

# WASHINGTON REPORT

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## FY 2015 USDA Appropriations

The FY 2015 appropriations process is in full swing as the Administration released its budget request in April and the House and Senate marked up their draft USDA budget in May. Included in the table is the enacted budget for each of the USDA agencies in FY 2014, followed by the proposed FY 2015 numbers from the Administration, House and Senate. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Economic Research Service (ERS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are all slated for higher budgets by the Administration, House and Senate compared to FY 2014. The Administration's budget for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is down 1.6% percent to \$1.104 billion compared to FY 2014 while the Senate proposed a \$17 million increase for ARS compared to FY 2014. The Administration proposed a 4.4% increase for the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to \$1.335 billion compared to FY 2014 while the House proposed a NIFA budget for FY 2015 that's a smidge lower than its \$1.277 billion it received this year.

USDA Agency	FY 2014	FY 2015 President	FY 2015 House	FY 2015 Senate
	(in thousands of dollars)			
APHIS	821,721	834,341	867,705	872,414
ARS	1,122,482	1,104,403	1,120,253	1,139,673
ERS	78,058	83,446	85,784	85,373
NASS	161,206	178,999	169,371	178,154
NIFA	1,277,067	1,335,536	1,273,804	1,292,448
NRCS	812,939	814,772	843,053	849,295

Within NIFA, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) is proposed to increase 2.8% from \$316 million to \$325 million in all three FY 2015 budget proposals. Similarly, all three budget proposals for FY 2015 from the Administration, the House, and the Senate have the Hatch Act staying at \$244 million, the Smith Lever 3b and 3c funding for extension staying at \$300 million, and IR-4 program funding staying at \$11.9 million. The new Farm Bill that was passed in February also revived 2 programs that would have expired. The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) will get \$80 million per year in mandatory funding. The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) will get \$20 million per year.

## USDA NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management Funding

The RFA for the USDA NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) grants program closes on June 19. WSSA had circulated the RFA in mid May. While you are likely reading this after the RFA has closed, the Science Policy Committee would like to pass along some information regarding the equitable distribution of funds among the pest management disciplines. CPPM received \$17.1 million in funding for FY 2014 and is expected to see the same next year. CPPM contains the funding authorities for the Pest Management Alternatives Program, the IPM grants program, the Regional IPM Centers funding, and the capacity funds for the Extension IPM (E-IPM) Coordinators program. Over half of the CPPM funding authority is derived from E-IPM capacity funds (\$9.9 million). Each eligible institution must submit a 3 yr proposal for the E-IPM funds at \$300,000 max per year. There is only one proposal allowed for an institution. With the "repackaging" of the E-IPM funds into CPPM, there will now be up to a 30%

indirect cost charge. However, USDA is hoping that universities take less than the 30% rate. The process of developing each institution's proposal is the responsibility of the Director of Cooperative Extension. The Director puts together the writing team and vets the proposal before submission. The 2014 directory of State Extension Service Directors and Administrators can be [found here](#). Every state is a little different in terms of how the E-IPM application process works and who is the lead P.I. for the E-IPM funds proposal. Some states have very good "team efforts" among the pest management disciplines. Other states are completely run by one pest management discipline or another. If your institution is not inclusive of all pest disciplines (specifically Weed Science) please let me know.

### **House and Senate Direct Spending Towards Herbicide Resistance**

The FY 2015 agriculture appropriation bills from the House and Senate both contain directives to the various USDA agencies to help improve herbicide resistance management. In the Senate Ag Appropriations Committee bill under the USDA research programs it states: *"Herbicide resistant weeds are a major threat to food, feed, and fiber production in the United States and the problem is expected to continue to increase in size and scope. Current funding for research and extension is woefully inadequate. The Committee is concerned that the lack of research based information significantly delays developing effective management strategies to address the herbicide resistance problem. The Committee encourages NIFA, in conjunction with ARS and land-grant institutions, to conduct research that will more comprehensively address herbicide resistance. Research may include: identification of herbicide resistant weed populations or those most likely to develop resistance, characterization of mechanisms of resistance, and development of innovative weed management strategies to overcome current resistance problems and delay or prevent future ones. In addition, effective and widespread dissemination of results to farmers, foresters, and rights of way land managers through extension and outreach will be critical to the success of this endeavor."*

The Senate Ag Approps Committee also has directives for the NRCS addressing a variety of weed science related issues including promoting the adoption of cover crops, addressing the threats posed by invasive plant species, and herbicide resistance. Specifically: *"**Herbicide Resistance-** The Committee is concerned that pigweed has seriously endangered conservation tillage and has increased herbicide costs by more than 70 percent for some crops. In an effort to address herbicide-resistant weeds and associated environmental concerns, agricultural advisors and producers have become increasingly more aggressive with conservation planning and practice implementation to solve this issue. The Committee directs NRCS to ensure agency staff, partners, and producers are aware of new and interim conservation practice standards and conservation activity plans to address herbicide-resistant weeds, such as pigweed, and that financial assistance through certain conservation programs is available to assist producers in their efforts to control these weeds."*

