

Public Law 102-554  
102d Congress

An Act

Oct. 28, 1992

[H.R. 6129]

Agricultural  
Credit  
Improvement  
Act of 1992.  
7 USC 1921 note.

To amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to establish a program to aid beginning farmers and ranchers and to improve the operation of the Farmers Home Administration, and to amend the Farm Credit Act of 1971, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992”.

(b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. References to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.
- Sec. 3. Limitation on aggregate indebtedness.
- Sec. 4. Interest rate for loans sold into secondary market; guaranteed loan fees.
- Sec. 5. Federal-State beginning farmer partnership.
- Sec. 6. Grants for private business enterprises.
- Sec. 7. Down payment loan program.
- Sec. 8. Special assistance to certain qualified beginning farmers and ranchers.
- Sec. 9. Graduation of borrowers with operating loans or guarantees to private commercial credit.
- Sec. 10. Consideration of borrowers for loan service programs.
- Sec. 11. Time period within which county committee is required to meet to consider applications for farm ownership and operating loans and guarantees and beginning farmer plans.
- Sec. 12. Increase in period during which county committee loan eligibility certification continues in effect.
- Sec. 13. Processing of applications for farm operating loans.
- Sec. 14. Graduation of seasoned direct loan borrowers to the loan guarantee program.
- Sec. 15. Simplified application for guaranteed loans of \$50,000 or less.
- Sec. 16. Inventory lease or lease with option to purchase.
- Sec. 17. Transfer of Indian lands pledged as collateral for FmHA loans.
- Sec. 18. Debt service margin requirements; certified lenders program.
- Sec. 19. Definition of qualified beginning farmer or rancher.
- Sec. 20. Targeting of funds.
- Sec. 21. Equal access to FmHA assistance by gender.
- Sec. 22. State mediation programs.
- Sec. 23. Regulations.
- Sec. 24. Technical amendment.

**SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.**

Wherever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.), except to the extent otherwise specifically provided.

**SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON AGGREGATE INDEBTEDNESS.**

Section 305 (7 U.S.C. 1925) is amended by striking “and 310D of this title” and inserting “310D, and 310E”.

#### SEC. 4. INTEREST RATE FOR LOANS SOLD INTO SECONDARY MARKET; GUARANTEED LOAN FEES.

Section 309(h) (7 U.S.C. 1929(h)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” after “(h)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) The interest rate payable by a borrower on the portion of a guaranteed loan that is sold by a lender to the secondary market under this title may be lower than the interest rate charged on the portion retained by the lender, but shall not exceed the average interest rate charged by the lender on loans made to farm and ranch borrowers.

“(3) With regard to any loan guarantee on a loan made by a commercial or cooperative lender related to a loan made by the Secretary under section 310E—

“(A) the Secretary shall not charge a fee to any person (including a lender); and

“(B) a lender may charge a loan origination and servicing fee in an amount not to exceed 1 percent of the amount of the loan.”

#### SEC. 5. FEDERAL-STATE BEGINNING FARMER PARTNERSHIP.

(a) COORDINATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Section 309 (7 U.S.C. 1929) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(i)(1) Not later than 60 days after any State expresses to the Secretary, in writing, a desire to coordinate the provision of financial assistance to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers in the State, the Secretary and the State shall conclude a joint memorandum of understanding that shall govern the coordination of the provision of the financial assistance by the State and the Secretary.

“(2) The memorandum of understanding shall provide that if a State beginning farmer program makes a commitment to provide a qualified beginning farmer or rancher with financing to establish or maintain a viable farming or ranching operation, the Secretary shall, subject to applicable law, normal loan approval criteria, and the availability of funds provide the farmer or rancher with a down payment loan under section 310E or a guarantee of the financing provided by the State program, or both.

“(3) The Secretary shall not charge any person (including a lender) any fee with respect to the provision of any guarantee under this subsection.

“(4) The Secretary shall notify each State of the provisions of this subsection.

“(5) As used in paragraph (1), the term ‘State beginning farmer program’ means any program that is—

“(A) carried out by, or under contract with, a State; and

“(B) designed to assist persons in obtaining the financial assistance necessary to enter agriculture and establish viable farming or ranching operations.”

(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall establish an advisory committee, to be known as the “Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers”, which shall provide advice to the Secretary on—

Inter-  
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relations.

7 USC 1921 note.

(A) the development of the program of coordinated assistance to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers under section 309(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (as added by subsection (a) of this section);

(B) methods of maximizing the number of new farming and ranching opportunities created through the program;

(C) methods of encouraging States to participate in the program;

(D) the administration of the program; and

(E) other methods of creating new farming or ranching opportunities.

(2) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Secretary shall appoint the members of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall include representatives from the following:

(A) The Farmers Home Administration.

(B) State beginning farmer programs (as defined in section 309(i)(5) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (as added by subsection (a) of this section)).

(C) Commercial lenders.

(D) Private nonprofit organizations with active beginning farmer or rancher programs.

(E) The Cooperative Extension Service.

(F) Community colleges or other educational institutions with demonstrated experience in training beginning farmers or ranchers.

(G) Other entities or persons providing lending or technical assistance for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers.

#### **SEC. 6. GRANTS FOR PRIVATE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.**

Section 310B(c) (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” after “(c)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) The Secretary may make grants to qualified nonprofit organizations for the provision of technical assistance and training to rural communities for the purpose of improving passenger transportation services or facilities. Assistance provided under this paragraph may include on-site technical assistance to local and regional governments, public transit agencies, and related nonprofit and for-profit organizations in rural areas, the development of training materials, and the provision of necessary training assistance to local officials and agencies in rural areas.”.

