

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY FOR:**July 1, 2002**

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LAST WEEK

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP, FISCAL 2003 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS – The Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies Subcommittee (Chairman Bonilla, TX) of the House Appropriations Committee marked up draft legislation that would make fiscal 2003 appropriations for programs under its jurisdiction. The legislation will be publicly available after the full committee markup scheduled for July 9, 2002.

HOUSE-SENATE FARM BILL BRIEFING- On June 24, 2002, a briefing was held for the staff of both House and Senate Agriculture Committees regarding conservation provisions in the Farm Bill. Deputy Undersecretary Mack Gray, Acting Associate Chief Tom Weber, and Associate Deputy Chief for Programs Carole Jett, discussed the progress to date and responded to questions from the staff. They discussed the priority at present is to implement the programs, EQIP, FPP, WHIP, and WRP, that were provided funding for FY 2002.

Questions from staff included changes in EQIP, including the special provisions for the Klamath Basin and Ground and Surface Water, Conservation Security Program, Conservation Reserve Program changes, and Conservation Compliance for the new Dairy Program, and the status of funding. Responses included discussing the apportionment process through OMB and the importance of following the public comment process for programs requiring new rules.

CONFIRMATION HEARING - The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee (Chairman Harkin, IA) held a confirmation hearing on June 25, 2002, on pending nominations. Nominations are Phillis K. Fong for USDA Inspector General, Walter Lukken, for Commissioner, Commodity Futures Training Commission, Sharyn Brown-Hruska, Commissioner, Commodity Futures Trading Commission and Douglas L. Flory, Member, Farm Credit Administration Board.

PROTECTING CORAL REEFS OVERSIGHT HEARING – The Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee (Chairman Gilchrest, MD) of the House Resources Committee held an oversight hearing on June 27, 2002, on various measures being taken to protect coral reefs. Witness from NOAA and USFWS testified regarding actions taken by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which includes USDA, established in 1998 by Executive Order 13089. The Task Force is developing and implementing a comprehensive program of research and mapping to inventory, monitor, and "identify the major causes and consequences of degradation of coral reef ecosystems." Federal agencies must use their authorities to protect coral reef ecosystems and, to the extent permitted by law, prohibits them from authorizing funding or carrying out any actions that will degrade these ecosystems. Testimony was provided that indicated a growing recognition that non-point pollution from coastal watersheds impacts coral reefs.

THIS WEEK

INDEPENDENCE DAY RECESS - The House and Senate will be in recess until July 8.

DROUGHT AND NEW MEXICO RECLAMATION PROJECTS- Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Bingaman, NM) will hold a field hearing on the impact of the drought in the West on reclamation projects in New Mexico, focusing on the Rio Grande and Pecos River basins.

July 2 2:00 p.m. U.S. Army Corps District Office, Albuquerque, NM

LOOKING AHEAD

FISCAL 2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS – The House and Senate conferees will meet to consider legislation that would make supplemental appropriations for fiscal 2002. The date and time has not been determined.

MISSOURI RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES – Water and Power Subcommittee (Chairman Dorgan, ND) of Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on Missouri River water management issues.

July 10 9:30 a.m. 366 Dirksen Bldg.

FISCAL 2003 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS – The House Appropriations Committee (Chairman Young, FL) will mark up legislation that would make fiscal 2003 appropriations for agricultural programs. The legislation was approved by the Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies Subcommittee on June 26, 2002.

July 9

TBA

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FISCAL 2003 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS – The Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies (Chairman Kohl, WI) of the Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up legislation that would make fiscal 2003 appropriations for agriculture programs under their jurisdiction the third week of July.
