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SORGHUM E-Notes

NATIONAL SORGHUM PRODUCERS Ensuring Sorghum's Profitability

April 11, 2008

Farm Bill Conference Committee Meets for the First Time

After Speaker Pelosi appointed House farm bill conferees last night, House and Senate farm bill conferees met for the first time today in hopes of reaching an agreement on the farm bill by the next deadline, April 18th. At its first meeting, House Ag Chairman Collin Peterson rolled out a recommendation to cut the proposed 10-year increase over the baseline from \$10 billion to \$5.5 billion and to use increased income that would come from stricter rules on reporting credit card transactions as an offset. The Administration, however, has said it will not support the credit card offset as its revenue was not intended for agriculture. Peterson's proposal did not include funding the Senate's proposed \$4 billion disaster program or the Senate's \$2.5 billion in tax breaks. Also last night, the House voted 444 to 11 to instruct conferees to write a bill without increasing taxes

Tom Harkin, Chair of the Senate Ag Committee, said he would counter Peterson's proposal with a package similar to one that was previously agreed upon by the House, Senate and Administration that would provide \$10 billion in over-baseline funding. Harkin said the Senate would respond to the House offer with a \$10 billion over baseline proposal.

Meanwhile, Charles Rangel, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, wants to know how money will be spent *before* he will agree to provide offsets from his committee. He wants any money that comes from Ways and Means to be spent in the Nutrition Title of the bill.

Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus, who has championed a strong disaster program, called Peterson's \$5.5 billion offer a "lowball" for farm country. "The absence of disaster assistance is unacceptable to Senate conferees," he said. "But I'm confident this won't be the House's final position."

Senate Finance ranking member Charles Grassley said, "If the House really wants a farm bill, they didn't start out very well today. Not only did the House leave out important tax provisions for young and beginning farmers, they also neglected to include relief from the self-employment tax on CRP payments for the disabled and retired. The agriculture industry needs more than just subsidies. It needs a balanced bill that does justice to important priorities like crop insurance, farm payment reform and tax relief. I don't think the Senate will stand for this irresponsible proposal."

Pelosi Appoints 49 House Conferees

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi finally appointed House Conferees to the farm bill conference committee last night. She appointed 49 Members of Congress and Delegates from twelve different committees to reach agreements on various portions of the House and Senate bills. The Conferees and their committees are as follows:

Democratic Members of Congress selected to serve on the Conference Committee are:

From the Agriculture Committee:

Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin C. Peterson of Minnesota
Congressman Tim Holden of Pennsylvania

Congressman Mike McIntyre of North Carolina
Congressman Bob Etheridge of North Carolina
Congressman Leonard Boswell of Iowa
Congressman Joe Baca of California
Congressman Dennis Cardoza of California
Congressman David Scott of Georgia

Conferees on Farm Bill provisions with jurisdiction beyond the Agriculture Committee:

Congressman George Miller of California (Education and Labor)
Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy of New York (Education and Labor)
Congressman John Dingell of Michigan (Energy and Commerce)
Congressman Frank Pallone of New Jersey (Energy and Commerce)
Congressman Paul Kanjorski of Pennsylvania (Financial Services)
Congresswoman Maxine Waters of California (Financial Services)
Congressman Howard Berman of California (Foreign Affairs)
Congressman Brad Sherman of California (Foreign Affairs)
Congressman John Conyers of Michigan (Judiciary)
Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia (Judiciary)
Congressman Nick Rahall of West Virginia (Natural Resources)
Delegate Madeline Bordallo of Guam (Natural Resources)
Congressman Henry Waxman of California (Oversight and Government Reform)
Congressman Edolphus Towns of New York (Oversight and Government Reform)
Congressman Bart Gordon of Tennessee (Science and Technology)
Congressman Nick Lampson of Texas (Science and Technology)
Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez of New York (Small Business)
Congressman Heath Shuler of North Carolina (Small Business)
Congressman Jim Oberstar of Minnesota (Transportation and Infrastructure)
Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia (Transportation and Infrastructure)
Congressman Charles Rangel of New York (Ways and Means)
Congressman Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota (Ways and Means)

The Republican Members of Congress selected to serve on the conference committee are:

From the Agriculture Committee:

Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Bob Goodlatte of Virginia
Congressman Frank Lucas of Oklahoma
Congressman Jerry Moran of Kansas
Congressman Robin Hayes of North Carolina
Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave of Colorado
Congressman Randy Neugebauer of Texas

Conferees on Farm Bill provisions with jurisdiction beyond the Agriculture Committee:

Congressman Todd Platts of Pennsylvania (Education and Labor)
Congressman Joe Barton of Texas (Energy and Commerce)
Congressman Spencer Bachus of Alabama (Financial Services)
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida (Foreign Affairs)
Congressman Lamar Smith of Texas (Judiciary)
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington (Natural Resources)
Congressman Jim Jordan of Ohio (Oversight and Government Reform)
Congressman Michael McCaul of Texas (Science and Technology)
Congressman Steve Chabot of Ohio (Small Business)
Congressman Sam Graves of Missouri (Transportation and Infrastructure)
Congressman Jim McCrery of Louisiana (Ways and Means)

The Members of Congress selected from Leadership to serve on the conference committee are:

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut

Congressman Adam Putnam of Florida

List generated from a House Committee on Agriculture press release.

Season's First Crop Report: 20 Percent of Sorghum Planted

Nationwide, sorghum producers had planted 20 percent of their acreage, slightly behind last year but ahead of the normal pace by three percent. Warm and dry conditions for most of Texas allowed producers to get ahead of the five-year average pace by 11 percent. Elsewhere, Arkansas and Louisiana producers were facing delays due to the tremendous amount of moisture during the week, keeping progress behind last year and average by 32 and 19 percent, respectively.

From: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/WWNatSumm/WWNatSumm-04-08-2008.pdf>

About Sorghum Notes

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Quote of the week:

"Diplomacy is the art of saying 'nice doggie' until you can find a rock." – **Will Rogers**

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