#### **SEC. 7. DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subtitle A (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

##### **“SEC. 310E. DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM.**

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

“(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Notwithstanding any other section of this subtitle, the Secretary shall establish, within the farm ownership loan program established under this subtitle, a program under which loans shall be made under this section to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers for down payments on farm ownership loans.

“(2) **ADMINISTRATION.**—The Secretary shall be the primary coordinator of credit supervision for the down payment loan program established under this section, in consultation with

the commercial or cooperative lender and, if applicable, the contracting credit counseling service selected under section 360(c).

**"(b) LOAN TERMS.—**

**"(1) PRINCIPAL.—**Each loan made under this section shall be in an amount equal to 30 percent of the purchase price or appraisal value, whichever is lower, of the farm or ranch to be acquired, unless the borrower requests a lesser amount.

**"(2) INTEREST RATE.—**The interest rate on any loan made by the Secretary under this section shall be 4 percent.

**"(3) DURATION.—**Each loan under this section shall be made for a period of 10 years or less, at the option of the borrower.

**"(4) REPAYMENT.—**Each borrower of a loan under this section shall repay the loan to the Secretary in equal annual installments.

**"(5) NATURE OF RETAINED SECURITY INTEREST.—**The Secretary shall retain an interest in each farm or ranch acquired with a loan made under this section that shall—

**"(A)** be secured by the farm or ranch;

**"(B)** be junior only to such interests in the farm or ranch as may be conveyed at the time of acquisition to the person (including a lender) from whom the borrower obtained a loan used to acquire the farm or ranch; and

**"(C)** require the borrower to obtain the permission of the Secretary before the borrower may grant an additional security interest in the farm or ranch.

**"(c) LIMITATIONS.—**

**"(1) BORROWERS REQUIRED TO MAKE MINIMUM DOWN PAYMENT.—**The Secretary shall not make a loan under this section to any borrower with respect to a farm or ranch if the contribution of the borrower to the down payment on the farm or ranch will be less than 10 percent of the purchase price of the farm or ranch.

**"(2) MAXIMUM PRICE OF PROPERTY TO BE ACQUIRED.—**The Secretary shall not make a loan under this section with respect to a farm or ranch for which the purchase price or appraisal value, whichever is lower, exceeds \$250,000.

**"(3) PROHIBITED TYPES OF FINANCING.—**The Secretary shall not make a loan under this section with respect to a farm or ranch if the farm or ranch is to be acquired with other financing that contains any of the following conditions:

**"(A)** The financing is to be amortized over a period of less than 30 years.

**"(B)** A balloon payment will be due on the financing during the 10-year period beginning on the date the loan is to be made by the Secretary.

**"(d) ADMINISTRATION.—**In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

**"(1)** facilitate the transfer of farms and ranches from retiring farmers and ranchers to persons eligible for insured loans under this subtitle;

**"(2)** make efforts to widely publicize the availability of loans under this section among—

**"(A)** potentially eligible recipients of the loans;

**"(B)** retiring farmers and ranchers; and

**"(C)** applicants for farm ownership loans under this subtitle;

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"(3) encourage retiring farmers and ranchers to assist in the sale of their farms and ranches to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers by providing seller financing; and

"(4) coordinate the loan program established by this section with State programs that provide farm ownership or operating loans for beginning farmers and ranchers."

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES FOR CERTAIN BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Subtitle A (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.) (as amended by subsection (a) of this section) is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

7 USC 1936.

**"SEC. 310F. AVAILABILITY OF FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTEES FOR CERTAIN QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.**

"(a) ASSISTANCE PROHIBITED FOR A LIMITED PERIOD.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, if the Secretary approves the application of a qualified beginning farmer or rancher (referred to in this section as the 'applicant') for assistance under section 318, the Secretary shall not make a loan under this subtitle to the applicant or provide a guarantee under section 309(h) with respect to any farm real estate loan made to the applicant.

"(b) AVAILABILITY OF DOWN PAYMENT LOANS.—After the applicable period, the Secretary may make an insured loan under this subtitle, or a down payment loan under section 310E, to an applicant if—

"(1) throughout the applicable period, the applicant conducted an operation for which assistance is provided under section 318 in accordance with the plan for special assistance; and

"(2) the applicant is otherwise eligible for the loan.

"(c) AVAILABILITY OF LOAN GUARANTEES.—After the applicable period, the Secretary may guarantee under section 309(h) the repayment of a commercial or cooperative loan made to an applicant referred to in subsection (a) if—

"(1) throughout the applicable period, the applicant conducted the operation for which assistance is provided under section 318 in accordance with the plan for special assistance; and

"(2) the applicant is otherwise eligible for the loan guarantee.

"(d) APPLICABLE PERIOD DEFINED.—As used in this section, the term 'applicable period' means the first 5 years for which an applicant has operated a farm or ranch, including the period of time the applicant is provided assistance under section 318."

**SEC. 8. SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.**

Subtitle B (7 U.S.C. 1941 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

7 USC 1948.

**"SEC. 318. SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.**

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide special assistance in accordance with this section to enable a qualified beginning farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 5 years (referred



to in this section as the 'applicant'), to conduct viable farming or ranching operations.

