

WASHINGTON REPORT

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Weed Science Research Funding- House Agriculture Appropriations

The House of Representatives (House) passed their FY2007 Agriculture Appropriations Bill on May 24. The House budget for USDA has a lot of good news and a little bad news for weed science compared to the Administration's budget proposal. Given the extremely tight budgetary conditions here in DC, weed science has a lot to be thankful about. It's now up to the Senate to pass their version of the Agriculture Appropriations bill which should happen a week or two after the Memorial Day recess.

THE GOOD NEWS: In the House Agriculture Appropriations Bill, the FY2007 USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) budget for the **National Research Initiative (NRI)** competitive grants program is \$190 million, an **increase of \$8,830,000** above the amount available for FY2006. The Administration's budget proposed to move the USDA CSREES Section 406 Programs into the NRI, but the House Ag Appropriators wanted to keep the Section 406 Programs where they are. Section 406 Programs include the Regional Pest Management Centers, Crops at Risk from the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Implementation; FQPA Risk Mitigation Program for Major Food Crop Systems; and the Methyl Bromide Transition Program.

MORE GOOD NEWS:

- For payments under the **Hatch Act**, the House of Representatives provided an appropriation of \$183,275,000, an **increase of \$6,306,000** above the amount available for FY2006 and an increase of \$6,355,000 above the President's budget request. This funding level represents a 3 percent increase above the FY2006 funding level and the first time since FY1999 that funding has increased for the Hatch Act.
- For cooperative forestry research (**McIntire-Stennis**), the House provides an appropriation of \$22,668,000, an **increase of \$660,000** above the amount available for FY2006 and an increase of \$685,000 above the budget request. This funding level represents a 3 percent increase above the FY2006 funding level and is also the first increase in this program since FY1999.
- The House Appropriations Committee provided increases or level funding for 4 USDA CSREES special grant programs for agricultural research on improved pest control. Among these programs, **IR-4 increased \$108,000** over FY2006 to \$10.79 million, the **IPM program increased \$174,000** over FY2006 to \$2.57 million, and the Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP) remained level to FY2006 funding levels at \$1.42 million.
- The House also increased appropriations for the **Smith Lever Act** Sections 3(b) and 3(c) by \$7.5 million for a total budget outlay of **\$281.4 million in FY2007**. On average, Smith-Lever formula funds account for about 30% of a state's total funding for extension programs.

- Under the USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS), the House provided an increase of \$100,000 for a total of \$525,745 in FY2007 for expanded research on invasive aquatic weeds carried out at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.
- The House Appropriations Committee provided \$425,000 for the New England Center for Invasive Plants in Connecticut, Vermont, and Maine. This is a new award in FY2007. The goal is to develop a multi-state, interdisciplinary research program to address the problems caused by invasive species that are important to New England and the nation. There are five main goals: (A) development of non-invasive, sterile landscape plants; (B) assessment of the ecological impact of invasive plants and ecological evaluation of new “super-sterile” cultivars; (C) assessment of the economic impact of invasive species in New England; (D) development of alternative native crops; and (E) public education and outreach efforts to limit and control invasive species. More than 12 faculty members at the University of Connecticut, University of Vermont, and University of Maine will be involved in this project. The total estimated amount contributed by the three universities in the form of faculty salary and associated fringe benefits based on the faculty time commitment to this project is \$40,000 per year. In addition, no indirect costs will be charged to the project. The indirect cost of this project is about \$66,300. Thus, the total amount contributed to this project from non-federal sources is more than \$100,000.

THE BAD NEWS: President Bush’s budget proposed a new USDA program for invasive species that included \$9.9 million for competitive grants to private groups for eradication and control of invasive species through the use of new and innovative methodologies. Unfortunately, the House Agriculture Appropriators did not include any money in the USDA budget for this initiative nor did they include the \$15 million appropriation authorized in the 2004 Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act. The House Agriculture Appropriations bill also directs the USDA ARS to terminate the Poisonous Plant Research Laboratory in Logan, UT, for a savings of \$1,400,757. However, I’m sure Senator Bennett (R-UT), Agriculture Appropriations Chair, will have something to say about this.

