

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**April 10, 2000**

NRCS, Office of Legislative Affairs
Room 5121 South Agriculture Bldg.
(202) 720-2771

For additional information contact:

Tia G. Young
Douglas J. McKalip
Anita Holland-Spears

LAST WEEK:

SENATE SUPPLEMENTAL ON HOLD – Last week, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, (R-MS) blocked attempts to bring the House-passed Emergency Supplemental bill to the floor, in favor of considering FY' 2001 Appropriations bills. In discussions with the President, Lott said that any fiscal 2001 spending bill used as a vehicle for additional spending needed in the current year will include a provision to release the money as soon as the bill was signed into law. Mr. Lott reported that Mr. Clinton expressed concern about how soon the supplemental funding could be cleared by Congress and whether the legislation's chances of enactment had been jeopardized by the large amount of additional spending lawmakers are attempting to add to the administration's \$5.2 billion in requests. The White House has warned that failure to clear the supplemental spending bill soon would force the Pentagon to curtail training and maintenance, require victims of Hurricane Floyd to remain in temporary housing through next winter and even lead to an escalation of ethnic violence in Kosovo. The other option the Majority Leader mentioned was distributing the additional fiscal 2000 funding among several of the fiscal 2001 bills. He said he would prefer that approach, but acknowledged it would be slower.

FARM POLICY FIELD HEARINGS – The House Committee on Agriculture held farm policy hearing on Saturday, April 1, in West Chester, Ohio, and Monday, April 3, in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. The farm policy field hearing series have allowed Members of the Committee to hear from producers of virtually every crop and livestock variety. While these witnesses have consistently cited regulatory burdens, unfair foreign trade practices, and low prices as obstacles to their prosperity, they have often disagreed on what actions the federal government should take to combat these problems. Chairman Combest, R-TX, said that it would be difficult to reach a consensus solution that every region and every producer likes but indicated once the hearings were complete the Committee would have a much better understanding of how federal policies affect and are perceived by American producers.

LEGISLATION OF NOTE

The following Bills of significance to NRCS and conservation have been introduced.

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
H.R. 4064	Moran, (R-KS)	To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from net earnings from self-employment certain payments under the Conservation Reserve Program.
H.R. 4101	Pitts, (R-PA)	To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from estate axes the value of certain farmland the use of which is restricted in perpetuity to use as farmland.
S. 2282	Campbell, (R-CO)	To encourage the efficient use of existing resources and assets related to Indian agricultural research, development and exports within the United States Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.
S. 2291	Daschle, (D-SD)	To provide assistance for efforts to improve conservation of, recreation in, erosion control of, and maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat of the Missouri River in the State of South Dakota, and for other purposes.
S. 2344	Brownback, (R-KS)	To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat payments under the Conservation Reserve Program as rentals from real estate.

THIS WEEK:

CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION AREA – National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee (Chairman Hansen, R-UT) of the House Resources Committee will hold a hearing on H.R. 1751, a bill to establish the Carrizo Plain National Conservation Area in the state of California, and for other purposes.

April 11

10:00 a.m.

1324 Longworth Bldg.

FARM POLICY REVIEW - The House Agriculture Committee (Chairman Combest, R-TX) will hold a hearing on federal farm policy.

April 12 10:00a.m. 1300 Longworth Bldg.

COLORADO CONSERVATION AREA – The Forests and Public Land Management Subcommittee (Chairman Craig, R-ID) of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on legislation that would establish the Canyons of the Ancients National Conservation Area in Colorado.

April 13 2:30 p.m. 366 Dirksen

LOOKING AHEAD:

FARM POLICY FIELD HEARINGS – House Agriculture Committee Chairman, Larry Combest (R-TX) and Ranking Member Charlie Stenholm (D-TX) have announced the schedule of farm policy hearings in 10 cities in regions from March through May, encouraging producers to submit detailed proposals for agriculture policy. Although each hearing may last for up to four hours, full discussion of producers' plans and Committee Members' questions will limit the number of witnesses who can testify at the hearings. Producers may be invited to offer testimony as a witness, or if not selected, producers may either submit specific views for the record, or e-mail informal comments to the Committee. To be considered as a potential witness at the hearing, producers should include information about their agricultural experience and their farming operations. The Committee will select witnesses who are qualified to provide specific testimony about federal farm policy, and answer questions posed by Agriculture Committee Members about policy alternatives.

The schedule for the Farm Policy Field Hearings are as follows:

Monday, May 1 Sacramento, California Heidrick Ag History Center (Woodland, California) 8:30 a.m. Pacific Time	Tuesday, May 2 Sioux Falls, South Dakota Augustana College 8:30 a.m. Central Time	Friday, May 12 Boise, Idaho City Council Building 10:00 a.m. Mountain Time
	Saturday, May 13 Peoria, Illinois Peoria Civic Center 8:30 a.m. Central Time	

AGENCY PERFORMANCE AUDITS – The Government Management, Information and Technology Subcommittee (Chairman Horn, R-CA) of the House Government Reform Committee will hold a hearing on the Financial Management Act of 1996, which establishes requirements for auditors to report on agency compliance and for agency heads and agency management to correct agency deficiencies within a certain time period.

May 3

10:00 a.m.

2154 Rayburn Bldg.

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