

# Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance

*Working to Make American Agriculture Stronger*

April 14, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-221  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
S-230  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee Agriculture,  
Nutrition and Forestry  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Leaders:

We appreciate your leadership in establishing a formal conference committee and are pleased with the dialogue that has taken place last week regarding the Farm Bill. On behalf of the 120 specialty crop organizations and 350 individual specialty crops across America, the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA) encourages you to enact a Farm Bill during this Congress that makes federal farm policy more equitable. We are hopeful you will include the highest level of funding for specialty crop producers since we account for nearly half of all cash crop receipts in agriculture.

For the first time, the House and Senate passed versions of the Farm Bill recognized the priorities of specialty crop producers in an equitable fashion. A continued stalemate, long term extension or even reverting back to the statute would curtail important policy and funding progress that has been dedicated to critical specialty crop, pest and disease, nutrition, research and conservation priorities. For example, the USDA Fruit & Vegetable Snack Program has received national attention and recognition for combating obesity in our schools and without a new Farm Bill this program cannot reach schools on a nationwide level. In addition, enhanced research that would improve the safety, taste and quality of foods and funding for the Specialty Crop Competitive Grant program geared towards helping local stakeholders would be ignored by the continuation of current policy. Overall, the specialty crop industry and priorities that Congress has supported at meaningful levels would be lost if a new Farm Bill is not enacted.

We understand the difficult and challenging task passing a final Farm Bill has become. However, this conference committee represents an opportunity to complete the collaborate efforts of agriculture stakeholders that have worked so hard in the last year and a half to pass a more equitable Farm Bill. On behalf of our members, we encourage you to complete this bill quickly and include the highest level of funding for specialty crops.

Sincerely,

American Mushroom Institute  
American Nursery and Landscape Association  
Cherry Marketing Institute  
Leafy Greens Council  
National Berry Crop Initiative  
National Grape Cooperative Association  
National Grape and Wine Initiative  
National Onion Association  
National Potato Council  
National Watermelon Association  
North American Blueberry Council  
North American Bramble Growers Association  
North American Strawberry Growers Association  
Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.  
Produce Marketing Association  
Society of American Florists  
U.S. Apple Association  
United Fresh Produce Association  
United Potato Growers of America  
Welch's  
Wine Producers Commission  
WineAmerica  
Winegrape Growers of America  
Alabama Watermelon Association

Arizona Winegrowers Association  
Blue Diamond Growers  
Buy California Marketing Agreement  
California Association of Nurseries & Garden Centers  
California Association of Wine Grape Growers  
California Citrus Mutual  
California Dried Plum Board  
California Fig Institute  
California Fresh Fig Growers Association  
California Grape and Tree Fruit League  
California Strawberry Commission  
California Table Grape Commission  
California Tree Fruit Agreement  
California Walnut Commission  
California-Arizona Watermelon Association  
Grower-Shipper Association of Central California  
Sun Maid Growers  
Sunkist Growers, Inc.  
Western Growers  
Western Pistachio Association  
Wine Institute  
Colorado Potato Administrative Committee  
Colorado Wine Industry Development Board  
Rocky Mountain Association of Vintners & Viticulturists  
Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council  
Connecticut Vineyard & Winery Association  
Florida Citrus Mutual  
Florida Citrus Packers  
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association  
Florida Strawberry Growers Association  
Florida Sweet Corn Exchange

Florida Tomato Exchange  
Florida Watermelon Association  
Indian River Citrus League  
Miami-Dade County  
Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association  
Tropical Fruit Growers of South Florida  
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
Georgia Watermelon Association  
Winegrowers Association of Georgia  
Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission  
Idaho Grower Shippers Association  
Idaho Potato Commission  
Potato Growers of Idaho  
United Fresh Potato Growers of Idaho  
Indiana-Illinois Watermelon Association  
Northern Kentucky Vintners & Grape Growers Association  
Maine Potato Board  
Wild Blueberry Commission  
Maryland-Delaware Watermelon Association  
Maryland Wineries Association  
New England Vegetable and Berry Growers  
Michigan Apple Committee  
WineMichigan  
Minnesota Area II Potato Growers Research and Promotion Council  
Minnesota Grape Growers Association  
Northern Plains Potato Growers  
Missouri Wine & Grape Board  
Missouri-Arkansas Watermelon Association  
New Mexico Wine Growers Association  
Empire State Potato Growers  
New York Apple Association

New York Wine & Grape Foundation  
North Carolina Blueberry Council  
North Carolina Grape & Wine Council  
North Carolina Potato Association  
North Carolina Strawberry Association  
North Carolina Watermelon Association  
Fruit Growers Marketing Association  
Ohio Wine Producers Association  
Oklahoma Grape Growers & Wine Makers Association  
Oregon Potato Commission  
Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission  
Oregon Strawberry Commission  
Oregon Winegrowers Association  
Peerbolt Crop Management  
South Carolina Watermelon Association  
Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Association  
Texas Citrus Mutual  
Texas Produce Association  
Texas Vegetable Association  
Texas Wine & Grape Growers Association  
Texas-Oklahoma Watermelon Association  
Virginia Apple Growers Association  
Virginia Wineries Association  
Northwest Horticultural Council  
Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers  
Washington Red Raspberry Commission  
Washington Apple Commission  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Wyoming Grape & Wine Association

Cc: House Farm Bill Conferees  
Senate Farm Bill Conferees