



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## SPECIALTY CROPS

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Specialty crops play a crucial role in the success of American agriculture. However, because specialty crops include everything from fruits and vegetables to tree nuts, nursery crops, and floriculture, the development of the specialty crop safety net has been particularly challenging in the past.

The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 makes significant investments in the specialty crop industry by providing over \$1 billion for programs that support specialty crop research, enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, and protect specialty crops from damaging pests and diseases. Additionally, the bill makes changes to programs across titles to improve program delivery for specialty crop producers.

### **Specialty Crop Research Initiative**

- The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) is a competitive grant program that provides resources for research and extension projects for the specialty crop industry. Building on the SCRI investments in H.R. 1, the bill also gives the Secretary the authority to waive the matching funds requirement for SCRI.

### **Specialty Crop Mechanization and Automation**

- Specialty crops are very labor intensive, and the availability of a stable workforce has long been one of the greatest challenges facing specialty crop growers. Research to promote the development of mechanization and automation technologies for the specialty crop industry remains a top priority. The bill reserves \$30 million per year from SCRI for a new Specialty Crop Mechanization and Automation Research and Extension Program.
- Additionally, the bill identifies specialty crop mechanization and automation as a new high-priority research area.

### **Citrus Disease**

- Citrus greening remains a serious threat to domestic citrus production. Despite significant investments over the past decade, the disease continues to spread to citrus trees in Florida, Texas, Arizona, and California, and yields continue to decline. The bill also reauthorizes the Citrus Disease Subcommittee of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

### **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

- Since its creation, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) has successfully enhanced the competitiveness of the specialty crop industry. The bill directs state program administrators to consult with specialty crop producers on an annual basis when setting priorities for the program.

### **Market Access**

- The bill substantially increases funding for the Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development Program (FMD), E Kika de la Garza Emerging Markets Program (EMP), Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC), and Priority Trade Fund (PTF). Through these robust promotion programs, U.S. specialty crop producers will see greater market expansion and trade promotion for their products.
- After public notice and comment, the bill requires the Secretary to submit a report to Congress detailing the policies or practices of foreign countries that act as significant barriers to specialty crop exports or those that enhance the competitiveness of imported specialty crops with domestic producers.

### **Nutrition**

- Reauthorizes the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), improves year-round availability of incentives through the use of all forms of produce (frozen, fresh, canned, and dried), and corrects the inequities in program availability by waiving the federal match in persistent poverty counties.
- Reauthorizes the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Ensures USDA will continue to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and other specialty crops for distribution to schools and service institutions.
- Reauthorizes and expands the offerings of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).
- Establishes a local food procurement program to strengthen partnerships between local producers and the food distribution community, expanding markets for the distribution of fresh, fresh frozen, and nutritious foods.

### **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)**

- The bill makes the Tree Assistance Program more effective by expanding eligible crops, providing producers with the opportunity to receive an initial TAP payment that will help with cash flow following losses, and increases producer access to critical disaster assistance.

### **Expanding Crop Insurance Access for Specialty Crop Growers**

- To allow the needs of specialty crop producers to be heard, the bill creates an advisory committee to provide counsel to the Risk Management Agency (RMA) on issues related to specialty crop insurance policies.



- The bill improves Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) policies by requiring an annual review of limitations.
- Research and development on the creation of multiple policies related to specialty crops.

### **Specialty Crop Assistance Framework**

- Creates a default framework for USDA to use when delivering any economic and disaster assistance that will help streamline the process to help producers get the assistance they need in a more timely fashion.