

AGEC 410 – Agricultural and Food Policy

3 – The Policy Process

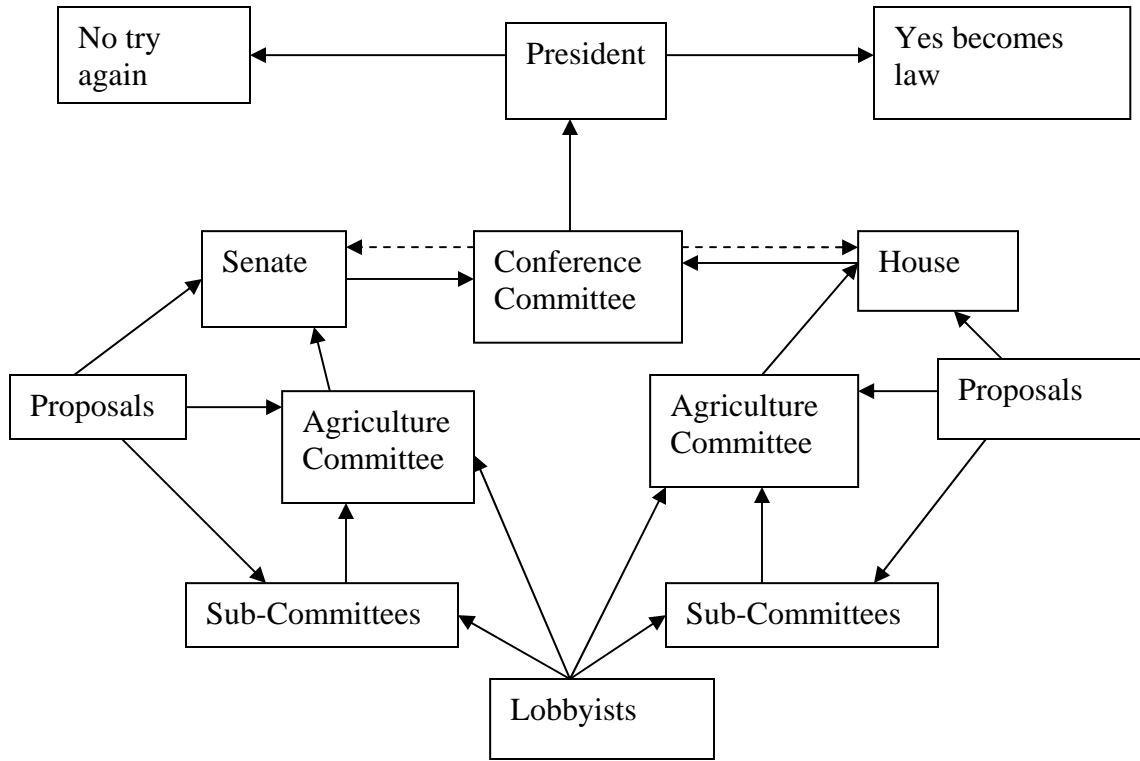
Agricultural policy is a political process where interest groups with competing interests forge a deal.

Key is to control the agenda and the process

Ultimate decision lies with Congress

With falling farm population many have predicted decline in support for farmers.

Has not occurred. Why?



Simple Flowchart of U.S. Agricultural Legislation

Power lies in the system of committees and sub-committees

Types critical for agriculture

1. Agricultural committees authorize
2. Budget committees
3. Appropriations
4. Foreign Relations (S), International Relations (H)
5. Environmental
6. Food Safety (FDA)
7. Labor, Education, Judiciary (anti-trust)

Agricultural Committees

Southern slant

Senate Committee 21 members

Forestry, Conservation, and Rural Revitalization

Marketing, Inspection, and Product Promotion

Production and Price Competitiveness

Research, Nutrition, and General Legislation

House Committee 51 members

General Farm Commodities & Risk Mgmt

Livestock and Horticulture

Specialty Crops and Foreign Agriculture

Department Operations, Nutrition and Forestry

Resource Conservation, Research, Credit, and Rural
Development

Committees report a bill and committee report to full
body for debate, alteration, and vote

Differences resolved in Conference Committee

Conference Committee

Equal representation from both houses

Includes Committee chairs

Sub-committee chairs

Senior members

Focus on areas of disagreement

Compromise usually not open for change

If House and Senate accept, called enrolled bill,
goes to President

President

Sign and becomes law

Not sign:

Congress in session, law after 10 days

Congress not in session, pocket veto

Veto

Budgeting

Basic titles of a farm bill are entitlements

Process:

1. Proposed budget by President
2. Congressional budget resolution
1974 Budget and Impoundment Act
“tight” schedules
may raise, lower spending, or end programs
3. Appropriations controls actual funding
4. Revenue raising

Executive Branch

Implements and administers laws Congress enacts
(Even if it does not like them)

Two main channels, sometimes at cross purposes

1. Executive Office of the President (EOP)

Assimilates, coordinates, sometimes dictates,
positions of various departments and agencies

2. Cabinet departments

represents interests of various groups

U.S. Department of Agriculture (1862)

Responsibilities fluctuate over time

Around 105,000 employees, 15-20 agencies

Congress often gives the Secretary freedom to decide program rules or instruments

Example: Set-aside

- Determine options

 - May involve General Counsel, White House

- Notify relevant agencies

 - FSA, CCC, NRCS, FAS, ERS

- Agencies analyze options

- Inter-agency “sharing”

- Secretary or staff weigh and decide

Economic analysis is important, but only one piece

Judicial Branch

Responsible for interpreting the Constitution and settling disputes.

Has always been involved

AAA 1933

Anti-trust and meat packing, 1920s

But have become more activist

Recent examples?