



POLITICO

## Morning Agriculture

Delivered daily by 10 a.m., Morning Agriculture examines the latest news in agriculture and food politics and policy.

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Editor's Note: Morning Agriculture is a free version of POLITICO Pro Agriculture's morning newsletter, which is delivered to our subscribers each morning at 6 a.m. The POLITICO Pro platform combines the news you need with tools you can use to take action on the day's biggest stories. [Act on the news with POLITICO Pro.](#)

### QUICK FIX

— **The Nutrition Coalition is calling on the Agriculture Department and HHS to hit pause** on a key Dietary Guidelines report, alleging that some experts involved in reviewing the science have complained about the process.

— **As USDA considers allowing more farmers to qualify for its \$16 billion direct aid program**, Iowa's governor, ag secretary and senators are making the case for liquid egg producers to get their share of relief.

— **House Democrats are rolling out a surface transportation package** that would include nearly \$500 billion for highways, transit and rail over the next half-decade, with a focus on climate resiliency.

**HAPPY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3!** Welcome to Morning Ag, where [bikes are "the new toilet paper."](#) Send tips to [rmccrimmon@politico.com](mailto:rmccrimmon@politico.com) and [@ryanmccrimmon](#), and follow us [@Morning\\_Ag](#).

### DRIVING THE DAY

**CRITICS URGE USDA TO DELAY DIETARY GUIDELINES REPORT:** The Nutrition Coalition on Tuesday wrote to USDA and HHS asking to delay the release of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's conclusions, alleging that "whistleblowers" from the committee have come forward with serious concerns about the process.

**The group, which believes the guidelines have long been extremely flawed**, said one or more committee members [reached out anonymously to complain about a number of issues](#), ranging from not having enough time to complete scientific reviews to leaving out dozens of low-carb clinical trials and not having a procedural mechanism of dissent where there are scientific disagreements.

"The federal government cannot ignore these allegations and should delay publication of the DGAC expert report to address and potentially remediate them," said Nina Teicholz, executive director of the Nutrition Coalition.

**What's next:** The committee's draft conclusions will be presented June 17. After taking comments, the advisory committee will issue a final scientific report that will advise USDA and HHS as they craft the 2020 Dietary Guidelines. [Register for the June meeting here.](#)

**EGG ADVOCATES TRY TO CRACK AG AID PROGRAM:** Iowa lawmakers and officials [sent a letter to Secretary Sonny Perdue on Tuesday](#) asking the USDA chief to send more support for the state's egg farmers. The group said about 70 percent of Iowa's egg-laying flocks sell to the liquid egg market, which has been crushed by the closure of schools and restaurants. It's distinct from the shell egg

market, which actually saw a temporary boost when the pandemic started, said Gov. Kim Reynolds, Ag Secretary Mike Naig and Sens. [Joni Ernst](#) and [Chuck Grassley](#), all Republicans.

**Ag producers that weren't explicitly included in the USDA aid package** can still qualify for payments if they demonstrate that their commodity prices have fallen by 5 percent or more since January. In the letter to Perdue, the Iowa officials said liquid egg prices have dropped by more than 68 percent since mid-January, citing data from USDA itself and similar estimates from market analysts.

The FDA early on tried to help producers by [easing regulations to divert eggs](#) from the crumbling liquid market to the more stable shell egg side. But it wasn't a solution for farmers whose flocks were ineligible because of hen age limits or those who lacked the proper egg packaging equipment.

**By the numbers:** Iowa's egg industry accounts for \$2.6 billion in economic activity and supplies one of every six eggs consumed in the U.S., according to the letter.

**HOUSE PANEL LAYS OUT CLIMATE-FOCUSED HIGHWAY BILL:** The House Transportation Committee is introducing a \$494 billion surface transportation bill to build and repair highways, bridges, rails and other infrastructure. As House leaders promised earlier this year, the measure includes provisions to make transportation projects more climate-friendly and resilient, [writes Pro Transportation's Tanya Snyder.](#)

**The deets:** The draft bill would set aside \$319 billion for highways; \$105 billion for transit; and \$60 billion for rail. It would direct regulators to establish new standards for greenhouse gas emissions and provide \$28 billion for a bridge investment program. The panel has tentative plans to mark up the legislation on June 17.

**Crumbling roads and bridges are a constant headache for agriculture**, especially in rural areas. [Research published last month by transportation research nonprofit TRIP](#) found that a combined 34 percent of rural roads are in "poor" or "mediocre" condition. That's especially problematic for heavy vehicles like farm machinery or trucks carrying ag products.

**But there's a huge backlog in funding for such repairs**, and the pandemic is further straining state budgets. The slowdown of travel is projected to lower state transportation revenue by at least \$50 billion (or 30 percent) over the next 18 months, according to TRIP.

Under the House bill, some transportation projects would be put off by one year as states try to manage the pandemic.

**Speaking of climate-focused:** Separately, dozens of Democrats are pushing to include clean energy provisions in the next economic stimulus package, like investments in "clean fuels." The lawmakers say around 600,000 clean energy jobs have been wiped out because of the coronavirus. [Pro Energy's Anthony Adragna has the details.](#)