"(b) **SUBMISSION OF PLAN OF FARM OPERATION.**—An applicant who desires to apply for special assistance under this section shall submit a plan, in coordination with activities conducted under sections 359, 360, 361, and 362, that—

"(1) describes, for each of the first 5 years for which assistance under this section is sought for the operation—

"(A) how the operation is to be conducted;

"(B) the types and quantities of commodities to be produced by the operation;

"(C) the production methods and practices to be employed by the operation;

"(D) the conservation measures to be taken in the operation;

"(E) the equipment needed to conduct the operation (including any expected replacements for the equipment) and, with respect to each item of needed equipment, whether the applicant owns, leases, or otherwise has access to the item, or proposes to purchase, lease, or otherwise gain access to the item;

"(F) the expected income and expenses of the operation;

"(G) the expected credit needs of the operation, including the types and amounts of assistance to be sought under this section; and

"(H) the site or sites at which the operation is (or is to be) located; and

"(2) projects the financial status of the operation after assistance under this section has been provided for a period of not more than 10 years, consistent with section 319, as is necessary for the operation to become financially viable without further assistance from the Secretary, including specific goals that the applicant projects to meet in order to progress toward graduation as expeditiously as possible.

"(c) **DETERMINATIONS BY THE COUNTY COMMITTEE; APPROVAL OF PLAN.**—The county committee shall approve a plan submitted by an applicant in accordance with subsection (b) if the county committee determines that—

"(1) the applicant has not operated a farm or ranch, or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 5 years;

"(2) during the 5-year period ending with the submission of the plan, the applicant has had sufficient education and experience to indicate that the applicant is able to conduct a successful farming or ranching operation, as the case may be;

"(3) the applicant owns, leases, or has a commitment to have leased to the applicant the site or sites of the operation;

"(4) there is, or will be, available to the applicant equipment sufficient to conduct the operation in accordance with the plan;

"(5) the applicant agrees to participate in such loan assessment, borrower training, and financial management programs as the Secretary may require; and

"(6) the applicant is otherwise eligible for assistance under this title.

"(d) **DETERMINATION BY THE SECRETARY; APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary shall approve an application for assistance under this section for an operation described in

a plan approved by a county committee under this section if the Secretary determines that—

"(1) the operation would generate income sufficient to cover the expenses of the operation, debt service, and adequate living expenses of the applicant, to the extent that other income would not cover the living expenses, if the operation received assistance under this section as provided for in the plan; and

"(2) during the commitment period established in accordance with subsection (e)(1), the operation will be financially viable without further assistance from the Secretary and the identified goals are reasonable and practicable.

"(e) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—

"(1) DETERMINATION OF COMMITMENT PERIOD.—

"(A) INITIAL DETERMINATION.—In approving an application under subsection (d), the Secretary shall, subject to subparagraph (C), determine the period during which assistance under this section is to be provided for the operation described in the application (referred to in this subsection as the 'commitment period').

"(B) AUTHORITY TO EXTEND PERIOD; NO AUTHORITY TO REDUCE PERIOD.—At any time, the Secretary may, subject to subparagraph (C) and subsections (f) and (g), extend the duration of the commitment period. The Secretary shall not reduce the duration of the commitment period.

"(C) LIMITATIONS.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—The duration of any commitment period (including any extensions of the period) shall not exceed 10 years and shall be consistent with section 319.

"(ii) ELIGIBILITY FOR INSURED OPERATING LOANS.—During the commitment period, an applicant shall not be eligible to receive an insured operating loan under this section after the date that is 8 years after the date on which the applicant first receives assistance under this section.

"(2) OPERATING LOANS; LOAN GUARANTEES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that an applicant whose application is approved under subsection (d) is unable to obtain sufficient credit from commercial or cooperative lenders to finance the operation described in the application at reasonable rates and terms (taking into consideration prevailing private and cooperative rates, and terms in the community in which the operation is (or is to be) located, for loans for similar purposes and periods of time), the Secretary shall, subject to the availability of funds and to subsections (f) and (g) and consistent with sections 360 and 362, make a conditional commitment to the applicant for each of the years of the commitment period—

"(i) to provide to any commercial or cooperative lender who makes a loan to the applicant that is within the credit needs of the operation (as specified in the plan contained in the application) a guarantee under section 309(h) for the repayment of 90 percent of the loan principal and interest;

"(ii) to provide to any commercial or cooperative lender who makes a loan to the applicant that is within

the credit needs of the operation (as specified in the plan contained in the application) a guarantee under section 309(h) for the repayment of 90 percent of the loan principal and interest and an interest subsidy payment in the amount necessary to ensure that the applicant qualifies for such a loan but not more than the amount of interest assistance allowed by section 351; or

“(II) if during any of the first 4 years for which assistance is provided under this section the Secretary determines that the applicant will not qualify for a loan described in subclause (I), an interest subsidy payment sufficient to ensure that the effective rate of interest payable by the applicant on the loan equals the rate of interest charged to low income, limited resource borrowers on insured operating loans made under this subtitle that are of comparable size and maturity; or

“(iii) to make an insured loan under this subtitle to the applicant, in the amount specified in the plan contained in the application, at an interest rate that is no higher than the interest rate charged to regular borrowers and no lower than the interest rate charged to low income, limited resource borrowers under this subtitle.

“(3) **LOANS OR GUARANTEES FOR NEW OR IMPROVED EQUIPMENT.**—The Secretary shall make a commitment to any applicant whose application is approved under subsection (d) to provide the applicant with loans under this subtitle or loan guarantees under section 309(h) to finance the acquisition, improvement, or repair of equipment needed in the operation described in the application if the plan contained in the application provides for the commitment, to the extent that the applicant is unable to obtain sufficient credit from commercial or cooperative lenders for such purposes at reasonable rates and terms (taking into consideration prevailing private and cooperative rates and terms in the community in which the operation is, or is to be, located, for loans for similar purposes and periods of time).