Weed Science Research Funding- House Appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The House Appropriation bill for the Department of the Interior (except the Bureau of Reclamation), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and for other related agencies, including the Forest Service was passed by the House on May 18, 2006. Under the Land Resources section in the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**, the House Appropriations Committee recommends \$187 million for land resources, \$350,000 above the president’s budget request, but \$382,000 below the FY2006 enacted level. The BLM is responsible for the multiple use management, protection, and development of minerals, timber, rangeland, fish and wildlife habitat, and wilderness on about 261 million acres of the Nation’s public lands as well as management of 700 million additional acres of Federally-owned subsurface mineral rights. The BLM is the second largest supplier of public outdoor recreation in the Western United States. Changes from the President’s budget request include increases of \$500,000 in range management for invasive species work; \$400,000 in forestry as a general increase; and \$250,000 in riparian management to work on the Santa Ana River wash project, CA.

The **Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)** received \$1.3 billion in the House bill, a decrease of \$55 million from the FY2006 enacted amount and \$2 million below the president's request. The largest decreases would be in construction (zero funds would be provided, down from \$30 million last year), and state and tribal grants, which would be funded at \$50 million, down \$17.5 million from FY2006. Other FWS subtotals include \$80.5 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Act, down slightly from fiscal 2006, and \$36.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund.

As the Nation's largest water, earth, and biological science and civilian mapping agency, the **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** collects, monitors, analyzes, and provides scientific understanding about natural resource conditions, issues, and problems. The House appropriated \$986 million for the USGS, up \$16 million from FY2006.

The House appropriated **\$7.566 billion to EPA**, which is a decrease of \$58.5 million below the FY2006 level. However, in the **EPA's Office of Science and Technology**, pesticide licensing of new pesticides increases \$303,000 to \$2.7 million over FY2006 and pesticide review / re-registration increases \$340,000 to \$2.8 million. The Science and Technology account funds all EPA research carried out through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies, States, universities, and private business, as well as in-house research. The **EPA Environmental Programs and Management** account encompasses a broad range of abatement, prevention, and compliance activities. The House Appropriations committee passed a \$2.5 decrease for pesticide licensing activities in the Environmental Programs and Management section compared to FY2006 allocation, but is an increase of \$4.5 million over Administration's budget request of \$118.3 million for FY2007.

The House Appropriation's committee recommended that the EPA's Pesticide Safety Education Program should continue to be funded at \$1.2 million in FY2007 using the services of the USDA CSREES. Furthermore, the House commends the **Agriculture Container Recycling Council** for its development of a voluntary program for recycling agricultural and professional specialty pesticides containers. This program has facilitated the proper disposal of millions of plastic pesticide containers at no cost to farmers. The EPA has been developing regulations on this recycling and, to ensure the program remains a viable, free service that is available to agricultural producers, the House Appropriations Committee expects EPA to issue a final rulemaking on the recycling of high density polyethylene pesticide containers within 60 days of enactment of this Act.

The **U.S. Forest Service (USFS)** manages 192 million acres of public lands for multiple use Nationwide, including lands in 44 States and Puerto Rico, and cooperates with States, other Federal agencies, Tribes and others to sustain the Nation's forests and grasslands. The National Forest System (NFS) includes 155 National forests, 20 National grasslands, 20 National recreation areas, a National tallgrass prairie, 6 National monuments, and 6 land utilization projects. While USFS policy is authorized by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, funds are appropriated through the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

The House Appropriations Committee recommends **\$280 million for forest and rangeland research**, an increase of \$12.5 million above the President's budget request and \$2.6 million

above the FY2006 enacted level. Within the National Forest System (NFS) account, the House recommends \$180 million for vegetation and watershed management, an increase of \$148,000 above the FY2006 funding level.

Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act

On May 2, 2006, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2720, the Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act. The Senate version of this bill, S. 177 now waits approval in that chamber. H.R. 2720 would authorize the appropriation of \$20 million in FY2006 and \$15 million for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2010. Of this, not more than 15 percent shall be used to pay for administrative costs to carrying out the program. H.R. 2720 directs the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation and the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, to carry out a salt cedar (*Tamarix spp*) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) assessment and demonstration program to: (1) assess the extent of the infestation by salt cedar and Russian olive trees in the western United States; (2) demonstrate strategic solutions for the long-term management of such trees and the reestablishment of native vegetation; and (3) assess economic means to dispose of biomass created as a result of removal of those trees. H.R. 2720 also directs the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into a memorandum of understanding for the administration of such program.

