

**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION**  
**May 28 - June 1, 2007**

**ACTION NEEDED**

**NEW – Value-Added and Rural Entrepreneurs & Microenterprise Programs:** The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Specialty Crops, Rural Development, and Foreign Assistance will markup its Farm Bill provisions next Wednesday June 6th. Subcommittee members need to hear from us about the importance of supporting and strengthening the existing Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) and also including the new Rural Entrepreneurs & Microenterprise Program (introduced in the Senate as S. 566) in the House version of the Farm Bill. **The key states are: AL, CO, GA, NE, NC, ND, and TX.** For the full action alert, with a list of Rural Development Subcommittee members who should be contacted by phone or e-mail, please go to the Farm Bill Action Center on our webpage at [www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org](http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org). **Calls Needed until Wednesday Morning, June 6.**

**NEW – Farmers Market Promotion Program and Organic Certification Cost Share Program:** Next Thursday, June 7, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture takes up Farm Bill proposals under its jurisdiction, including the Farmers Market Promotion Program and the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program. Both of these programs need modest language changes and mandatory funding in the next Farm Bill, the latter being the harder issue. **The key states are: CA, FL, GA, NC, NY, TN, and TX.** For a full action alert on these programs and the list of HOA Subcommittee Members to be contacted, please go to the Farm Bill Action Center on our webpage at [www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org](http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org). **Calls Needed Until Thursday Morning, June 7.**

**ONGOING - Save and Strengthen CSP:** With the fate of the Conservation Security Program in the House version of the farm bill hanging in the balance, we encourage everyone to contact any of your Representatives on the Committee about the importance of the CSP in your state. Please go to the SAC Farm Bill Action Center an action alert about the state of play concerning CSP and the full list of House Agriculture Committee members. Between now and when the full House Agriculture Committee meets for markup in late June, we must urge those Members to support full funding for CSP and oppose the substantive weakening of the program contained in Chairman Peterson's proposal that has now been reported out of the conservation subcommittee. A great deal of work has been done to prepare a full committee amendment, but we are not yet at the stage of referring to a specific amendment, so until we get to that stage, please continue using the more general alert. **Calls and letters needed now and throughout June.**

**ONGOING – Beginning Farmer Bill:** Even as markup is underway in the House Ag Committee, we continue to push for more co-sponsors for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act. We expect Senators Klobuchar and Boxer to sign on early next week. Other current Senate sponsors, in addition to Chairman Harkin, are Sens. Baucus, Brown, and Grassley. We need to keep adding both House and Senate co-sponsors. The full action alert is at the Farm Bill Action Center.

**ONGOING - Competition Title Action:** We continue to push for co-sponsors for Senate bill S 622 and House bill HR 2135, the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act. We want the bill to pass later this summer when it is considered in the Senate Agriculture Committee and we want at least major pieces of the bill to be offered and passed as an amendment to the House farm bill during full Committee markup in a few weeks.

The House bill was introduced by Rep. Leonard Boswell (D-IA) and co-sponsors include House Agriculture Committee members Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Steve Kagen (D-WI), and Earl Pomeroy (D-ND). Other members co-sponsoring the bill include Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA), Barbara Cubin (R-WY), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), and David Loebsack (D-IA).

Key targets for action are members of the House Agriculture Committee who are not yet sponsors of H.R. 2135, particularly those who voted in a Subcommittee markup for one of its provisions -- prohibitions on mandatory arbitration clauses in production contracts. **Those key targets are Rep. Gillibrand (NY), Holden (PA), Baca (CA), Donnelly (IN), Costa (CA), and Mahoney (FL).** See the alert at the SAC Farm Bill Action Center for more information.