“(4) **PRIORITY IN PURCHASE OF INVENTORY EQUIPMENT; LOANS OR GUARANTEES FOR THE PURCHASES IN CERTAIN CASES.**—During the commitment period, the Secretary shall—

“(A) accord the applicant whose application is approved under subsection (d) priority for the purchase of equipment in the inventory of the Farmers Home Administration necessary for the success of the operation described in the application; and

“(B) provide the applicant with loans under this subtitle or loan guarantees under section 309(h) to finance the purchases if the plan contained in the application provides for the assistance, to the extent that the applicant is unable to obtain sufficient credit from commercial or cooperative lenders for such purpose at reasonable rates and terms (taking into consideration prevailing private and cooperative rates, and terms in the community in which the operation is, or is to be, located, for loans for similar purposes and periods of time).



**"(5) OTHER KINDS OF ASSISTANCE.**—During the commitment period, the Farmers Home Administration, the Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and the other entities of the Department of Agriculture shall provide the applicant with such other assistance and information as may be needed in developing and implementing the operation described in the application.

**"(6) FEES.**—

**"(A) SECRETARY.**—The Secretary shall not charge a fee to any person (including a lender) in connection with any loan guarantee provided in accordance with this section.

**"(B) LENDER.**—A lender may charge a loan origination and servicing fee in connection with a loan or loan guarantee provided in accordance with this section in an amount not to exceed 1 percent of the amount of the loan.

**"(f) ANNUAL PLAN REVISIONS REQUIRED AS CONDITION OF CONTINUED ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary shall not provide assistance under this section for an operation for any particular year after the first year for which the assistance is provided, unless—

**"(1)** not later than 60 days before the assistance is to be first provided for the particular year, the plan describing the operation has been revised, pursuant to section 360, based on the experience of the year preceding the particular year, to provide the information required by subsection (b) for the 5-year period beginning with the particular year (or, if shorter, the period beginning with the particular year and ending with the year in which the plan projects the operation as becoming financially viable); and

**"(2)** the Secretary has approved the revised plan.

**"(g) EFFECTS OF AVOIDABLE FAILURE TO ACHIEVE GOALS.**—

**"(1) TERMINATION OF COMMITMENTS.**—The Secretary shall revoke commitment for assistance made to an applicant under this section if the operation of the applicant fails, for 2 consecutive years, to meet the goals specified in the plan, unless the failure has not materially reduced the likelihood of the operation becoming financially viable and is due to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant.

**"(2) SUSPENSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE.**—During the 3-year period that begins with the date a commitment made to an applicant is revoked under paragraph (1), the applicant shall not be eligible for assistance under this section."

**SEC. 9. GRADUATION OF BORROWERS WITH OPERATING LOANS OR GUARANTEES TO PRIVATE COMMERCIAL CREDIT.**

Subtitle B (7 U.S.C. 1941 et seq.) (as amended by section 8 of this Act) is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

7 USC 1949.

**"SEC. 319. GRADUATION OF BORROWERS WITH OPERATING LOANS OR GUARANTEES TO PRIVATE COMMERCIAL CREDIT.**

**"(a) GRADUATION PLAN.**—The Secretary shall establish a plan, in coordination with activities under sections 359, 360, 361, and 362, to encourage each borrower with an outstanding loan under this subtitle or with respect to whom there is an outstanding guarantee under this subtitle to graduate to private commercial or other sources of credit.

**"(b) LIMITATION ON PERIOD FOR WHICH BORROWERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.—**Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle:

**"(1) GENERAL RULE.—**Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall not—

**"(A)** make a loan to a borrower under this subtitle for any year after the 10th year for which such a loan is made to the borrower; or

**"(B)** guarantee for any year a loan made to a borrower for a purpose specified in this subtitle, after the 15th year for which loans under this subtitle are made to, or such a guarantee is provided with respect to, the borrower.

**"(2) TRANSITION RULE.—**If, as of the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary has made a loan to a borrower under this subtitle for 5 or more years, or has provided a guarantee for 10 or more years with respect to one or more loans made to the borrower for a purpose specified in this subtitle, the Secretary shall not make a loan to the borrower under this subtitle, or provide such a guarantee with respect to a loan made to the borrower for a purpose specified in this subtitle, after the 5th year occurring after the date of enactment for which a loan is made under this subtitle to, or such a guarantee is provided with respect to, the borrower."

**SEC. 10. CONSIDERATION OF BORROWERS FOR LOAN SERVICE PROGRAMS.**

The first sentence of section 331D(e) (7 U.S.C. 1981d(e)) is amended by inserting after "not later than 60 days after receipt of the notice required in this section" the following: "or, in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the applicable State director, after the 60-day period".

**SEC. 11. TIME PERIOD WITHIN WHICH COUNTY COMMITTEE IS REQUIRED TO MEET TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR FARM OWNERSHIP AND OPERATING LOANS AND GUARANTEES AND BEGINNING FARMER PLANS.**

Section 332 (7 U.S.C. 1982) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking "The committee" and inserting "Subject to subsection (e), the committee"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

**"(e)** The county committee shall meet to consider approval of an application received by the committee for a loan under this title, a guarantee under section 309(h), or a plan of farm operation under section 318, not later than—

**"(1)** 5 days after receipt of the application if at the time of the receipt there is at least one other such application or plan pending; or

**"(2)** 15 days after receipt of the application if at the time of the receipt there are no other such applications or plans pending."

**SEC. 12. INCREASE IN PERIOD DURING WHICH COUNTY COMMITTEE LOAN ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION CONTINUES IN EFFECT.**

Section 333(2)(A)(iii) (7 U.S.C. 1983(2)(A)(iii)) is amended by striking "2 years" and inserting "5 years".

