

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:

January 29, 2001

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

For additional information contact:

Douglas J. McKalip
Eric W. Carlson
Sharyn C. Alvarez

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LAST WEEK

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE BRIEFING – On Friday, January 26, Dr. Joel Brown conducted briefings for both the House and Senate staff regarding Global Climate Change research issues and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The briefings were conducted for Agriculture Committee staff as well as agriculture legislative aides. Dr. Brown discussed many aspects of soil carbon and the benefits that can be gained from management practices, including conservation tillage. He highlighted advances that have been made in developing technical tools that can monitor soil carbon and other organic material. He stated that NRCS is focused on providing technical assistance and education to farmers. Questions reflected an interest in whether incentives for farmers should be based upon the successful completion of management practices, or upon a quantifiable change in soil carbon levels. Dr. Brown was also asked about the cost and availability of new technology, as well as the role of NRCS in carbon trading activities. Dr. Brown indicated that agency activities are focused upon technical resources and modeling rather than direct involvement in carbon trading. He also stressed the need for long term management, in order to gain carbon sequestration benefits.

SENATE AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE-
Selections have been made and the new members of the Committee are as follows:

Republicans

Democrats

Richard G. Lugar, IN, Chairman
Jesse Helms, NC
Thad Cochran, MS
Mitch McConnell, KY
Pat Roberts, KS
Peter Fitzgerald, IL
Craig Thomas, WY
Wayne Allard, CO
Tim Hutchinson, AR
Micheal Crapo, ID

Tom Harkin, IA, Ranking Minority
Patrick Leahy, VT
Kent Conrad, ND
Tom Daschle, SD
Max Baucus, MT
Blanche Lincoln, AR
Zell Miller, GA
Debbie Stabenow, MI
Ben Nelson, NE
Mark Dayton, MN

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LEGISLATION OF NOTE

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

BILL	MEMBER	PURPOSE
S. 116	Feingold, (D-WI)	Would alter current irrigation subsidies, to incorporate means testing and acreage limitations

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THIS WEEK

SENATE OVERSIGHT HEARING – The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee (Chairman Lugar, R-In.) will hold an oversight hearing on the report of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture. The Commission was established by the 1996 Farm Bill to review farm programs and make recommendations for revisions. Keith Collins, Chief Economist - USDA, will testify on behalf of the Department.

January 30 9:00am 332 Russell Bldg.

HOUSE OVERSIGHT HEARING – House Agriculture Committee (Chairman Combest, R- TX) will hold an oversight hearing on the report of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture.

January 31 10:00am 1300 Longworth Bldg.

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