

WASHINGTON REPORT

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Lee Van Wychen

Farm Bill “Do-Si-Do”

The extension of the 2008 Farm Bill expired Sept. 30, but lawmakers have said the real deadline is Jan. 1, 2014, when permanent 1938 and 1949 agriculture laws take effect, triggering higher crop and dairy supports. We were in this same scenario a year ago, just change the dates and add some political “do-si-do”. The Senate has already passed their 2nd version of a new Farm Bill in June, while the House failed on their first attempt. After that, the House split their Farm Bill legislation into two separate bills. The first piece, H.R. 2642, contains 11 of the 12 Titles of the original farm bill, but only accounts for 20 percent of the annual spending. That bill was passed 216-208 on July 11 without a single democratic vote. The other bill, H.R. 3102, contains only the Nutrition Title, but accounts for 80 percent of Farm Bill spending. H.R. 3102 contains a variety of wide reaching policy changes regarding SNAP recipient eligibility restrictions, as well as permanently removing the Nutrition Title from the Farm Bill and putting it on a 3 year approval cycle. The food stamp related cuts in H.R. 3102 are 10 times the level of cuts approved in the Senate. On Sept. 19, the House passed H.R. 3102 by a 217-210 vote, again without a single democratic vote. However, the House still couldn’t formally move to conference committee with the Senate until a 3rd piece of parliamentary legislation, H.Res. 361, was passed that joined the two separate House bills on Sept. 28. While this last step was hidden in the House vs. Senate game of government-shut-down-chicken, it was a critical next step in this 2 year (and counting) journey to reauthorize farm and nutrition programs.

The House continues to slow walk progress on a Farm Bill conference with the Senate and will likely not appoint conferees until the end of October. Prior to the August recess, the Senate appointed the following 12 members: Democrat’s, Stabenow (MI), Leahy (VT), Harkin (IA), Baucus (MT), Brown (OH), Klobuchar (MN), and Bennet (CO), and Republican’s Cochran (MS), Roberts (KS), Chambliss (GA), Boozman (AR), and Hoeven (ND). Given what the Senate passed in their version of the Farm Bill and what the House passed in their two separate bills, it might take another game of government-shut-down-chicken to reach a Farm Bill compromise that could be signed into law.

EPA Approves Arundo and Napiergrass for Renewable Fuel Standard

On June 28, EPA approved a supplementary final rule which would allow for biofuels made from two known invasive weeds, giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and Napiergrass (*Pennisetum purpureum*), to qualify for credits under the Federal Renewable Fuels Standard. EPA had originally withheld these two species from a final rule approved in March due to objections raised by the National and Regional Weed Science Societies and many other invasive species, conservation, and wildlife groups. Both these species are known invaders and the March final rule that was approved by EPA lacked risk mitigation measures to prevent these species from spreading.

In the supplementary final rule released at the end of June, EPA adopted additional registration, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements based on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee's (ISAC) recommendations in their 2009 whitepaper titled "[Biofuels: Cultivating Energy, not Invasive Species](#)". For example, EPA is requiring that renewable fuel producers demonstrate that the growth of giant reed or Napiergrass will not pose a significant likelihood of spreading beyond the planting area or that such a risk will be minimized through an EPA approved Risk Mitigation Plan (RMP). The RMP will include plans for early detection and rapid response to potential spread, best management practices as modeled by existing state and federal invasive species management programs, continuous monitoring and reporting of site conditions, a plan for site closure and post-closure monitoring, and identification of a third party auditor who will evaluate the performance of the RMP on an ongoing annual basis.

The EPA supplementary final rule from June can be found at:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-11/pdf/2013-16488.pdf>

WSSA Recognized for Pesticide Stewardship Outreach

At their annual meeting in August, the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE) passed two resolutions recognizing the work of WSSA and its members on pesticide stewardship outreach issues. The [first AAPSE resolution](#) recognized the various stewardship activities that the WSSA has undertaken over the past few years. These activities include trying to find stable federal funding for the [Pesticide Safety Education Program \(PSEP\)](#), the Public Awareness committee's 11 part [pesticide stewardship series](#), and the Herbicide Resistant Plants and Herbicide Resistance Education Committee's development of the online [Lesson Modules for Herbicide Resistant Weeds](#). A new lesson module for [turf crops](#) was just released, and there are upcoming modules being developed for aquatics and non-crop land weeds. The [second AAPSE resolution](#) recognized the work of the 41 member National Stakeholder Team for PSEP funding. The WSSA is a member of this diverse team of representatives from government, industry, and academia, plus WSSA member Carol Somody has helped lead the stakeholder team as co-chair over the past couple years.

Aquatic Plant Control Research Program Update

The Army Corp of Engineers finally received appropriations for its Aquatic Plant Control Research Program (APCRP) for FY 2013, about three quarters of the way through the fiscal year. Better late than never. We are now all painfully aware that the federal government began the 2014 fiscal year on October 1 with no Congressional approved spending. Whenever the shutdown ends, APCRP will find itself in the same situation as what has occurred over the past three years – no funding requested from the Administration or the House in FY 2014, but with funding support in the Senate to the tune of \$4 million. The National and Regional Weed Science Societies continues to educate Congress about the critical mission of APCRP and would like to see the program fully funded at its authorized amount of \$12 million.