### SEC. 13. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FOR FARM OPERATING LOANS.

Section 333A(a)(2) (7 U.S.C. 1983a(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(A)" after "(2)";

(2) by inserting "(other than under subtitle B)" after "under this title"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(B)(i) Not later than 10 calendar days after the Secretary receives an application for an operating loan or loan guarantee under subtitle B, the Secretary shall notify the applicant of any information required before a decision may be made on the application. On receipt of an application, the Secretary shall request from other parties such information as may be needed in connection with the application.

"(ii) Not later than 15 calendar days after the date an agency of the Department of Agriculture receives a request for information made pursuant to clause (i), the agency shall provide the Secretary with the requested information.

"(iii) If, not later than 20 calendar days after the date a request is made pursuant to clause (i) with respect to an application, the Secretary has not received the information requested, the Secretary shall notify the applicant and the district office of the Farmers Home Administration, in writing, of the outstanding information.

"(iv) A county office shall notify the district office of the Farmers Home Administration of each application for an operating loan or loan guarantee under subtitle B that is pending more than 45 days after receipt, and the reasons the application is pending.

"(v) A district office that receives a notice provided under clause (iv) with respect to an application shall immediately take steps to ensure that final action is taken on the application not later than 15 days after the date of the receipt of the notice.

"(vi) The district office shall report to the State office of the Farmers Home Administration on each application for an operating loan or loan guarantee under subtitle B that is pending more than 45 days after receipt by the county committee, and the reasons the application is pending.

"(vii) Each month, the Secretary shall notify the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, on a State-by-State basis, as to each application for an operating loan or loan guarantee under subtitle B on which final action had not been taken within 60 calendar days after receipt by the Secretary, and the reasons final action had not been taken."

### SEC. 14. GRADUATION OF SEASONED DIRECT LOAN BORROWERS TO THE LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

Section 333A (7 U.S.C. 1983a) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(f)(1) As used in this subsection:

"(A) The term 'approved lender' means a lender approved prior to the date of enactment of this subsection by the Secretary under the approved lender program established by exhibit A to subpart B of part 1980 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 1, 1991), or a lender certified under section 114.

"(B) The term 'seasoned direct loan borrower' means a borrower receiving a direct loan under this title who has been

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classified as 'commercial' or 'standard' under subpart W of part 2006 of the Instruction Manual (as in effect on January 1, 1991).

"(2) The Secretary, or a contracting third party, shall annually review under section 360 the loans of each seasoned loan borrower. If, based on the review, it is determined that a borrower would be able to obtain a loan, guaranteed by the Secretary, from a commercial or cooperative lender at reasonable rates and terms for loans for similar purposes and periods of time, the Secretary shall assist the borrower in applying for the commercial or cooperative loan.

"(3) In accordance with section 362, the Secretary shall prepare a prospectus on each seasoned direct loan borrower determined eligible to obtain a guaranteed loan. The prospectus shall contain a description of the amounts of loan guarantee and interest assistance that the Secretary will provide to the seasoned direct loan borrower to enable the seasoned direct loan borrower to carry out a financially viable farming plan if a guaranteed loan is made.

"(4) With the approval of the borrower, the Secretary shall provide the prospectus of the seasoned direct loan borrower to each approved lender whose lending area includes the location of the seasoned direct loan borrower. If the Secretary receives an offer from an approved lender to extend credit to the seasoned direct loan borrower under terms and conditions contained in the prospectus, the seasoned direct loan borrower shall not be eligible for an insured loan from the Secretary under subtitle A or B, except as otherwise provided in this subsection.

"(5) If the Secretary is unable to provide loan guarantees and, if necessary, interest assistance to the seasoned direct loan borrower under this subsection in amounts sufficient to enable the seasoned direct loan borrower to borrow from commercial sources the amount required to carry out a financially viable farming plan, or if the Secretary does not receive an offer from an approved lender to extend credit to a seasoned direct loan borrower under the terms and conditions contained in the prospectus, the Secretary shall make an insured loan to the seasoned direct loan borrower under subtitle A or B, whichever is applicable.

"(6) To the extent necessary for the borrower to obtain a loan, guaranteed by the Secretary, from a commercial or cooperative lender, the Secretary shall provide interest rate reductions as provided for under section 351."

#### **SEC. 15. SIMPLIFIED APPLICATION FOR GUARANTEED LOANS OF \$50,000 OR LESS.**

Section 333A (7 U.S.C. 1983a) (as amended by section 14 of this Act) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(g)(1) The Secretary shall provide to lenders a short, simplified application form for guarantees under this title of loans the principal amount of which is \$50,000 or less.

"(2) In developing the application, the Secretary shall—

"(A) consult with commercial and cooperative lenders; and

"(B) ensure that—

"(i) the form can be completed manually or electronically, at the option of the lender;

"(ii) the form minimizes the documentation required to accompany the form;

"(iii) the cost of completing and processing the form is minimal; and

"(iv) the form can be completed and processed in an expeditious manner."

**SEC. 16. INVENTORY LEASE OR LEASE WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE.**

The fourth sentence of section 335(c)(1) (7 U.S.C. 1985(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(A)" after "shall be"; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: "or (B) leased to persons eligible for assistance under the provisions of any law administered by the Farmers Home Administration or the Rural Development Administration under an annual lease or a lease with an option to purchase, with a preference for sale".

