



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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WSDA Director Hover applauds passage of the U.S. Farm Bill

OLYMPIA – “I know I join many in the agriculture community who applaud today’s passage of a new five-year farm bill, a critical piece of legislation that not only reduces the risk to the farmers who grow our food, but helps ensure a stable, low-cost food supply for consumers in Washington and across the country.

“This Agricultural Act of 2014 has been long in coming and contains numerous programs to help agriculture on several levels -- It will fund important agricultural research, provide crop insurance to help farmers in tough times and protect the dairy industry against fluctuations in milk prices.

“The bill continues funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Market Access Program, which WSDA’s International Marketing Program leverages to assist agriculture-related businesses break into the growing export market, now a 30 percent segment of our state’s agriculture industry.

“The Specialty Crop Block Grant program the farm bill funds will provide opportunities for innovative projects in our state to support important specialty crops Washington farmers grow, including fruit, vegetable, tree fruit and nursery crops.

“The bill also provides important resources to benefit organic farmers, a growing segment of the agriculture industry in our state, including money for research and assistance in covering the costs of organic certification itself.

“Despite cuts in the federal food stamp program, the bill promotes food security for the needy in our communities, something WSDA is directly involved with through its Food Assistance Programs. The federal Emergency Food Assistance Program funded by the farm bill will provide money to support the emergency food system and food to pantries and meal programs across our state.

“While the farm bill doesn’t contain everything farmers and ranchers wanted, neither does it eliminate programs that are critical to the continued support of our state’s \$49 billion agriculture industry and the 160,000 jobs it supports.

“I want to thank leaders in the agriculture community who fought so long to keep this issue at the forefront and our state leaders in the House and Senate who worked to get a farm bill passed. Their efforts help to guarantee food security in our nation for years to come.”

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