## **Agriculture**

**Why it matters:** Agriculture is Arkansas’s largest industry, adding around $21 billion to our economy every year and accounting for approximately one in every six jobs. Rice, soybeans, cotton, poultry, cattle and timber are particular staples of our state’s agriculture economy.

**Where I stand:** Agricultural producers have faced tough economic times over the last several years. Commodity prices are down, input costs are up. Farmers and ranchers have weathered trade wars, volatile weather and a global pandemic.

How do we help our producers overcome these difficult times?

A top priority must be to open more markets in which they can sell their commodities. When it comes to agriculture, for every five customers we have in the U.S., 95 customers exist outside our country. We have to give our farmers and ranchers the opportunity to reach them.

Along with increasing trade, we have to make certain that farmers and ranchers have the proper tools and assistance to be successful. That is why the Senate has to ensure that the improvements and reforms included in the current farm bill are properly implemented, while working to build on these policies with the next Farm Bill. These important risk management tools allow our family farms to compete in a high-risk, heavily subsidized global marketplace.

There are a number of additional issues within the Agriculture Committee’s portfolio that are vital to Arkansas’s future, including smart nutrition policies that help fight hunger and important rural development initiatives, including broadband expansion. These will remain priorities for me as we continue our efforts to improve the quality of life in The Natural State.

**What I’ve Done:** I am honored to serve as the Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee this Congress. This leadership position gives me a unique opportunity to shape the debates over how to address the many challenges facing our agricultural producers, modernize our nutrition programs and pursue policies that help rural America thrive, while continuing to work in a bipartisan manner to author and champion provisions critical to providing certainty and flexibility to agricultural producers.

# **Senator Boozman's Agriculture Accomplishments**

In the 118th Congress, Senator Boozman proudly serves as the Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee where he will continue his commitment to Arkansas’s agriculture producers to provide certainty and predictability to the industry.

Boozman, who served as a conferee on the 2018 Farm Bill Conference Committee where he helped craft the compromise legislation between the Senate and House of Representatives, is a respected voice on behalf of the ag community and rural America. During the last Farm Bill negotiations, he [ensured the final version](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=F2C81AF7-C93F-474D-A5A3-91377869ABEB) provided a workable safety net for farmers and ranchers. The Farm Bill Conference Report included several provisions he authored including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reform, trade promotion funding for marketing U.S. agriculture products in Cuba, regulatory reform and many other priorities for Arkansas agriculture.

Boozman has led efforts to improve United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs and [provide flexibility](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/6/boozman-introduces-bill-to-make-federal-summer-meals-program-more-effective-in-arkansas) for school districts and community partners to reach children in rural areas and help them get the nutrition they need when school is out of session for the summer. During the coronavirus pandemic, provisions from his legislation were [implemented by USDA](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2020/8/boozman-praises-usda-for-extending-free-school-meals-through-end-of-2020) as a waiver to ensure students have access to healthy and nutritious meals. He successfully brokered the bipartisan [*Keep Kids Fed Act*](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=76A4D3B7-D3BD-44B2-8EBD-83B211F2AB80)to extend the school and summer meals flexibility that avoids additional burdens on taxpayers that was [signed into law](https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/newsroom/dem/press/release/president-signs-the-keep-kids-fed-act) in June of 2022.

As a co-chair of the Senate Hunger Caucus, Boozman has championed [initiatives](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2011/11/boozman-joins-hunger-caucus-co-chairs-urging-colleagues-to-raise-awareness) and policies to combat hunger in the United States and across the world including the [Global Food Security Act of 2016](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/9/casey-johanns-coons-isakson-cardin-and-boozman-introduce-global-food-security-bill-to-combat-hunger-malnutrition-and-bolster-u-s-security) and the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2017. These legislative packages help provide the resources and tools necessary to effectively fight hunger worldwide and strengthen food programs such as Feed the Future.

Boozman supported the [*Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES)* *Act*](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=E0A04CFF-F4A4-4099-A4D8-8C0F04C1EE21) which provided vital support for the agricultural community during the coronavirus pandemic. It delivered $9.5 billion in emergency support for agricultural producers, including livestock producers impacted by the public health emergency, allocated $300 million for financial assistance to aquaculture businesses and other fishery related businesses, and provided $14 billion toward replenishment of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), which gave the USDA flexibility to respond to farmers’ economic challenges. He successfully fought for the [inclusion of CCC funding](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2020/9/boozman-applauds-inclusion-of-funds-to-ensure-certainty-predictability-for-farmers-and-ranchers-in-bill-to-avoid-shutdown) in a continuing resolution approved in September 2020, which ensured funding for agricultural programs would go out on schedule. Boozman also worked to ensure that programs helping America’s agriculture producers received an additional $13 billion in funding in the COVID-19 relief package signed into law in December 2020.

