The Agricultural Data Act of 2018: To Pass or Not to Pass

Over Sixty AAEA Members and Leading Scholars Send Letter to Congress

(PRWEB) November 20, 2018 -- With the 2014 Farm Bill at a close, the House and Senate return to complete a Farm Bill in Washington. In a recent Letter in Science Magazine, Dr. Joshua Woodard of Cornell University and founder of Ag-Analytics.org, along with 14 others including the former Deputy Secretary of USDA, the former President of the National Corn Growers Association, several leading farmers, and representatives from the AGree Initiative, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, National Corn Growers Association, Walton Family Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, American Farmland Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the farmer-led North American Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance, speak on the importance of the Agricultural Data Act of 2018. The proposed Agriculture Data Act of 2018 introduced by Senators Thune (R-SD) and Klobuchar (D-MN) was included in the Senate-passed Farm Bill. The Ag Data Act would establish the framework for a conservation and farm productivity national data warehouse; the first of its kind in the United States, that would unlock solutions to conserve natural resources and improve farmer success while protecting data privacy.

“The Agriculture Data Act of 2018 would be an important first step to harness the power of USDA data, providing researchers the ability to conduct big-data oriented research in agriculture, the environment, nutrition, and supply chains,” the letter in Science says. “Such research would enable the design of policies that inspire changes in agricultural practices, improve producer profitability, and lead to better environmental outcomes.”

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In a second letter sent to Senate and House Agriculture Committee leaders Tuesday morning, over 60 scholars representing 30 leading U.S. universities reiterated the potential value of the Agriculture Data Act. The signatories -- led by Dr. Joshua Woodard -- include the President of the AAEA, the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University; two members of the National Academy of Sciences; several Department Heads and Center Directors; and several other leading scholars from multiple disciplines.

“The Power of Agricultural Data” can be found in full on Merid.org. The letter sent to Congress can be viewed here: https://tinyurl.com/y76x86t3.

If you are interested in setting up an interview on this topic, please contact Allison Scheetz in the AAEA Business Office.

ABOUT AAEA: Established in 1910, the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA) is the leading professional association for agricultural and applied economists, with 2,500 members in more than 60 countries. Members of the AAEA work in academic or government institutions as well as in industry and not-for-profit organizations, and engage in a variety of research, teaching, and outreach activities in the areas of agriculture, the environment, food, health, and international development. The AAEA publishes two journals, the American Journal of Agricultural Economics and Applied Economic Perspectives & Policy, as well as the online magazine Choices. To learn more, visit www.aaea.org.
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