

*(18) Sustainable agriculture technology development and transfer*

The House bill authorizes authorization of appropriations of \$5,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7203)

The Senate amendment amends authorization of appropriations of such sums as necessary for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7203)

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7203)

*(19) National Agricultural Weather Information System*

The House bill repeals Title XVI. (Section 7206)

The Senate amendment authorizes appropriations of \$1,000,000 for fiscal years 2014 through 2018. (Section 7206)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7206)

The Managers are aware that advanced weather forecasts, using systems such as Tropospheric Airborne Meteorological Data Reporting, have been utilized by various Federal agencies for nearly a decade. The Managers support advanced forecasting in that it enhances U.S. meteorological forecasting systems, which are particularly useful in agricultural weather forecasts. The Managers therefore encourage continued use of these systems.

*(20) Rural Electronic Commerce Extension Program*

The House bill repeals section 1670. (Section 7207)

The Senate amendment contains no comparable provision.

The Conference substitute adopts the House provision. (Section 7207)

*(21) Agricultural Genome Initiative*

The House bill repeals Section 1671. (Section 7208)

The Senate amendment authorizes the Secretary to encourage awards to consortia of eligible entities. (Section 7207)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision. (Section 7208)

*(22) High-priority research and extension initiatives*

The House bill repeals high-priority research and extension areas in subsections (e), (f) and (i). Pollinator protection is reauthorized through fiscal year 2018 and an annual report is amended to address honey bee health disorders and best management practices. A coffee plant health initiative is authorized as well as the authorization of appropriations through 2018. Section 7405(b)(2)(C) addresses research needs regarding cervidae and Section 6405 authorizes a Pulse Health Initiative. (Section 7209)

The Senate amendment repeals certain high-priority research and extension areas. Pollinator protection is reauthorized through fiscal year 2018. A cervidae initiative, a Corn, Soybean Meal, Cereal Grains, and Grain Byproducts Research and Extension priority, Forestry Products Advanced Utilization Research, Training Coordination for Food and Agriculture Protection, and Farm Animal Agriculture Integrated Research are authorized as well as the authorization of appropriations through 2018. (Section 7208)

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with an amendment. The amendment reauthorizes the authorization of appropriations through 2018, strikes certain

high-priority research and extension areas, authorizes a coffee plant health initiative, a corn and soy meal high-priority research and extension area, a pulse crop health initiative, and training coordination for food and agriculture protection. Pollinator protection is reauthorized and amended to include health and population status surveillance. The amendment also authorizes Forestry products advanced utilization research in Section 7310. (Section 7209 and 7310)

The Managers recognize that it is in the economic interest of agricultural producers and American consumers to ensure a healthy, sustainable population of native and managed pollinators, including managed honey bees. Pollinators are essential to the production of an estimated one-third of the human diet and to the reproduction of at least 80 percent of flowering plants. Insect-pollinated agricultural commodities result in significant income for agricultural producers and account for about \$20 billion in U.S. agricultural output yearly.

The Managers remain concerned about the decline in the health and viability of managed honey bees due in part to a loss of appropriate habitat. As a result, the conference substitute continues to include a priority for creating pollinator habitat utilizing the Title II conservation programs. The Managers remain committed to pollinator protection activities, including the granting of priority treatment to conservation program applicants who commit to providing pollinator habitat. The Managers expect the Secretary to continue to utilize conservation programs to create, restore and enhance native and managed pollinator habitat quantity and quality, and specifically encourage the Secretary to ensure that conservation programs are resulting in sufficient high-quality pollinator habitat for managed honey bees--habitat that includes common alfalfa and sweet clover varieties utilized effectively in farm bill conservation programs.

The Conference substitute also continues the authorization for research on pollinator protection, and adds a consideration for honey bee health disorders and best management practices related to colony collapse disorder to the annual report that the Secretary is required to submit to Congress. The Managers also recognize the need to assist honey bee producers who suffer from disasters in the commodity title with the funding provided for the emergency assistance program that includes honey bees. Additionally, the Managers are aware that specialty crop producers groups are working collaboratively with institutions of higher learning on research and education activities. The Managers applaud these actions and encourage the Secretary to support their efforts.

The Cooperative Extension system is a nationwide, non-formal educational network. Each state, territory, and the District of Columbia has an office at its land-grant universities and a network of local or regional offices which are staffed by experts who provide practical, research-based education to agricultural producers, small business owners, youth, consumers, and others in rural and urban communities. The Managers encourage the Secretary to ensure that Cooperative Extension is effectively utilized to deliver the educational component of USDA programs. The Secretary is also encouraged to engage in discussions with other federal departments and agencies to consider ways to use the Cooperative Extension to deliver education for other federal programs as practicable.

In addition, the Managers recognize the unique knowledge and information that the Cooperative Extension system experts provide to various groups regarding farm and food systems. As mentioned, this education and information is disseminated through a