



## ACTION ALERT

### ***SECURE FUNDING TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS (IDA's) FOR BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS!!!***

The 2008 Farm Bill opened the door for a new program to support beginning farmers and ranchers as they pursue their goals and dreams. In response to grassroots support for the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress authorized a new federal matched savings programs to help beginning farmers build a nest egg of as much as \$10,000 to use for purchasing tractors and other equipment or to make a down payment on land. However, Congress did not provide any funding for the program!

We are calling for a \$5 million dollar appropriation. This is what the Senate version of the Farm Bill called for before it was deleted in the final version of the 2008 bill. The funding would support pilot programs in 15 states including financial training and matched savings accounts to establish a pattern of savings and build equity in a new farming operation. This program is modeled after California FarmLink's IDA program which has attracted national attention! It is also modeled after a federal IDA program, serving primarily urban people, that has received bipartisan funding support in Congress.

**We need Congress to “talk with its checkbook.” Call your Representative and Senators today and ask them to appropriate funds for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Account Pilot program. The Appropriations Committees are working on the 2011 Appropriations Bill. Now is the time to act.**

#### **PLEASE CALL OR FAX TODAY**

***It is easy to call or write.*** Please call the Capitol switchboard (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Senator's or Representative's office by name. Once they connect you to the office ask the receptionist for the legislative aide who covers agriculture. If the agriculture aide is unavailable, leave a message with your name, phone number and the message below on the aide's voice mail or with the receptionist. It is important to make three contacts: your Representative, and both California Senators. If you are unsure who your Congressperson is, a directory is available at <http://www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm>. Please email or call us once you have contacted your Representative and Senators. If you prefer to send a hard copy letter, please fax California FarmLink your letter with your name, address and contact information and we will send it along to the appropriate offices.

***The message is simple:*** I am a constituent and I am calling to ask Congressperson\_\_\_\_\_ to appropriate funds for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers IDA Pilot Program. (For Rep. Farr and Senator Boxer, also thank them for co-sponsoring the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Initiative.) ***I support an appropriation of \$5 million dollars for the Beginning Farmer Individual Development Account (IDA) Pilot Program authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill.*** Let them know about your involvement in the agricultural community, for example, “I'm a beginning farmer,” or “I've farmed 30 years and want to support new farmers.”

***Your call or letter is essential!*** Please call or write your Member of Congress and Senators Boxer and Feinstein. Then call our office at (707) 829-1691 ext. 102 or e-mail [linda@californiafarmlink.org](mailto:linda@californiafarmlink.org) and let us know you made the contact. It is important that we track how many contacts members of Congress receive calls.