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LAST WEEK:

AGRICULTURAL POLICY- On September 19, 2001, Secretary Ann M. Veneman released the Administration's review of the food and agriculture system by identifying critical needs for the new century. The report, "***Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for the New Century,***" details the changes that have taken place in agriculture.

An entire chapter is devoted to conservation. The report states seven principles for conservation;

- Sustain past environmental gains
- Accommodate new and emerging environmental concerns
- Design and adopt a portfolio approach to conservation policies
- Reaffirm market-oriented policies
- Coordinate conservation and farm policies
- Recognize the importance of collaboration

The entire report is available on the Department's website: www.usda.gov.

WETLANDS RESTORATION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING - The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee (Chairman Duncan, TN) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing on pending legislation that would establish a federal charter for wetland mitigation banks. The legislation is based on the 1995 Federal Guidance for the Establishment, Use and Operation of Mitigation Banks of which NRCS is a signatory. Witnesses included G. Tracy Mehan, III, Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Dominic Izzo, Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Army Corps of Engineers in addition to several environmental groups and operators of private mitigation banks. Committee Members were very supportive of the concept behind the legislation, but had many questions regarding the enforcement aspects and scientific basis to be used to establish and operate a wetland bank.

THIS WEEK:

FARM BILL ISSUES- FULL COMMITTEE HEARING - The Secretary of Agriculture, Ann M. Veneman, is scheduled to testify before the Senate Agriculture Committee on Wednesday, September 26, 2001 at 9:00 a.m., in 106 Dirksen, regarding farm policy. Following her testimony, the Committee will have a confirmation hearing for Elsa Murano for Under Secretary for Food Safety and Ted McPherson for Chief Financial Officer. The confirmation hearing for Tom Dorr for Under Secretary for Rural Development has been postponed from the scheduled date of September 25, 2001.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT NOMINATIONS CONFIRMATION HEARING

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Harkin, IA) will hold a confirmation hearing on pending nominations.

September 26 Time TBA 106 Russell Bldg.

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LOOKING AHEAD:

WETLANDS RESTORATION SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING - The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee (Chairman Duncan, TN) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing on wetlands issues. Agenda: The Wetlands Permitting Process: Is It Working Fairly?" NOTE: This hearing was originally scheduled for September 12.

October 3 10:00 am 2167 Rayburn Bldg.

CALFED REAUTHORIZATION FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP - The House Resources Committee (Chairman Hansen, UT) will mark up pending legislation, H.R. 1985. NOTE: This hearing was originally scheduled for September 19.

Date TBA Date TBA 1324 Longworth Bldg.