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**Farm Bill Conference Report Takes First Step to
Harness Agriculture Data and Secures Conservation Wins**
AGree's Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force Applauds Provisions

Washington, DC, December 12, 2018 – AGree's [Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force](#) (Task Force) supports the farm bill conference report that will make critical improvements that conserve natural resources and improve farmer success while protecting data privacy.

“We are delighted the final farm bill conference report takes the first step toward transforming data to help farmers improve their profitability while reducing risk,” said AGree Executive Director Deborah Atwood. “We look forward to working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to unlock opportunities for data-driven scientific discovery that will eventually lead to better conservation outcomes.”

The Task Force thanks Chairman Roberts (R-KS), Ranking Member Stabenow (D-MI), Chairman Conaway (R-TX), and Ranking Member Peterson (D-MN) and their staff for their work to craft a bipartisan farm bill. We also applaud Senators Thune (R-SD) and Klobuchar (D-MN) for introducing the Agriculture Data Act of 2018, which put the issue of data integration and analysis on the agenda. Their leadership and the backing of many farmers and agricultural organizations across the country helped secure a mandated report of USDA's current data management.

The farm bill conference report includes several AGree and Task Force legislative priorities that will benefit farmers, ranchers, and the environment:

- A Congressionally mandated report that requires the Secretary to identify available USDA data on conservation practices and the effects of those practices on crop yields, farm and ranch profitability, and soil health;
- This report also directs USDA to summarize the data and steps the Secretary will have to take to provide secure data access to university researchers;
- Improving crop insurance guidance on conservation practices such as cover crops that will enable conservation adoption on more acres; and
- Continuing funding for conservation programs that help farmers protect soil, water, and wildlife.

AGree has demonstrated that diverse stakeholders support improved management of agriculture data. The Task Force, which is comprised of researchers, producers, former USDA leadership, and representatives from environmental NGOs, has been working

since 2013 to empower farmers to adopt conservation practices, therefore strengthening the long-term viability of the crop insurance program.

Over 70 academics representing 30 leading U.S. universities recently signed a [letter](#) in solidarity with the Agriculture Data Act. A [letter](#) recently published in *Science* also called for harnessing the power of agriculture data.

Earlier this year, 23 producers, national and state commodity groups, supply chain companies, and environmental and conservation groups signed a [letter](#) to U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Roberts (R-KS), Ranking Member Stabenow (D-MI), U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Conaway (R-TX), and Ranking Member Peterson (D-MN) urging them to support the Agriculture Data Act.

The Task Force looks forward to working closely with Congress and USDA over the coming months to implement these important provisions.

Since 2013, the AGree advisors and partners that comprise the Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force have been working to drive broader adoption of conservation practices through the intersection of conservation and crop insurance. More information about the Task Force can be found [here](#).

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