The Senate bill was introduced by Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) and is co-sponsored by Baucus (D-MT), Enzi (R-WY), Thomas (R-WY), Dorgan (D-ND), McCaskill (D-MO), Brown (D-OH), and Feingold (D-WI). **Key targets for action are the following Senate Ag Committee members: Salazar (D-CO), Thune (R-SD), Stabenow (D-MI), Coleman (R-MN), Klobuchar (D-MN), and Casey (D-PA).**

## **THIS WEEK**

**Congressional Memorial Day Recess:** The House and Senate were adjourned for the week and many members of Congress returned to their states and districts. We hope some of you had the opportunity to meet with them or to attend town hall meetings and such to urge their support for SAC priorities as the 2007 Farm Bill works its way through Congress.

## **NEXT WEEK**

**House Farm Bill Markups Continue in Subcommittees:** The House Agriculture Committee resumes work on the Farm Bill next week with mark-up of Chairman Collin Peterson's proposal for the *Subcommittee on Specialty Crops, Rural Development, and Foreign Assistance* scheduled for Wednesday, June 6. Both the Value-Added Producer Grant Program and the Rural Entrepreneurship and Microenterprise Program, key components of SAC's Farm Bill agenda, are expected to be considered at the mark-up. We expect both programs to be in the Peterson proposal, but getting them funded will be the big test. Also expected to be in the mark will be a new and improved authorization for the ATTRA program, an authorization being sponsored by Representative John Barrow (D-GA). We will of course report in full next week.

The following day, Thursday, June 7, the *House Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture* will markup its Farm Bill proposals including two additional SAC priorities, organic agriculture provisions and reauthorization of the Farmers Market Promotion Program. Please see the Action Alerts posted at the top of this edition of the Weekly for more information about how you can support these important SAC Farm Bill priorities during next week's Farm Bill mark-ups.

The following week, the Nutrition subcommittee and the Commodities subcommittee will be marking up their sections of the farm bill, otherwise known as the big Kahunas. Full committee markup could conceivably be the week of June 18 or 25.

The Chairman's proposals for the mark-ups will likely be posted on the House Farm Bill Home Page at <http://agriculture.house.gov/inside/2007FarmBill.html> the afternoon before the markup. A weblink for live audio of the mark-up is posted on the House Agriculture Committee website at <http://agriculture.house.gov/index.shtml>.

**House Agricultural Appropriations:** We are still awaiting final confirmation that the annual agricultural spending bill will be marked up in subcommittee next week. Four appropriations bills were dealt with the week before the Memorial Day recess, and agriculture is scheduled to be among the next bunch out of the shoot. A special action alert was sent by the National Campaign this week to people in Connecticut asking them to be in touch with Subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) to support sustainable agriculture funding.

## LAST WEEK

**Limits on Arbitration:** We failed to note last week that in addition to the 8-6 vote in favor of prohibiting mandatory arbitration for livestock and poultry contracts in the House Ag Livestock Subcommittee, the Senate Judiciary Committee also passed S. 221, which also prohibits mandatory arbitration for livestock and poultry contracts. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) is the legislation's main sponsor.

## DULY NOTED

**Annual Family Farm Report:** USDA's Economic Research Service today released the annual status of the family farm report required by the 1977 and 1981 farm bills. The full report is entitled "Structure and Finances of U.S. Farms: Family Farm Report, 2007 Edition and is available at [www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB24/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB24/). A 12-page summary version entitled "America's Diverse Family Farms" is at [www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB26/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB26/). Also in the new edition of the ERS monthly magazine released today, an article is included on "The Importance of Farm Program Payments to Farm Households" – see [www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/June07/Features/FarmProgram.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/June07/Features/FarmProgram.htm).

**AAI Livestock Issue Briefs:** Elanor Starmer has written two new issue briefs for the Agribusiness Accountability Initiative. The first is entitled "Corporate Power in Livestock Production: How it's Hurting Farmers, Consumers, and Communities – And What We Can Do About It." The second brief is entitled "Environmental and Health Problems in Livestock Production: Pollution in the Food System." Both will be available soon on the National Catholic Rural Life Conference website.