

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2002

The Honorable Larry Combest
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Stenholm
Ranking Member, House Agriculture
Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Agriculture
Nutrition and Forest Committee
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Lugar
Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture
Nutrition and Forest Committee
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We are very concerned after reading the attached letter we received last week from over fifty national and state specialty crop and livestock organizations alerting us to the drastic cut in funding facing the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS) competitive research program and the Market Access Program (MAP) in the Farm Bill conference negotiations.

We understand that the Conference Committee has adopted budget parameters for individual titles of the farm bill within which to negotiate. We were disappointed to learn that the Trade, Research and Rural Development titles are bundled together with the Credit, Forestry and Miscellaneous titles and that the collective funding provided for those titles reflects nearly a 40 percent reduction from the funding that was provided in legislation approved by the House and Senate. Specialty crop and livestock producers currently receive a mere fraction of total agricultural spending and it is unconscionable that program benefits to them would be subject to a 40 percent cut.

As Members of Congress who represent producers of specialty crops and livestock, it is unacceptable to us that these modest federal investments that deliver the most significant returns to our farmers and ranchers should be in jeopardy.

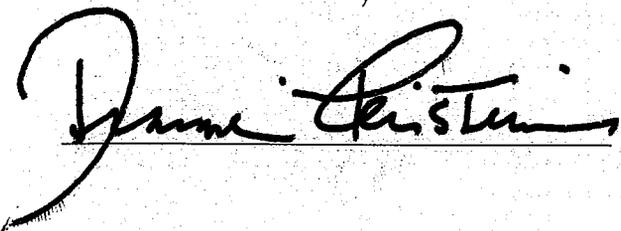
Specialty crops and livestock do not participate in direct agricultural subsidy programs. However, we cannot over-emphasize the importance to specialty crop and livestock producers of the critical federal investments in MAP and IFAS that dollar-for-dollar provide the most benefits to these industries.

Therefore, at a minimum, we urge the conferees to fund the MAP program at the funding level provided in the House bill.

We also urge the conferees to provide the funding level of \$225 million a year for the IFAFS program that was provided in the Senate bill.

Considering the importance of these provisions, we would be hard pressed to vote for final passage of the bill if these very important provisions are not adequately funded in conference.

Sincerely,



Sam Lan

Loetta Sanchez

Ellen Dauscher

Lois Capps

Susan A. Davin

Lynn N. Rivers

Charles H. Taylor

Bob Schaffer

Karen L. Thurman

Ray P. Pinal

Allan Boyd

Darlene Hovley

Jim M^cDonnell

Hilda L. Solis

Styler

Lynn R. Northcutt, Jr.

Anna C. Eshoo

Mike Simpson

Mark Foley

Dave Weller

Jim Davis

Mary Bow

Paul & Kildee

Jerry Lewis

Wally Harger

Ken Calvert

Lynn Woolsey

Anna Hunt

Alfred Hastings

Robert J. Matson

Nancy Pelosi

Jack Drinn

Corrine Brown

Lucille Roybal-Allard

John T. Doherty

Bob Fulmer

Jane Harman

Elton Sledge

Alan Allen

Gary C. Kelpatnick

John Baldacci

Joe Brea

Pat Allen

Peter Pustak

Robert Suptak

Barbara Lee

Ann Houghton

Earl Blumenau

Tom Allen

Scott Fox

Jim Langerman

Mary W. Sledge

Jim Barcia

George Miller

Robt Wepk

John V. Costello

Stacy J. Spurr Jr.

April 2, 2002

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United States Senate
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Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As national and state agricultural organizations representing California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, New Jersey and Texas, we are writing to express our concern regarding the drastic reduction of funding for provisions in the farm bill that deliver the most benefits to producers of fruits, nuts, specialty crops and livestock. We are specifically concerned about the 40 percent cut in funding for market promotion programs in the Trade title, which includes the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAS), the competitive, peer reviewed agricultural research grants in the Research Title.

We understand that the Conference Committee has adopted budget parameters for individual titles of the farm bill within which to negotiate over the next several weeks. We were disappointed to learn that the Trade, Research and Rural Development titles are bundled together with three other titles in the farm bill and that the collective funding provided for those titles reflects nearly a 40 percent reduction from the funding that was provided in the House farm bill that was approved last October. Specialty crop and livestock producers currently receive a mere fraction of total agricultural spending and it is unconscionable that program benefits to them would be subject to a 40 percent cut.

As you know, specialty crops and livestock do not participate in direct agricultural subsidy programs. However, we cannot over-emphasize the importance to specialty crop and livestock producers of the modest, yet critical federal investments in MAP and IFAS that provide significant returns to these industries. Therefore, at a minimum, we urge the conferees to fund these two programs at the level of funding provided in the House bill. Considering the importance of these provisions, we would be hard pressed to urge our state Congressional delegations to vote for final passage of the bill if they are not adequately funded in conference.

We thank you for your attention to this very important request.

Sincerely,

Allied Grape Growers
Blue Diamond Growers
California Association of Wine Grape Growers
California Canning Peach Association
California Cattlemen's Association
California Citrus Mutual
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Fig Institute
California Dried Plum Board
California Grape & Tree Fruit League
California Pistachio Commission
California Poultry Federation
California Seed Association
California Strawberry Commission
California Table Grape Commission
California Walnut Commission
Diamond Walnut of California
Florida Citrus Commission
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Citrus Packers Association
Florida Citrus Processors Association
Florida Department of Citrus
Florida Farm Bureau
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Florida Tomato Exchange
Frieda's, Inc.
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association
Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
Gulf Citrus Growers Association
Harris Farms, Inc.
Highlands County Citrus Growers Association
Idaho Growers-Shippers Association, Inc.
Indian River Citrus League
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Potato Council
New Jersey Farm Bureau
New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
Olive Growers Council
Pacific Egg and Poultry Association
Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association
Produce Marketing Association
Sacramento Packing
Sunkist Growers
SunMaid Growers of California
SunSweet Growers, Inc.
Texas Citrus Mutual
Texas Vegetable Association
United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association
U.S. Meat Export Federation
Valley Fig
Western Growers Association
Wine Institute

cc: House and Senate Conferees

Congressional delegations of California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, New Jersey and Texas