McCarthy Finally Confirmed by Senate to Lead EPA

The Senate confirmed Gina McCarthy to lead the EPA on July 18, ending a four-month battle with Senate Republicans. McCarthy was approved 59-40, with six Republicans joining all but one Democrat, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, in supporting her. Manchin said the EPA has engaged in an "over-regulatory rampage" against the coal industry, which is a pillar of West Virginia's economy. McCarthy served as EPA's assistant administrator for air and radiation since 2009 and was nominated to take over as head of EPA for the departing Lisa Jackson. The delay wasn't so much a disapproval with McCarthy, who has a good reputation for working with both sides of the aisle, but was more of protest against the Obama administration plans for first-time limits on carbon dioxide emissions from both new and existing fossil fuel-fired power plants, as well as anticipated regulations related to ozone air quality standards, guidance related to hydraulic fracturing, and more stringent standards limiting vehicle emissions and the sulfur content of gasoline, among other rules.



*EPA Administrator
Gina McCarthy*

Harden Confirmed as USDA Deputy Secretary

Krysta L. Harden was confirmed by the Senate in July to succeed Kathleen Merrigan as the number two in charge at USDA behind Secretary Vilsack. Krysta received strong bipartisan support from the Senate Ag Committee members and was introduced and endorsed by two of her home state Congressman from Georgia- Sen. Saxby Chambliss and Rep. Sanford Bishop. Prior to her nomination as USDA Deputy Secretary, Harden was the USDA Chief of Staff and the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. She also spent 5 years as the CEO of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). Krysta got her start in Washington DC in 1981 with Rep. Charles Hatcher where she worked as Press Secretary, Legislative Director, and Chief of Staff. She also was the Staff Director for the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Peanuts and Tobacco. Krysta has an excellent understanding of agricultural issues and often mentions her parents farm in Camilla, Georgia. She is acutely aware of the herbicide resistant palmer amaranth in her home state and pledged USDA's help in addressing the problem when she spoke at a herbicide resistance stakeholder workshop

on Sept. 26 in Washington, DC that was organized by members of the National and Regional Weed Science Societies.



*USDA Deputy Secretary
Krysta Harden*

Knipling Retires from USDA-ARS

Dr. Edward B. Knipling has retired from USDA-ARS after 46 years of years of service, which included the last 9 years as the agency's Administrator. He joined ARS in 1968 as a research plant physiologist in Gainesville, Florida, followed by work in Stoneville, Mississippi, Fresno, California, and finally Beltsville, Maryland where he was appointed associate administrator 1997, and finally as administrator in July 2004. Dr. Knipling is a native of Texas, but grew up primarily in the Washington, D.C. area. His father was Edward F Knipling, who also worked for the USDA-ARS and was well known for his work developing the Sterile Insect Technique. Dr. Knipling earned a B.S. in forestry in 1961 from Virginia Tech University and received his M.A. in 1963 and Ph.D. in 1966 in plant physiology from Duke University.

Plant Science Summit Issues Decadal Vision Report

On July 25 the Plant Science Research Summit released [*Unleashing a Decade of Innovation in Plant Science: A Vision for 2015-2025*](#) (PDF), a call to action for the U.S. to address research priorities in plant science that could address major challenges including health, energy, food, and environmental sustainability. The report, supported by the American Society of Plant Biologists, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Energy, provides recommendations regarding future budgets and investments at the state and federal levels.

Congressional Invasive Species Caucus Founded

On July 10, Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) and Rep. Dan Benishek (MI-1) founded the bipartisan Congressional Invasive Species Caucus. The Caucus will serve to raise awareness about invasive species, support local communities who are bearing the brunt

of this problem, and promote efforts to prevent and control the spread of invasive species. The Caucus will provide opportunities for Members of Congress to meet with other policy makers, organizations and industry leaders that are working to prevent the spread of invasive species.

Rep. Thompson is a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He represents some of the wine country area north of San Francisco and is a small vineyard owner. He is a co-author of H.R. 1823, Protecting Lakes Against Quagga Act, that would add quagga mussels to the national invasive species list.

Dr. Benishek, a surgeon representing Michigan's Upper Peninsula in his 2nd term, serves on the House Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Veteran's Affairs Committees and is avid hunter and fisherman. He has supported several pieces of legislation that would help curtail invasive species, including the Asian Carp Prevention Act of 2012, and is a member of the Great Lakes Task Force.

Please Consider Signing Petition Opposing Vandalism of Field Trials

On August 8, vandals in the Philippines destroyed government field trials of golden rice. The global scientific community is reaching out to us to condemn these acts. For more information, please go to: <http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/global-scientific-community-condemns-the-recent-destruction-of-field-trials-of-golden-rice-in-the-philippines>

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