

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 7, 2007
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Washington, DC (June 7, 2007) – The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA) commends the efforts of the U.S. House of Representatives Horticulture and Organic Agriculture Subcommittee to begin the process of creating a more comprehensive and equitable farm bill that addresses the needs of specialty crop producers. The title for the new farm bill approved by the subcommittee, chaired by Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), acknowledges several key priorities for the SCFBA including block grants, pest detection protections, food safety, transportation infrastructure, and return Agriculture Quarantine Inspection activities to USDA. Unfortunately, the title does not include adequate funding for many of these initiatives and leaves several needs identified in H.R. 1600, the *Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act (EAT Healthy America Act)* unaddressed. H.R. 1600 was introduced in March by Reps. Cardoza (D-CA), Randy Kuhl (R-NY), John Salazar (D-CO), Adam Putnam (R-FL), Rick Larsen (D-WA), and Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and is cosponsored by 119 Members of Congress. The SCFBA strongly supports the introduction and consideration by Congress of H.R. 1600 as part of the farm bill debate.

Under stringent budget rules, the House Agriculture Committee has no ready funding for programs to address specialty crop needs. SCFBA recognizes these parameters for new programs in the 2007 farm bill, but maintains that it is critical for Congress to find the funding for investment in specialty crops at this time. As so many have recognized, now is the time to begin the framework for bringing equity to farm policy that recognizes the importance of specialty crops to agriculture in all 50 states. The SCFBA will continue to work with the members of the agriculture committees in the House and the Senate and with the leadership of both parties to identify funding opportunities available for specialty crop producers.

Specialty crops compose nearly 50 percent of the farm gate value of U.S. agriculture and should be included in the farm bill on an equal basis with program crops. The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance will work hard to achieve an equitable spending balance as the farm bill is considered in the agriculture committees and on the floors of the House and Senate.

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