

News from the House Agriculture Committee

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Committee on Agriculture



Collin C. Peterson, Minnesota
Chairman

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Subcommittee Reviews USDA Farm Bill Proposals for Specialty Crops and Organic Agriculture

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture held a hearing to review the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s proposals for specialty crops and organic agriculture in the 2007 Farm Bill. Congressman Dennis Cardoza of California is Chairman of the Subcommittee.

“Many of the crops covered by this subcommittee have waited far too long to become part of federal farm programs,” Chairman Cardoza said. “Specialty crops comprise a substantial percentage of American agriculture, but receive far less than their fair share in federal support. We must look for resourceful and innovative ways to weave non-traditional commodities into existing programs and create new ones that suit the unique needs of these industries.”

“Fruits and vegetables are a large and important segment of American agriculture. As this Subcommittee begins its work on the 2007 Farm Bill, I look forward to hearing input from producers to determine how any new funding that might be available would provide the most benefit for the specialty crop sector,” said Ranking Member Randy Neugebauer of Texas.

The subcommittee heard testimony from U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner. Deputy Secretary Conner answered questions from subcommittee members about the specialty crop title to the USDA 2007 Farm Bill proposals the agency released on January 31.

The Horticulture and Organic Agriculture Subcommittee will be one of six House Agriculture subcommittees involved in reauthorization of farm programs in the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill authorizes commodity support, agricultural trade, marketing, food assistance, and rural development policies over several years. The current farm bill was written in 2002, and many of the provisions in that bill will expire in September of 2007.

Deputy Secretary Conner’s opening statement is available on the Committee website at <http://agriculture.house.gov/hearings/index.html>. A full transcript of the hearing will be posted on the Committee website in 4-6 weeks.

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