**SEC. 17. TRANSFER OF INDIAN LANDS PLEDGED AS COLLATERAL FOR FmHA LOANS.**

Section 335(e)(1) (7 U.S.C. 1985(e)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D)(i), by striking "If" and inserting "Except as provided in subparagraph (G), if"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph: "(G)(i) If—

"(I) the real property described in subparagraph (A)(i) is located within an Indian reservation;

"(II) the borrower-owner is an Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located or the borrower-owner is a member of an Indian tribe;

"(III) the borrower-owner has obtained a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this title; and

"(IV) the borrower-owner and the Secretary have exhausted all of the procedures provided for in this title to permit a borrower-owner to retain title to the real property, such that it is necessary for the borrower-owner to relinquish title, the Secretary shall dispose of or administer the property only as provided in subparagraph (D), as modified by this subparagraph.

"(ii) The Secretary shall provide the borrower-owner of real property that is described in clause (i) with written notice of—

"(I) the right of the borrower-owner to voluntarily convey the real property to the Secretary; and

"(II) the fact that real property so conveyed will be placed in the inventory of the Secretary.

"(iii) The Secretary shall provide the borrower-owner of the real property with written notice of the rights and protections provided under this title to the borrower-owner, and the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located, from foreclosure or liquidation of the real property, including written notice of—

"(I) the provisions of subparagraphs (C)(i), (C)(ii), and (D), this subparagraph, and subsection (g)(6);

"(II) if the borrower-owner does not voluntarily convey the real property to the Secretary, that—

"(aa) the Secretary may foreclose on the property;

"(bb) in the event of foreclosure, the property will be offered for sale;

"(cc) the Secretary must offer a bid for the property that is equal to the fair market value of the property



or the outstanding principal and interest of the loan, whichever is higher;

“(dd) the property may be purchased by another party; and

“(ee) if the property is purchased by another party, the property will not be placed in the inventory of the Secretary and the borrower-owner will forfeit the rights and protections provided under this title; and

“(III) the opportunity of the borrower-owner to consult with the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located or counsel to determine if State or tribal law provides rights and protections that are more beneficial than those provided the borrower-owner under this title.

“(iv)(I) Except as provided in subclause (II), the Secretary shall accept the voluntary conveyance of real property described in clause (i).

“(II) If a hazardous substance (as defined in section 101(14) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601(14))) is located on the property and the Secretary takes remedial action to protect human health or the environment if the property is taken into inventory, the Secretary shall accept the voluntary conveyance of the property only if the Secretary determines that it is in the best interests of the Federal Government.

“(v) If a borrower-owner does not voluntarily convey to the Secretary real property described in clause (i), at least 30 days before a foreclosure sale of the property, the Secretary shall provide written notice to the Indian tribe that has jurisdiction over the reservation in which the real property is located of—

“(I) the sale;

“(II) the fair market value of the property; and

“(III) the requirements of this subparagraph.

“(vi)(I) Except as provided in subclause (II), at a foreclosure sale of real property described in clause (i), the Secretary shall offer a bid for the property that is equal to the higher of—

“(aa) the fair market value of the property; or

“(bb) the outstanding principal and interest of the loan.

“(II) If a hazardous substance (as defined in section 101(14) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601(14))) is located on the property and the Secretary takes remedial action to protect human health or the environment if the property is taken into inventory, subclause (I) shall apply only if the Secretary determines that it is in the best interests of the Federal Government.”.

#### **SEC. 18. DEBT SERVICE MARGIN REQUIREMENTS; CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.**

Section 339 (7 U.S.C. 1989) is amended—

(1) by striking “SEC. 339. The” and inserting the following:

##### **“SEC. 339. RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(b) DEBT SERVICE MARGIN REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), in providing farmer program loan guarantees under this title, the Secretary shall consider the income of the borrower

adequate if the income is equal to or greater than the income necessary—

“(1) to make principal and interest payments on all debt obligations of the borrower, in a timely manner;

“(2) to cover the necessary living expenses of the family of the borrower; and

“(3) to pay all other obligations and expenses of the borrower not financed through debt obligations referred to in paragraph (1), including expenses of replacing capital items (determined after taking into account depreciation of the items).

“(c) CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program under which the Secretary shall guarantee loans for any purpose specified in subtitle B that are made by lending institutions certified by the Secretary.

“(2) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall certify a lending institution that meets such criteria as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations, including the ability of the institution to properly make, service, and liquidate the loans of the institution.

“(3) CONDITION OF CERTIFICATION.—As a condition of the certification, the Secretary shall require the institution to undertake to service the loans guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection, using standards that are not less stringent than generally accepted banking standards concerning loan servicing employed by prudent commercial or cooperative lenders. The Secretary shall, at least annually, monitor the performance of each certified lender to ensure that the conditions of the certification are being met.

“(4) EFFECT OF CERTIFICATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

“(A) The Secretary shall guarantee 80 percent of a loan made under this subsection by a certified lending institution as described in paragraph (1), subject to county committee certification that the borrower of the loan meets the eligibility requirements and such other criteria as may be applicable to loans guaranteed by the Secretary under other provisions of this title.

“(B) With respect to loans to be guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection, the Secretary shall permit certified lending institutions to make appropriate certifications (as provided by regulations issued by the Secretary)—

“(i) relating to issues such as creditworthiness, repayment ability, adequacy of collateral, and feasibility of farm operation; and

“(ii) that the borrower is in compliance with all requirements of law, including regulations issued by the Secretary.

“(C) The Secretary shall approve or disapprove a guarantee not later than 14 calendar days after the date that the lending institution applied to the Secretary for the guarantee. If the Secretary rejects the loan application within the 14-day period, the Secretary shall state, in writing, all of the reasons the application was rejected.

