

**WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**

**August 6, 2001**

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**LAST WEEK:**

**AGRICULTURE ASSISTANCE** - On August 3, the Senate passed the House version of the Agriculture Assistance bill (H.R. 2213) by voice vote. The House version provides payment to producers, but does not contain funding for conservation programs.

**SENATE CONSERVATION HEARING** – The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held a hearing on conservation issues, with an emphasis on working agricultural lands. Witnesses included representatives from conservation and environmental organizations such as the National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association, USA Rice Federation, National Association of Conservation Districts, Land Stewardship Project, Soil and Water Conservation Society and Defenders of Wildlife. Gary Mast of the National Association of Conservation Districts presented the Committee with NACD's recommendations for the next farm. George Dunklin, Jr. a rice farmer from Arkansas and representing the U.S. Rice Producers Groups remarked that conservation programs can provide for important societal benefits in the form of clean water, air, forest conservation, improved wildlife habitat and species preservation. Dave Serfling of Land Stewardship Project asked the committee to consider stewardship incentives that promote conservation on working lands. He also urged the committee to extend conservation compliance into the new farm bill and apply it to all federal subsidy programs.

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

<b>BILL</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
H.R. 2646	Combest, TX	Amendments to the Food Security Act of 1985
H. R. 2653	Clayton, NC	Amends the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act
S. 1246	Harkin, IA	Emergency Agriculture Assistance Act of 2001
S. 1267	Crapo, ID	Amends the Food Security Act of 1985
S. 1326	Lugar, IN	Amends the Food Security Act of 1985

**HUTCHINSON JOINS THE ADMINISTRATION** - On August 1, the Senate confirmed Rep. Asa Hutchinson, AK, to be the head of the Drug Enforcement Agency. He resigned his congressional seat effective August 6, 2001.

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**THIS WEEK:**

**2002 FARM BILL FIELD HEARINGS** - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Harkin, IA) will hold field hearing on the 2002 farm bill. The agenda for the August 13 and 17 meetings: Specialty Crops. The schedules is as follows:

August 13	9:30 a.m.	Barvarian Inn Lodge One Covered Bridge Lane Frankenmuth, MI
August 13	2:00 p.m.	Hilton-Grand Rapids Airport 4747 28 <sup>th</sup> Street SE Grand Rapids, MI
August 17	TBA	University of Georgia Athens, GA
August 18	Time TBA	Moose Lodge 1325 N. Cedar Street Tipton, IA
August 20	9:30 a.m.	American Legion Hall 1100 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave., NW Stewartville, MN

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**LOOKING FORWARD:**

**AUGUST RECESS** - The House and Senate have adjourned for the August Recess. Both chambers are scheduled to reconvene after Labor Day.

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