



HORTICULTURE AND ORGANIC TITLE ISSUE BRIEF

This is a new section of the farm bill, included for the first time in 2008. In addition to the inclusion of this specific section, many new provisions relating to horticulture, specialty crops and organic agriculture were included in other relevant sections of the bill.

Despite the advances made in these subject areas, many of these programs are also the most vulnerable going into 2012. Although the cost of the programs in these sections is low relative to other parts of the bill, the fact that they are new makes them a target to a budget-focused Congress.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The Specialty Crop Block Grant program is designed to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops within markets. Under this program, grants are authorized to states which can use the funding for such programs.

Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program

This program focuses upon the eradication of plant pest species that detrimentally affect specialty crop yields by providing funding for research techniques regarding pest eradication.

National Clean Plant Network

The National Clean Plant Network is a new initiative aimed at establishing pathogen-free plant stocks. The program continues to monitor these stocks and maintain their uncontaminated state. It has no baseline past Fiscal Year 2012.

Pest and Disease Revolving Loan Fund

The Pest and Disease Revolving Loan Funds are designed to help local governments in their monitoring of trees that are infested by plant pests. Additionally the funding can be directed towards the replacement of trees that have already been infested by pests.

Census of Agriculture Specialty Crop Directive

This directive includes a new provision which now classifies specialty crops in the Census of Agriculture.

Food Safety Education Initiative

The Food Safety Education Initiative includes language which authorizes the use of funding for educational purposes. The initiative targets efforts to inform both produce handlers and the public regarding means to reduce pathogens in fresh produce.

Market News Program for Specialty Crops

The Market News Program for Specialty Crops is designed to expand USDA's market news to include price information on fruits and vegetables, and expand their consumer market.

Farmers Market Promotion Program

The Farmers Market Promotion Program aims to improve, expand and increase community-supported agricultural programs such as farmers markets and farm-to-consumer direct sales. The program supports these developments through a process of awarding grants. It has no baseline past FY 2012.



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Marketing Orders, Research and/or Promotion Programs

These set of provisions establish detailed regulations regarding the governing of specialty crop-specific marketing orders.

Market Loss Assistance for Asparagus Producers

This assistance program specifically targets asparagus producers who have been negatively affected by foreign imports and authorizes payments for their market losses. It has no baseline past FY 2012.

Grants to Improve Transporting Specialty Crops

Under a new provision, grants are now to be offered to improve the cost-effectiveness of transporting specialty crops to markets, further increasing their market availability, quality and price competitiveness.

Cost-Share Assistance for Organic Certification

The Cost-Share Assistance for Organic Certification mandates that funding be provided to organic producers in order to offset their higher transition costs. This assistance has no baseline past FY 2012.

Production and Market Data and Economic Research and Analysis for Organic Agricultural Products

This initiative provides mandatory funding for surveys that analyze the organic industry, specifically looking at organic production and consumption.

National Organic Program Support

The National Organic Program Support authorizes new funding to be used in support of USDA's organic regulation and certification activities.