

2018 Farm Bill

Congress failed to pass a new Farm Bill by the end of September 2018 to reauthorize programs/agencies that are important to the grape and wine industry and to ensure their continued existence

The 2014 Farm Bill included a number of key programs that are important to the grape and wine industry. These include the Market Access Program (MAP) in Title 3; Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and grape research by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Title 7; Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG), Plant Pest and Disease Programs, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Clean Plant Program (NCPN) in Title 10; and Crop Insurance in Title 11. Several of these programs expired on September 30, 2018 after Congress failed to pass the 2018 Farm Bill. Congress must pass a new Farm Bill as soon as possible to reauthorize and/or amend these programs and ensure their continued existence. Increasing the authorized funding levels for several programs, including the SCRI, NCPN and MAP, would be beneficial to the industry.

The Farm Bill is structured into twelve sections called “Titles”:

- Title 1 – Commodities
- Title 2 – Conservation
- Title 3 – Trade
- Title 4 – Nutrition
- Title 5 – Credit
- Title 6 – Rural Development
- Title 7 – Research, Extension and Related Matters
- Title 8 – Forestry
- Title 9 – Energy
- Title 10 – Specialty Crops & Horticulture
- Title 11 – Crop Insurance
- Title 12 – Miscellaneous

Seven titles in the Farm Bill include programs that affect or directly impact the Washington’s industry.

These programs have produced results for the U.S. and Washington grape and wine industries. For example:

- NCPN – network of clean plant centers in the U.S. for diagnostic and pathogen elimination services to promote availability through nurseries of safe, virus-free plant materials to vineyards, orchards and other growers.
- SCBG – grants to state departments of agriculture investing in programs and projects that support production-related research, commodity promotion, product quality enhancement, consumer health, food safety and other programs that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers.
- SCRI – addresses critical needs of the specialty crop industry by developing and disseminating science-based tools focused on specific crops and their regions. Research is conducted on priorities such as plant breeding, pests and diseases, mechanization, genetics, food safety and pollination, and includes research at Washington State University on fungicide resistance in grapes.
- Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) – helps producers with activities related to processing and/or marketing of value-added agricultural products.

- MAP – encourages development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial export markets through cost-share assistance to eligible trade organizations that implement a foreign market development program.

Congress generally passes Farm Bills about every five years to reauthorize and/or amend these programs; the last Farm Bill was passed in 2014.

The Farm Bill falls under the jurisdiction of the House Agriculture Committee and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Although the committees initiated hearings and developed a draft of a new Farm Bill, Congress failed to pass either a new bill or an extension of the existing Farm Bill before it expired on September 30, 2018.

The authorizations for some programs, including SCRI, SCBG, VAPG, and MAP, expired on September 30. In addition, the authorization that provides mandatory funding for conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program has also expired. No further funding can be provided for these programs until they are reauthorized in a new Farm Bill.

Ending these vital programs and others authorized by the Farm Bill would have a significant negative impact on the grape and wine industry as well as the greater agricultural industry. It is imperative that Congress passes a new Farm Bill as soon as possible.

What is Winegrowers doing for you?

In coordination with other Washington, California, and national industry organizations, Winegrowers is influencing Congress to extend authorization of key programs in the 2018 Farm Bill. Winegrowers is urging the Washington Congressional delegation to extend existing programs and to increase funding authority for some of the programs. Winegrowers will continue to advocate and keep the membership updated.

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