

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:**

**FARM BILL ISSUES - FULL COMMITTEE HEARING** - On September 26, 2001, Secretary Ann M. Veneman testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee on Wednesday regarding farm policy.

The Secretary provided the Committee an overview of the *Food and Agricultural Policy* report released recently. She emphasizes conservation in her opening remarks.

Chairman Tom Harkin (IA) and Sen. Richard Lugar (IN) both emphasized the importance of conservation in the Farm Bill, in addition to the importance of keeping the nation's food supply safe in light of the tragic events of September 11. Members asked several questions regarding conservation issues and some specific questions about programs such as EQIP and CRP. Chairman Harkin asked about the potential for stewardship incentives payments similar to those mentioned in the Administration's report being World Trade Organization (WTO) compliant as a "green box" payment and thus not distorting prices. The Secretary agreed that such payments would probably be viewed as "green box", but more specific information is needed for a precise determination. She emphasized how the *Food and Agricultural Policy* report is being used as a strategic analysis for the Administration as policy is developed for specific legislation.

Other topics of discussion were high fuel prices, subsidies by foreign governments of their farmers, providing leverage to agriculture trade negotiations, trade barriers, support for programs such as W.I.C. and the economy of rural communities.

**SENATE CONFIRMS USDA NOMINEES** - On September 26, 2001 the Senate confirmed Mark Edward Rey to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment and to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Commodity Credit Corporation; Elsa A. Murano, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food Safety; Hilda Gay Legg, to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service; and Edward R. McPherson to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Agriculture.

**CONTINUING RESOLUTION** - On Thursday, September 27, 2001, the White House received H. J. Res. 65 the continuing resolution for fiscal year 2002 which extends appropriations through October 16. The legislation will likely be signed during the weekend.

**FARM BILL RULE**- The House Rules Committee (Chairman David Drier, CA) will meet on Tuesday, October 2, to grant a rule on H.R. 2646, the Farm Security Act of 2001. The rule would govern the debate and amendment process to be adhered to when the bill is brought to the House floor.

**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.

**LEGISLATION OF NOTE**

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

<b>BILL</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
S. 1466	Crapo, ID	To amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to provide grants for special environmental assistance for the regulation of small communities.

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**LOOKING AHEAD :**

**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.

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