“(5) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—Neither this subsection nor subsection (d) shall affect the responsibility of

the Secretary to certify eligibility, review financial information, and otherwise assess an application.

**"(d) PREFERRED CERTIFIED LENDERS PROGRAM.—**

**"(1) IN GENERAL.—**Commencing not later than two years after the date of enactment of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992, the Secretary shall establish a Preferred Certified Lenders Program for lenders who establish their—

**"(A)** knowledge of, and experience under, the program established under subsection (c);

**"(B)** knowledge of the regulations concerning the guaranteed loan program; and

**"(C)** proficiency related to the certified lender program requirements.

The Secretary shall certify any lending institution as a Preferred Certified Lender that meets such criteria as the Secretary may prescribe by regulation.

**"(2) REVOCATION OF DESIGNATION.—**The designation of a lender as a Preferred Certified Lender shall be revoked at any time that the Secretary determines that such lender is not adhering to the rules and regulations applicable to the program or if the loss experiences of a Preferred Certified Lender are excessive as compared to other Preferred Certified Lenders, except that such suspension or revocation shall not affect any outstanding guarantee.

**"(3) CONDITION OF CERTIFICATION.—**As a condition of such preferred certification, the Secretary shall require the institution to undertake to service the loans guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection using generally accepted banking standards concerning loan servicing employed by prudent commercial or cooperative lenders. The Secretary shall, at least annually, monitor the performance of each preferred certified lender to ensure that the conditions of such certification are being met.

**"(4) EFFECT OF PREFERRED LENDER CERTIFICATION.—**Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall—

**"(A)** guarantee 80 percent of an approved loan made by a certified lending institution as described in this subsection, subject to county committee certification that the borrower meets the eligibility requirements or such other criteria as may be applicable to loans guaranteed by the Secretary under other provisions of this title;

**"(B)** permit certified lending institutions to make all decisions, with respect to loans to be guaranteed by the Secretary under this subsection relating to credit worthiness, the closing, monitoring, collection and liquidation of loans, and to accept appropriate certifications, as provided by regulations issued by the Secretary, that the borrower is in compliance with all requirements of law or regulations promulgated by the Secretary; and

**"(C)** be deemed to have guaranteed 80 percent of a loan made by a preferred certified lending institution as described in paragraph (1), if the Secretary fails to approve or reject the application of such institution within 14 calendar days after the date that the lending institution presented the application to the Secretary. If the Secretary rejects the application within the 14-day period, the Sec-

retary shall state, in writing, the reasons the application was rejected.”.

**SEC. 19. DEFINITION OF QUALIFIED BEGINNING FARMER OR RANCHER.**

Section 343(a) (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “this title (1) the term” and all that follows through “fish farming,” at the end of paragraph (1) and inserting “this title:

“(1) The term ‘farmer’ includes a person who is engaged in, or who, with assistance afforded under this title, intends to engage in, fish farming.”;

(2) by indenting, and aligning the margins of, paragraphs (2) through (10) so as to align with paragraph (1) (as amended by paragraph (1));

(3) by striking “the” the first place it appears in each of such paragraphs and inserting “The”;

(4) by striking the comma at the end of each of paragraphs (2) through (8) and inserting a period;

(5) by striking “, and” at the end of paragraph (9) and inserting a period; and

(6) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(11) The term ‘qualified beginning farmer or rancher’ means an applicant—

“(A) who is eligible for assistance under this title;

“(B) who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;

“(C) in the case of a cooperative, corporation, partnership, or joint operation, who has members, stockholders, partners, or joint operators who are all related to one another by blood or marriage;

“(D)(i) in the case of an owner and operator of a farm or ranch, who—

“(I) in the case of a loan made to an individual, individually or with the immediate family of the applicant—

“(aa) materially and substantially participates in the operation of the farm or ranch; and

“(bb) provides substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the State or county in which the farm or ranch is located; or

“(II)(aa) in the case of a loan made to a cooperative, corporation, partnership, or joint operation, has members, stockholders, partners, or joint operators, materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch; and

“(bb) in the case of a loan made to a corporation, has stockholders, all of whom are qualified beginning farmers or ranchers; and

“(ii) in the case of an applicant seeking to own and operate a farm or ranch, who—

“(I) in the case of a loan made to an individual, individually or with the immediate family of the applicant, will—

“(aa) materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch; and

“(bb) provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the State or county in which the farm or ranch is located; or

“(II)(aa) in the case of a loan made to a cooperative, corporation, partnership, or joint operation, will have members, stockholders, partners, or joint operators, materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch; and

“(bb) in the case of a loan made to a corporation, has stockholders, all of whom are qualified beginning farmers or ranchers;

“(E) who agrees to participate in such loan assessment, borrower training, and financial management programs as the Secretary may require;

“(F) who does not own land or who, directly or through interests in family farm corporations, owns land, the aggregate acreage of which does not exceed 15 percent of the median acreage of the farms or ranches, as the case may be, in the county in which the farm or ranch operations of the applicant are located, as reported in the most recent census of agriculture taken under section 142 of title 13, United States Code; and

“(G) who demonstrates that the available resources of the applicant and spouse (if any) of the applicant are not sufficient to enable the applicant to continue farming or ranching on a viable scale.”.

#### SEC. 20. TARGETING OF FUNDS.

(a) FARM OPERATING LOANS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Section 346(b) (7 U.S.C. 1994(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5)(A) In expending funds available for insured operating loans under subtitle B, including loans made under section 318—

“(i) during the first 6 months of fiscal year 1994, the Secretary shall reserve not less than 30 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured operating loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers;

“(ii) during the first 6 months of each of fiscal years 1995 and 1996, the Secretary shall reserve not less than 40 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured operating loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers; and

“(iii) during the first 6 months of each of fiscal years 1997 and thereafter, the Secretary may reserve not more than 50 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured operating loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers.

