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**LAST WEEK:**

**HOUSE PASSES FARM BILL-** On October 5, 2001, the House passed H.R. 2646, as amended, the Farm Security Act of 2001 by a vote of 291 - 120. The legislation provides authorization for many agricultural and conservation programs until 2011. A brief summary of the USDA Conservation programs changes:

**Farm Security Act of 2001 H.R. 2646 - Conservation Provisions Summary**

**ECARP**

- Eliminates priority areas

**Conservation Reserve Program**

- Reauthorize until 2011
- Adds improving wildlife as goal
- Eliminates the 10% marginal pasture to trees replacing with converted to wetlands and wildlife
- Changes the water quality goal for croplands to include soil, water and air
- Can include surface and groundwater conservation as a Secretary's discretionary goal
- Increases cap to 39.2 million acres
- Adds haying, grazing, wind turbines, biomass production as eligible uses

**Wetlands Reserve Program**

- Funding is 150,000 acres annually until 2011 from CCC
- Eliminates the allocation among easements and restoration

**Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program**

- Funding is ramped up to \$50 million annually from CCC

**Farmland Protection Program**

- Adds historic and archeological value for eligibility
- Funding is \$50 million annually from CCC
- Expands eligible organizations to non-profits and tribes

**Small Watersheds**

- Funding is authorized for \$15 million annually for rehabilitation

### **Environmental Quality Incentive Program**

- Reauthorize through 2011 with no change in administration
- 1 to 10/year contracts and adds incentive payments
- Encourages compliance with laws, sustainable grazing, and beneficial use of animal manure
- Payment limits increased to \$50,000/yr and \$200,000 per contract
- Funding is ramped up to \$60 million for groundwater conservation and irrigation efficiency
- Funding is ramped up to \$1.5 billion annually from CCC
- Technical assistance to be reevaluated by Secretary
- Third party can provide technical assistance once certified under new regulations
- Adds a new purpose for renewable energy

### **Resource Conservation and Development Program**

- Permanent authorization; adds tribes to eligibility

### **Grassland Reserve Program**

- New Program to be administered by FSA
- 2 million acres cap for 10 – 30 year and permanent easements
- Funding is capped at \$254 million from CCC

### **Farmland Stewardship**

- New program that uses WRP, FLEP, WHIP, FPP, through contracts to groups that petition the Secretary

### **Forestry Incentive Program**

- Repealed, and replaced with a new program, Forestry Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) to administered by NRCS at \$20 million annually from CCC

### **Conservation Farm Option**

- Repealed

### **Environmental Easement**

- Repealed

### **National Natural Resources Foundation**

- Repealed

The floor action included over three hours of debate over an amendment proposed by Rep. Boehlert (NY), Rep. Kind (WI), Rep. Gilcrest (MD), and Rep. Dingell (MI) that would have shifted \$1.9 billion from the commodity title to the conservation title. The amendment failed by a 200-226 vote.

**FORESTRY BRIEFING-** On October 2, 2001, NRCS' Forest Incentives Program Manager, Robert Molleur, briefed Senate Agriculture committee staff regarding NRCS

