

**MAR 23 2017**

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) requires that the Secretary of Agriculture submit an Equitable Relief Report by February 1 of each year to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2016 Equitable Relief Report provides the number of requests for equitable relief filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by participants in USDA programs pursuant to sections 1613(b) and (e) of the 2002 Farm Bill and section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 during the previous calendar year and the disposition of those requests.

The enclosed report shows that program participants requested equitable relief in 15,289 cases filed with USDA and that USDA granted 15,189 of these requests and denied 92. Two requests were mooted by USDA granting other forms of relief to the program participants. In six cases equitable relief authority was not granted. The enclosed report provides a detailed breakdown of these numbers.

If you have questions about the enclosed report, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Young".

Michael L. Young  
Acting Deputy Secretary

Enclosure



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**MAR 23 2017**

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Stabenow:

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) requires that the Secretary of Agriculture submit an Equitable Relief Report by February 1 of each year to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2016 Equitable Relief Report provides the number of requests for equitable relief filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by participants in USDA programs pursuant to sections 1613(b) and (e) of the 2002 Farm Bill and section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 during the previous calendar year and the disposition of those requests.

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**MAR 23 2017**

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) requires that the Secretary of Agriculture submit an Equitable Relief Report by February 1 of each year to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2016 Equitable Relief Report provides the number of requests for equitable relief filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by participants in USDA programs pursuant to sections 1613(b) and (e) of the 2002 Farm Bill and section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 during the previous calendar year and the disposition of those requests.

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**MAR 2 9 2017**

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1010 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Peterson:

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) requires that the Secretary of Agriculture submit an Equitable Relief Report by February 1 of each year to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2016 Equitable Relief Report provides the number of requests for equitable relief filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by participants in USDA programs pursuant to sections 1613(b) and (e) of the 2002 Farm Bill and section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 during the previous calendar year and the disposition of those requests.

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## Department of Agriculture 2015 Equitable Relief Report

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) grants the Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Directors and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationists the authority to provide equitable relief to FSA participants in price, income support, production, or loss assistance programs and NRCS conservation programs. This relief is subject to financial limitations. Section 1613 also grants this authority to the Secretary of Agriculture, without any financial limitation, and the Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this statutory authority to the FSA Administrator and the Chief of NRCS. To qualify for relief, a participant must demonstrate that he or she acted in good faith to comply with program requirements. Forms of relief include the retention of benefits received under the program, continuity of benefits, re-enrollment of land for conservation, or other appropriate relief.

Section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 grants the Director of the National Appeals Division the same authority to provide equitable relief to program participants as provided to the Secretary.

The following table reflects information for calendar year 2016 as required by section 1613 of the 2002 Farm Bill.

### Farm Service Agency

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	1035
Number of Requests Denied:	36
Number of Requests Approved:	999

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	14,121
(Misaction/Misinformation):	68
Number of Requests Denied:	3
Number of Requests Approved:	14,118

### National Appeals Division

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	133
Number of Requests Denied:	53
Number of Requests Granted:	72
(Including 36 cases involving money: And 23 involving extensions of time)	
Number of Requests Mooted by Favorable Outcome in Appeal	2
No Authority to Grant	6