

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINAL BILL ANALYSIS**

<b>BILL #:</b>	CS/HB 645	<b>FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:</b>		
<b>SUBJECT/SHORT TITLE</b>	Young Farmers and Ranchers	114	Y's 0	N's
<b>SPONSOR(S):</b>	Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee; Raburn and others	<b>GOVERNOR'S ACTION:</b>		Approved
<b>COMPANION BILLS:</b>	CS/SB 872			

---

**SUMMARY ANALYSIS**

CS/HB 645 passed the House on March 7, 2018, as CS/SB 872 as amended. The Senate concurred in the House amendment to the Senate Bill and subsequently passed the bill as amended on March 9, 2018.

Florida is one of the nation's top ten most productive agricultural states. However, according to research, the overall number of farms is declining.

The bill creates within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council. The council is to consist of 12 members appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The council may submit to the commissioner, annually, findings and recommendations for mitigating challenges facing aspiring farmers and ranchers in the early stages of their careers. Issues the council may examine include, but are not limited to, access to land, availability of credit and capital, and access to business skills training.

The bill requires DACS to establish on its website a clearinghouse for resources available to young and beginning farmers and ranchers, including, but not limited to, local, state, federal, and private sources of grants, loans, and scholarships, as well as general resources on finance and business planning. The clearinghouse must also include resources available to beginning agricultural producers who are veterans as defined in s. 1.01, F.S.

The bill has an insignificant negative fiscal impact on state government.

The bill was approved by the Governor on March 23, 2018, ch. 2018-85, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2018.

## I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

### A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

#### **Present Situation**

##### Florida Agriculture

Florida had 47,100 commercial farms in 2016, using approximately 9.41 million acres of farmland. There were 5,600 farms with sales exceeding \$100,000, and the average farm size was 200 acres. Florida ranks 18th among all states in number of farms and 30th in land in farms.<sup>1</sup>

Florida is one of the nation's top ten most productive agricultural states.<sup>2</sup> However, the number of farms is declining throughout the state.<sup>3</sup> In the 1990s, the agricultural economy increased only five percent compared to 25 percent and 50 percent in previous decades.<sup>4</sup>

There are no grant programs or councils administered by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to assist young farmers and ranchers. DACS does provide resources through its Agricultural Industry,<sup>5</sup> Grant Opportunity,<sup>6</sup> and Business Development<sup>7</sup> webpages. At this time, financial resource content is limited to assisting growers with export operations.

#### **Effect of Proposed Changes**

The bill creates within DACS the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council, and requires DACS to establish on its website the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Resource Clearinghouse.

##### *Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council*

The bill creates within DACS the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council. The council is to consist of 12 members appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The commissioner is required to initially appoint six members for a one-year term, and six members for a two-year term. Thereafter, members must be appointed for two-year terms.

The bill provides that the meetings, powers, duties, procedures, and recordkeeping of the council shall be pursuant to s. 570.232, F.S.

The bill specifically authorizes the council to do the following:

- Submit annually to the commissioner findings and recommendations for mitigating challenges facing aspiring farmers and ranchers in the early stages of their careers; and

---

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, Statistical Bulletin 2017, at A-6, [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Florida/Publications/Annual\\_Statistical\\_Bulletin/2017/ASB-2017.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/2017/ASB-2017.pdf) (last visited January 24, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> University of Florida IFAS Extension, *Expanding Florida's Farming Business to Incorporate Tourism*, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr242> (last visited January 24, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Information pertaining to the agricultural industry may be retrieved from <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Agriculture-Industry/Search-by-Industry>.

<sup>6</sup> Information pertaining to grant opportunities can be retrieved from <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Business-Services/Grant-Opportunities>.

<sup>7</sup> Information pertaining to business development can be retrieved from <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Marketing-and-Development/Agriculture-Industry/Business-Development-Resources/Exporting-Florida-Agricultural-Products>.

- Examine issues that include, but are not limited to, access to land, availability of credit and capital, and access to business skills training.

*Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Resource Clearinghouse*

The bill requires DACS to establish on its website a clearinghouse for resources available to young and beginning farmers and ranchers, including, but not limited to, local, state, federal, and private sources of grants, loans, and scholarships, as well as general resources on finance and business planning. The bill requires the clearinghouse to include resources available to beginning agricultural producers who are defined as veterans under s. 1.01, F.S.

## **II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill has an insignificant negative fiscal impact on DACS. The bill will create an increase in workload relating to the Advisory Council and Clearinghouse, but DACS indicates that this workload can be absorbed within existing resources.<sup>8</sup>

### **B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

### **C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:**

None.

### **D. FISCAL COMMENTS:**

None.

---

<sup>8</sup> Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Agency Analysis of 2018 House Bill 645, p. 2 (Jan. 18, 2018).