The House Ag Appropriations committee has similar directives to manage invasive weeds and herbicide resistance in its markup language. *"**Cheat Grass Eradication.** —The Committee encourages ARS to continue research on cheat grass eradication, control, and the reduction of fuel loads, including late-season grazing techniques, and to work with the NRCS on this effort". **Herbicide Resistance.** The Committee reminds NRCS of the challenges many producers are facing due to the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds and encourages it to ensure agency staff, partners, and producers are aware of conservation practice standards and conservation activity plans to address herbicide-resistant weeds, and that financial assistance through certain conservation programs is available to assist producers in their efforts to control these weeds. **Invasive Annual Grasses.**—The Secretary is encouraged to consider targeted herbicide treatments of invasive annual grasses and restoration efforts to compliment juniper control efforts on greater sage-grouse habitat on private rangelands."*

### **Aquatic Plant Research Gets \$5 million Boost**

On June 10, the president signed into law the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA). This follows Congressional approval of the conference agreement reached in May by House and Senate negotiators that resolved the differences that occurred over 6 months between each chamber's version of the water resources reauthorization legislation. Within WRRDA, there is language for aquatic invasive species prevention and management, as well as a review of existing Federal authorities related to responding to invasive species, including aquatic weeds. WRRDA increases the authorization of funding from \$15 million to \$20 million per year that supports the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) Aquatic Plant Control Research Program (APCRP), the nation's only federally authorized program for research and development of science-based management strategies for invasive aquatic weeds. WRRDA also authorized \$20 million in new annual funding to establish watercraft inspection stations in the Columbia River Basin to be located in the States of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington at locations with the highest likelihood of preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species at reservoirs operated and maintained by the ACOE.

However, you may be aware that while APCRP was authorized at \$15 million per year for the past 20 years, the most they were appropriated was \$6 million, and over the last few years we have had to scratch tooth and nail to get \$4 million in funding appropriated. The expertise and institutional knowledge encompassed by APCRP is very underrated and often gets overlooked in the \$1.6 billion construction account the ACOE oversees. The good news is that there was broad bipartisan support from both chambers on final passage of the WRRDA conference agreement. In addition, WRRDA expanded the scope of research directed to control not just aquatic plant growths, but all aquatic invasive species. Specifically, the authorizing language will now read: *"There is hereby authorized a comprehensive program to provide for prevention, control, and progressive eradication of noxious aquatic plant growths and aquatic invasive species from the navigable waters, tributary streams, connecting channels, and other allied waters of the United States, in the combined interest of navigation, flood control, drainage, agriculture, fish and wildlife conservation, public health, and related purposes, including continued research for development of the most effective and economic control measures, to be administered by the Chief of Engineers, under the direction of the Secretary of the Army, in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies."*

### **Controversy Abounds on WOTUS**

On April 21, the EPA and Army Corp of Engineers jointly published a rule meant to clarify what are "Waters Of The United States" (WOTUS). The proposed rule would expand Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction to almost all waters in the United States subjecting thousands of streams, ditches, and other "small" waters to federal permitting and citizen lawsuits, impacting how communities and landowners manage their public and private property. The proposed rule states that all streams, as well as all waters and wetlands located in floodplains and riparian corridors, share a connection or "nexus" to downstream, traditionally regulated waters and are therefore subject to default regulation. The proposed definition includes a number of imprecise and broadly-defined terms such as 'adjacent,' 'riparian area' and 'floodplain' that do not clearly delineate which waters are covered. For the first time, 'tributary' is defined and includes bodies of water such as manmade and natural ditches. 'Other waters' also may be subject to the jurisdiction of the CWA on a case-by-case basis if there is a 'significant nexus' to a traditional navigable water. The expanded jurisdiction and the imprecision of the terms used by the agencies may result in significant added legal and regulatory costs. Farmers, ranchers, home builders and home owners that conduct activities and projects on lands with WOTUS designation will be directly affected. Permits may be required for removing debris and vegetation from a ditch, applying a pesticide, or building a fence or pond. In addition, landowners will be subject to citizen lawsuits under CWA provisions, challenging their ability to manage their own property. Opponents of the rule say that clarification is not necessary

because EPA and the Corps already have authority under the CWA to prosecute illegal dumping. Under section 402 of the CWA, unpermitted discharges of pollutants that reach jurisdictional waters either directly or indirectly are unlawful. EPA is taking comments on the proposed rule from now through Monday, October 20, 2014 and has already received over 3.5 million comments. To submit your comments via the Federal Register, please go to:

