



Senate Panel Approves Agriculture Spending Bill That Includes Millions for California

*-- Also includes report language requiring FDA to release reports on
perchlorate content in food, milk, water, and infant formula --*

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Washington, DC -- The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved a FY 2007 agriculture appropriations spending bill, which provides over \$100 billion for agriculture, nutrition, and food safety, and includes millions of dollars in funding for many significant California agricultural priorities including \$10 million for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced today.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops. These agricultural products, produced in all 50 states, constitute at least half of U.S. gross agriculture receipts, contribute nearly \$60 billion to the U.S. economy, and provide 60 percent of America's daily nutritional requirements.

“This funding will help make American specialty crops more competitive in the global marketplace,” Senator Feinstein said. **“Specialty crops are a vital part of our nation’s agricultural production. They are produced in all 50 states. They constitute at least half of U.S. gross agriculture receipts. They contribute nearly \$60 billion to the U.S. economy. And they provide 60 percent of America's daily nutritional requirements.”**

The Senate Appropriations Committee also agreed to an amendment to simplify travel to Cuba for agricultural sales, a Sense of the Senate amendment on the Japanese embargo on U.S. beef, and a \$3.9 billion agriculture disaster assistance amendment. This includes over \$1 billion for livestock assistance, \$1 billion in crop loss assistance and \$99.5 million specifically for specialty crop producers.

In addition to the specialty crop funding, the FY 2007 Agriculture Appropriations Bill includes the following items of interest to California:

Agricultural Marketing

- \$200 million for the Market Access Program
- \$400,000 for the Promotion of Specialty Crops
- \$3.13 million for the National Organic Program

Agricultural Research

- \$990,000 for the California State University Agricultural Research Initiative

- \$2.189 million for Pierce’s Disease research at UC Davis
- \$1.91 million for Exotic Pest Disease research at UC Riverside
- \$1.948 million for Organic Transition Research Grants
- \$2.7 million for research on Soy Bean and Wheat Stem Rust
- \$6.237 million for Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants
- \$3.075 million for the Methyl Bromide Transition Program
- \$2.079 million for the Viticulture Consortium
- \$3 million for the Salinas ARS Station construction

Inspection, Detection, Eradication and Control

- \$1.65 million for California County Import Inspection
- \$1.019 million for California County Pest Detection
- \$4.055 million for Sudden Oak Death Control
- \$17.243 million for BSE/Mad Cow, which will support 40,000 tests in FY07
- \$24.079 million for Pierce’s Disease
- \$60.187 million for Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection, including a study on multi-species control efforts in California

Food and Nutrition

- \$9 million for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable School Snack Pilot Program, which for the first time includes California
- \$20 million for the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program
- \$108.285 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which was zeroed out in the President’s Budget

Rural Development and Conservation

- \$397,000 for the Central California Air Quality Study
- \$10 million for Rural Empowerment Zones, including the Desert Communities Empowerment Zone in the Coachella Valley
- \$5 million for the Healthy Forests Reserve Program, which was authorized in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to allow USDA to assist private landowners protect forest ecosystems through approved conservation practices.
- \$2.5 million for the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas
- Cooperative Agreements with Mendocino County, Lake County, Yolo County, Calaveras County, Plumas County, the City of Big Bear Lake, and the Orange County Municipal Water District.

The report accompanying the bill includes language requested by Senator Feinstein to require the FDA to release reports on perchlorate content in food, milk, water, and infant formula.

“Right now we have an incomplete picture of how much perchlorate Californian’s are ingesting,” Senator Feinstein said. **“These reports will help give a clearer view of how much perchlorate is seeping into our food supply, and will help the Environmental Protection Agency establish a safe drinking water standard.”**

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