H.R. 2720 would limit the costs of the assessment phase to \$4 million, would limit the identification and documentation of strategies for long-term management at \$2 million, would limit demonstration projects to \$7 million, and would limit the analysis of the biomass disposition phase to \$3 million. Work done on federal land would receive 100 percent funding while work done on private land would require a minimum of 25 percent cost share of the federal grant dollars.

Sen. Talent Introduces Legislation to Boost Agriculture Research

Sen. Jim Talent (R-MO) introduced the National Food and Agriculture Act (NIFA) of 2006 which would keep America's farmers the most productive in the world by boosting investment in food and agriculture research. Sen. Talent's legislation, cosponsored by Sen. Bond (R-Mo.), would implement recommendations from the USDA Research, Education and Economics task force established in the 2002 farm bill.

"America has the safest, most abundant and least expensive food supply in the world," said Sen. Talent, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Marketing, Inspection and Product Promotion. "The heart of food production in the United States and the world is the American family farmer and rancher. Our plan will expand the development of research programs to improve human health, increase agricultural production and provide our producers with a competitive edge in the global marketplace."

"The leading competitiveness of our U.S. producers is only as solid as our willingness to invest in forward-looking investments and build upon our historic successes. This legislation seeks to lay the foundation for tremendous advances in the future," said Senator Bond. "This is a tremendous opportunity to improve agriculture and its benefits to all our populations."

"Knowledge is power," said Dr. William H. Danforth, Chancellor Emeritus of Washington University and Chairman of the Research, Education and Economics Task Force, USDA. "This legislation recognizes a knowledge gap in agriculture and seeks to close that gap so that the American farmer remains productive and competitive in the global marketplace. We do not yet fully know how to grow highly productive plants that require less water or less fertilizer, how to make plants maximally efficient in producing ethanol and bio-diesel fuels or how to immunize farm animals against dangerous diseases. With a national institute for agriculture, we will achieve that base of knowledge."

The USDA Research, Education and Economics task force found that America's inadequate funding of agriculture research puts the nation's farmers at a disadvantage from foreign competitors. One key recommendation from the task force suggested establishing a National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at the USDA which would supplement ongoing research conducted at the Department. The legislation implements this recommendation by directing USDA to create a NIFA that provides agriculture researchers additional funds through a competitively awarded grant program.

The amount of funding going into researching to improve profitability on farms, economic growth and jobs in rural America, consumer well-being, and conservation of natural resources has remained flat for roughly two decades. USDA's task force noted that the amount of funding designated for competitively awarded, peer-reviewed agriculture grants is outpaced 100 to 1 by the National Institutes of Health. NIFA would increase funds available for food and agriculture research in addition to the current available resources at USDA-ARS and CSREES.

Maxwell and Gopinath Speak on Capitol Hill and at USDA about Economic Impact of Invasive Weeds

On May 5, the WSSA along with the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) co-hosted 2 one hour briefings on Capitol Hill and USDA to highlight federally funded research for invasive weeds. The title of the seminar was "Researching Invasive Weeds: Tools for Policy Makers". Dr. Bruce Maxwell (WSSA) and Dr. Munisamy Gopinath (C-FARE) presented preliminary work from research funded by the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) Program of Research on the Economics of Invasive Species Management (PREISM) program, and other federally funded competitive grants.

Dr. Maxwell, Montana State University, discussed his work on developing and integrating tools for assessing the impacts of invasive plants for prioritization on federal lands. Dr. Maxwell's project developed a GIS-based decision support system for management planners based on economic tradeoff analysis.

Dr. Munisamy Gopinath, Oregon State University, analyzed the role of stakeholders' interest and input in explaining cross-state differences in noxious weed regulations. In particular, his work identified the trade-offs which consumers, environmentalists, and seed and commodity producers face in their decision to support or oppose noxious weed regulations.

Derr Visits DC for CoFARM/BESC Congressional Visits Day

On March 14 and 15, 2006, WSSA Vice President Jeff Derr represented the WSSA at the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM) - Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) program in Washington D.C organized to generate congressional support for the agricultural and biological sciences. Over 50 scientists from other scientific societies including the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), the Tri-Societies (ASA-CSSA-SSSA), and the Ecological Society of America (ESA) participated in this two day event.