“(B) In each fiscal year described in subparagraph (A), with regard to the funds not reserved under subparagraph (A), a qualified beginning farmer or rancher may apply for insured operating loans, but shall not receive any preference as a result of status as a qualified beginning farmer or rancher.”.

(b) PORTIONS OF FARM OWNERSHIP LOAN GUARANTEE FUNDS TARGETED TO BEGINNING FARMERS OR RANCHERS.—Section 346(b)(2) (7 U.S.C. 1994(b)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Not less than 25 percent of the amounts appro-



priated for guarantees of farm ownership loans for each of the fiscal years 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 shall be reserved by the Secretary during the first 6 months of the respective fiscal year for guarantees of farm ownership loans to beginning farmers or ranchers.”

(c) FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS.—

(1) PERCENTAGE OF INSURED FARM OWNERSHIP LOAN FUNDS RESERVED FOR BEGINNING FARMERS OR RANCHERS.—Section 346(b)(3) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

7 USC 1994.

“(D) To the extent that it is not inconsistent with an exercise of authority under section 355, in expending funds available for insured farm ownership loans—

“(i) during fiscal year 1994, the Secretary shall reserve not less than 55 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured farm ownership loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers;

“(ii) during fiscal year 1995, the Secretary shall reserve not more than 65 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured farm ownership loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers; and

“(iii) during each of fiscal years 1996 and thereafter, the Secretary may reserve not less than 65 percent and not more than 70 percent of the funds available for the fiscal year to make insured farm ownership loans to qualified beginning farmers or ranchers.”

(2) FUNDS RESERVED FOR DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM.—Section 346(b)(3) (as amended by paragraph (1) of this subsection) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) To the extent that it is not inconsistent with an exercise of authority under section 355, the Secretary shall reserve not less than 60 percent of the amounts reserved for qualified beginning farmers or ranchers under subparagraph (D) for any fiscal year for down payment loans under section 310E.”

(3) CERTAIN UNOBLIGATED DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR ANY TYPE OF INSURED FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS.—Section 346(b)(3) (as amended by paragraph (2) of this subsection) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(F) To the extent that it is not inconsistent with an exercise of authority under section 355, to the maximum extent practicable, any funds reserved for down payment loans under section 310E for a fiscal year by reason of subparagraph (E) that are not obligated by the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year shall be available during the third quarter of the fiscal year for any type of insured farm ownership loans to beginning farmers and ranchers.”

(d) INTEREST RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Section 346(b)(3) (as amended by subsection (c)(3) of this section) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) Not less than 40 percent of the amounts available for the interest rate reduction program under section 351 shall be reserved for the first 6 months of each fiscal year for assistance to beginning farmers or ranchers.”

(e) **DOWN PAYMENT LOAN PROGRAM.**—Section 346(b) (as amended by subsection (a) of this section) is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, at the end of the third quarter of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall transfer, and use to carry out section 310E, 75 percent of the amount that would otherwise be available for guaranteed operating loans.”.

**SEC. 21. EQUAL ACCESS TO FmHA ASSISTANCE BY GENDER.**

(a) **TARGET PARTICIPATION RATES.**—Section 355(a) (7 U.S.C. 2003(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “In establishing” and inserting “Except as provided in paragraph (3), in establishing”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) **GENDER.**—With respect to gender, target participation rates shall take into consideration the number of current and potential socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in a State in proportion to the total number of farmers and ranchers in the State.”.

(b) **TARGETING OF LOANS TO MEMBERS OF GROUPS WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO GENDER PREJUDICE.**—Section 355(e)(1) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)(1)) is amended by striking “or ethnic” and inserting “, ethnic, or gender”.

(c) **RECORDKEEPING OF LOANS BY BORROWER'S GENDER.**—Sub-title D (7 U.S.C. 1981 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

**“SEC. 369. RECORDKEEPING OF LOANS BY BORROWER'S GENDER.**

7 USC 2008d.

“The Secretary shall classify, by gender, records of applicants for loans and loan guarantees under this title.”.

**SEC. 22. STATE MEDIATION PROGRAMS.**

Section 502 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 5102) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “50” and inserting “70”; and

(2) in subsection (c), by inserting “with respect to which the amount was paid” before the period.

**SEC. 23. REGULATIONS.**

7 USC 1989 note.

(a) **INTERIM REGULATIONS.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue such interim regulations as are necessary to implement this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) **FINAL REGULATIONS.**—Not later than October 1, 1993, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue such final regulations as are necessary to implement this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

**SEC. 24. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.**

Section 306C(a)(2) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) **CERTAIN AREAS TARGETED.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Loans and grants under paragraph

(1) shall be made only if the loan or grant funds will be used primarily to provide water or waste services, or both, to residents of a county—

7 USC 1926c.

“(i) the per capita income of the residents of which is not more than 70 percent of the national average per capita income, as determined by the Department of Commerce; and

“(ii) the unemployment rate of the residents of which is not less than 125 percent of the national average unemployment rate, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), loans and grants under paragraph (1) may also be made if the loan or grant funds will be used primarily to provide water or waste services, or both, to residents of a rural area that was recognized as a colonia as of October 1, 1989.”.

Approved October 28, 1992.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 6129:**

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 138 (1992):

Oct. 4, considered and passed House.

Oct. 8, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 28 (1992):

Oct. 28, Presidential statement.