

Budget includes cuts to agriculture

By RICHARD DAVIS and CECIL H. YANCY JR.

PRESIDENT Bush's budget for 2007 includes a 5% cut in all commodity programs, tighter payment limits, and assessments on sugar and milk programs.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns says the cuts are necessary to help reduce the deficit. The cuts to agriculture represent \$1 billion in savings the first year and \$7.7 billion over the next

10 years. The deficit is projected to be \$400 billion in 2007.

But Congress is expected to reject the cuts to agriculture as it did last year, says Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.

Chambliss says Congress will "not burden farmers, particularly after the high fuel costs and extreme weather of the 2005 crop year."

The budget proposal would limit payments to \$250,000, eliminate the "three-entity rule" and force further consolidation of county Farm Service

Agency offices. Farm groups in the South say the proposal amounts to a rewrite of the farm bill a year before it is set to expire in 2007.

The National Cotton Council says the budget would undercut American agriculture.

"Agriculture should not be asked for greater sacrifice than other federal departments and certainly no farm sector or region should be targeted," says Woods Eastland, National Cotton Council chairman.

"Spending on commodity and conservation programs account for less than 1.5% of total mandatory spending, yet commodity programs are being asked to shoulder more than 8% of required reductions," Eastland says.

"The president's budget breaks the promise that Congress made to North Carolina farmers in the 2002 Farm Bill," says Rep. Bob Etheridge, D-N.C. "Our farmers were promised that the compromise we reached in 2002 would not change until the farm bill expired."

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New Holland TSA100, TSA115, TSA125A	4 or 6 cylinder, parent bore (dry cylinder)	36 to 41%	Optional	No
Massey Ferguson 5445, 5455, 5460	4 cylinder, dry sleeves	Not specified	No	No
Kubota M95S, M105S	4 cylinder, dry	35%	No	No

Comparison information taken from publicly available sources during Summer 2005.