Arkansas has the proud distinction of being the nation’s leader in rice production, producing about half of the U.S. rice crop. Boozman has consistently been an active supporter of the needs of the industry by advocating for [expanded markets](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/8/cotton-boozman-and-crawford-applaud-iraqi-purchase-of-u-s-rice) and leveling the playing field for producers. Shortly after Boozman called on the Trump administration to remove rice tariff lines from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Program, it was announced the [rice tariff lines would be modified](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=9FDA566E-4793-489E-9B6D-836354C789F5).

Boozman has also fought to protect domestic catfish producers, a hallmark of Arkansas’s aquaculture industry. The senator [successfully advocated](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/5/boozman-pushes-for-stronger-inspection-standards-for-imported-catfish) for transferring catfish inspection authority to USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service and will continue to ensure catfish imports meet the same standards as American production. He also led [efforts](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2024/3/boozman-cotton-hyde-smith-hail-victory-for-u-s-catfish-producers-as-commerce-dept-reverses-decision-favoring-imports-from-vietnam) to pressure the U.S. Department of Commerce to reverse a preliminary decision that would have greatly reduced anti-dumping duties on imported catfish from companies controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Throughout his time in office,Boozman has prioritized expanded business development and job training opportunities in rural areas. His position on the Senate Committee on Appropriations allowed him to secure [$2.8 million for the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Access (ATTRA)](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=4A34142A-B8F7-4B91-B875-5954B9306D96) program for Fiscal Year 2021. This program connects Arkansas agricultural producers to information that helps them improve their operations. ATTRA also administers the Armed to Farm program that assists veterans in transition to civilian life by training them for a career in farming. The program has a regional headquarters located in Fayetteville. Thanks to Boozman’s leadership, [ATTRA was reauthorized](https://www.boozman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=DA2E9DC0-4594-4885-9142-8E1C00100AD9) in the 2018 Farm Bill.

He also supported and was successful in increasing funding for the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program under the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to reduce adverse ecological and economic impacts caused by feral swine across Arkansas and the nation.

### ***Biography***

John Boozman is Arkansas’s senior U.S. Senator and the dean of the state’s Congressional delegation.

A fifth-generation Arkansan, John was raised in Fort Smith and graduated from Northside High School. He went on to play football for the University of Arkansas Razorbacks while completing his pre-optometry requirements. He graduated from the Southern College of Optometry in 1977 and entered private practice that same year co-founding a family business with his brother that would ultimately become a major provider of eye care to Northwest Arkansas.

Decades of experience as a successful healthcare provider and a small business owner guide John’s approach to governing. He is committed to advocating for economic policies that help Arkansas’s small businesses continue to grow and add jobs to our state’s economy. And since agriculture accounts for nearly one-quarter of Arkansas’s economic activity, John has been a consistent champion for our state’s farmers, ranchers and loggers and was instrumental in the fight for an equitable farm bill.

As the son of an Air Force Master Sergeant, John learned at an early age about the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, as well as the unique challenges military families face. He brings these values with him to Washington where he is committed to enhancing the quality of life for both our veterans and their families. As a member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, John has authored provisions to bolster care and services for women veterans, modernize educational benefits under the GI Bill and better reach and provide mental health care and resources to former service members.

John serves as the Ranking Member of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. This position enables him to play a key role in influencing policy that relates to the agriculture economy, nutrition programs and quality of life in rural America.

John will also continue to serve on the Committee on Appropriations, which is responsible for allocating federal funds, and the Committee on the Environment and Public Works, where much of the nation’s infrastructure policy is developed.

Along with these committees, John serves on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, commonly referred to as the Helsinki Commission. He serves on the Congressional Study Group on Europe (CSGE), a bipartisan organization dedicated to frank and candid dialogue between American lawmakers and their peers in European capitals and Brussels, and has served as the Vice Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group.

In addition, John also serves as one of six Congressional Regents on the Smithsonian Institute's Board of Regents which governs and administers the organization.

First elected to the Senate in 2010, John was sworn in for a third term on January 3, 2023. Prior to serving in the Senate, he represented the people of the Third District of Arkansas in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Active in his community, John has served on the Rogers School Board, the Benton County Fair Board, established the low vision program at the Arkansas School for the Blind in Little Rock and worked as a volunteer optometrist at an area clinic that provides medical services to low-income families. He successfully raised Polled Hereford cattle that were competitive in the show ring, as well as in bull testing at Oklahoma State University.

John is married to the former Cathy Marley and they currently reside in Rogers. The couple has three daughters and four grandchildren.