Unfortunately, I could not join Dr. Derr for this event as it conflicted with the WSWS meeting in Reno, NV. However, Jeff was generous enough to write the following report of his activities on March 14 and 15:

On the first day, we were briefed on the 2007 federal budget for agricultural and biological research funding. Several prominent people provided their perspectives on the science budget which included: Kei Koizumi, Budget Analyst, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Jim Collins, Assistant Director for Biology, National Science Foundation (NSF) Biology Directorate; Anna Palmisano, Deputy Administrator, Competitive Programs, USDA CSREES; Dan Byers, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP); and David Goldston, Chief of Staff, House Science Committee. There also was a congressional visits training workshop conducted by Adrienne Sponberg. In the evening, a reception was held to honor the contributions for Reps. Vern Ehlers (R-MI) and Rush Holt (D-NJ), two congressmen who have supported science research funding.

The next day, we attended a CoFARM-sponsored breakfast with Dr. Pearson, former USDA Deputy Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics, Dr. Ed Knipping, USDA-ARS Administrator, Colien Hefferan, USDA-CSREES Administrator, Rob Hedberg, former WSSA DSP now with USDA CSREES, and other USDA officials. They spoke on the National Research Initiative (NRI), Hatch Act funding, and funding for ARS and ERS, among other issues. I then went on three congressional visits with Paul Bradley, a student representing the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), and Mike Neff, representing the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS). We were grouped by state, our group focusing on Virginia, for our Capitol Hill visits. Surprisingly, we were able to meet with Rep. Jo Anne Davis (R-VA), who represents the Williamsburg area of Virginia. When we make these congressional visits, we need to highlight issues that are of interest to that individual representative. For Rep. Davis, who has cancer, funding for organic production and health benefits of fruits and vegetables were of interest to her. We also met with Brent Robinson, her legislative assistant. We then met with Carrie Breig, legislative assistant for Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA), who represents the Fairfax area in northern Virginia. Finally, we met with Tack Richardson, legislative assistant for Senator John Warner (R-VA). Tack was interested in the impact of invasive weeds on military installations because Sen. Warner chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee. Tack asked me for figures on the economic impact of weeds on military bases. What surprised me, though, about our discussions with Tack was his mention of National Invasive Weed Awareness Week (NIWAW) and that he had met some NIWAW 7 participants. It appears that making these Hill visits does have an impact.

I feel it was good to be there representing WSSA, since there were representatives from the entomology, plant pathology, crop/soil science, and horticulture societies, among others. Although I enjoyed meeting with representatives from organizations comprising BESC, it did make it more difficult getting across points with congressional staffers. While Mike Neff (ASHS) and I were talking about crop production and invasive plants issues that would be funded by USDA, Paul Bradley spoke about things like funding for NOAA, oyster research, and other issues, and mentioned that VIMS receives their funding primarily from NSF. In my mind, it would be preferable if agricultural representatives had separate visits from the BESC representatives, since it would allow for a more focused visit. This is important since we only had about 15 minutes to spend with the staffers and it is hard to talk about potential funding for weeds, crops, fish, oysters, weather, etc... in that time frame. I feel WSSA should continue sending representatives to CoFARM sponsored events.

EPA to Provide Financial Support for Conferences, Workshops and/or Meetings

I listed this news article in the last WSSA News and I am going to list it again. The EPA announced that it will provide financial support for Conferences, Workshops and/or Meetings on EPA mission related issues which include: 1) protecting human health and safeguarding the natural environment; 2) advancing the scientific and technical research that promotes environmental protection; 3) exploring current and emerging issues of importance to environmental protection; and/or 4) encouraging collaboration among the nation's best scientists and engineers in academia, business and nonprofit research institutes.

The EPA expects \$750,000 will be available in grant funds through 25 awards. Applications for grant funding will be due and approved on a quarterly basis through January 18, 2007. Eligible Applicants include city, county and state governments, public and private institutions of higher education and certain nonprofit organizations. Details are posted at http://www.epa.gov/ord/grants_funding/pdfs/BAA_conferences_011806.pdf - EPA Contact: Michael Bender at 202 564 6829; e-mail: Bender.Michael@EPA.gov

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