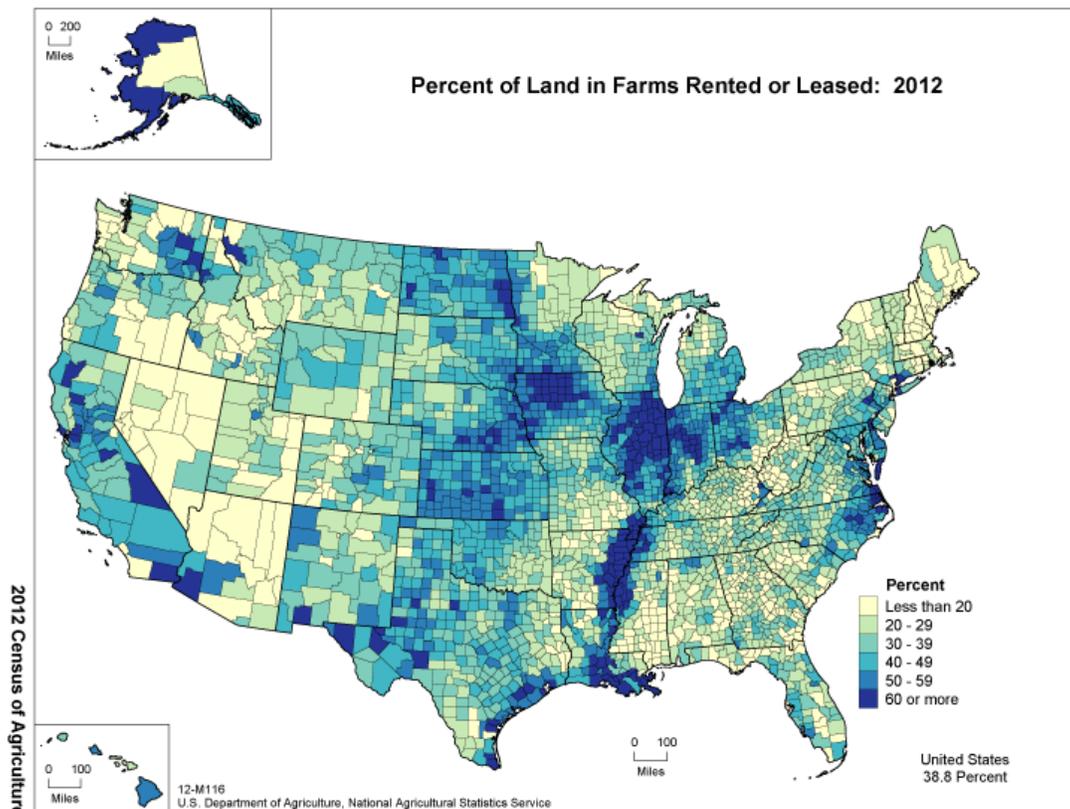
<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/04/21/2014-07142/definition-of-waters-of-the-united-states-under-the-clean-water-act#p-5>

### **Pesticide Registrants Can Now Make Legally Valid Product Labels Accessible on the Internet**

In April, EPA provided guidance to pesticide registrants for optional participation in web-distributed labeling for pesticide products. EPA believes that voluntary adoption of these recommendations by pesticide registrants will help pesticide users to better understand and comply with pesticide labeling. In addition, EPA believes that web-distributed labeling could allow addition of new uses, modification of existing labeling, and implementation of labeling-based risk mitigation measures more quickly. However, all pesticide products must still be accompanied by a physical copy of EPA-approved labeling. Those physical product labels will not be shortened in any way due to the launch of Web-distributed labeling., but the new process will allow pesticide registrants to include a reference to a website from which pesticide applicators can download enforceable labeling. The pesticide registration notice on Web-distributed labeling is available at [http://www.epa.gov/PR\\_Notices/pr2014-1.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/PR_Notices/pr2014-1.pdf)

### **USDA-NASS Releases 2012 Ag Census**

On May 2, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the final results of the 2012 Census of Agriculture, which is the 28<sup>th</sup> Federal census of agriculture and the 4<sup>th</sup> conducted by USDA. The census of agriculture provides a detailed picture of U.S. farms and ranches every five years. It is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every State and county or county equivalent. The USDA Census of Agriculture homepage is: <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>



### **USDA-ERS Publishes Pesticide Use Report**

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) published an 86 page Economic Information Bulletin in May titled "Pesticide Use in U.S. Agriculture: 21 Selected Crops, 1960-2008. The report examines trends in pesticide use in U.S. agriculture from 1960 to 2008, focusing on 21 crops that account for more than 70 percent of pesticide use, and identifies the factors affecting these trends. The report can be [found here](#).

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