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American Council of Independent Laboratories issues statement on the 2018 farm bill

WASHINGTON, DC - The American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL) applauds the farm bill conferees and Congress for their diligent work to adopt a farm bill before the end of the year. The 2018 farm bill received overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate (87-13) and House (369-47), after nearly two years of extensive negotiations.

ACIL commends the farm bill conferees' decision to include an important provision for grain handlers regarding domestic official grain inspections by providing dozens of grain elevators whose non-use of service/open season exception agreements were revoked by USDA in 2017. ACIL was a strong supporter of the inclusion of this provision, which provides these elevators with the option to restore previous arrangements with their non-incumbent domestic official inspection provider by notifying USDA of the change. In the fall, ACIL sent letters of support to Agriculture Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson, urging the inclusion of language restoring certain grain exemptions in the United States Grain Standards Act.

Perhaps the most groundbreaking initiative in the 2018 farm bill is the amendment of the Controlled Substances Act to exclude hemp from the definition of marijuana. The farm bill clears the way for commercial hemp production, while also opening the door for hemp producers to access banking as well as crop insurance. Undoubtedly, the decriminalization of industrial hemp opens new market opportunities for ACIL members in administering independent third-party testing. ACIL supports the conferees making new and emerging commercial products derived from hemp eligible for research and research funding.

The 2018 farm bill also reauthorizes important testing requirements through the Food and Drug Administration including food additives, pesticides and other chemical products, which ACIL members are instrumental in carrying out. The 2018 farm bill authorizes \$867 billion in spending over five years and now heads to President Trump's desk for signature.

The ACIL is an association representing independent commercial scientific and engineering firms with over 1,000 facilities across the U.S. engaged in testing, product certification, consulting, and research and development to enhance public health and safety. Their membership is a part of an \$11 billion industry, unaffiliated with any institution, company or trade group that might affect their ability to conduct investigations, render reports, or give professional, objective, and unbiased counsel.