



**AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.  
STRONGER TOGETHER.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – December 20, 2018

**Contact:**

Ryan McLaughlin

312.969.0255

[ryan@macstrategiesgroup.com](mailto:ryan@macstrategiesgroup.com)

## **Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance Commends President Trump for Signing the Farm Bill**

### *Legislation Includes Key Programs to Benefit Specialty Crop Industry*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The [Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance](#) (SCFBA), representing over 120 specialty crop organizations across the United States, released the following statement after H.R. 2 (115), the Farm Bill, was signed into law by President Trump during in the final Congressional session of 2018:

The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance applauds the efforts of the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate in passing the Farm Bill. The programs included in the Farm Bill play a critical role in the success and advancement of the specialty crop industry, and the Alliance is pleased this bipartisan legislation has been signed into law by the President before the end of the year.

The Alliance recognizes its three co-chairs: John Keeling, executive president and CEO of the National Potato Council, Mike Stuart, chief executive officer of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, and Tom Nassif, president and CEO of Western Growers Association, for their leadership and commitment to the specialty crop industry.

The Alliance also thanks House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer for their leadership in getting the Farm Bill through both chambers of Congress. Finally, the Alliance expresses gratitude to U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Michael Conaway, U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts and the Farm Bill conference committee members for their bipartisan efforts to submit a final conference report.

The following programs and funding included in the 2018 Farm Bill will bolster and strengthen the specialty crop industry over the next five years:

- Enhanced funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), allowing all specialty crops to compete for the full \$80 million annually for the SCRI program
- An annual trust fund of \$25 million annually to maintain resources for the citrus industry for combating citrus greening
- Full \$9 million annual funding of the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program, which encourages reduction of bureaucratic impediments to make the program more efficient in overcoming trade barriers
- Continued support for programs that combat invasive pests and diseases at \$75 million annually, with the goal of enhancing its funding in five years by \$7.5 million to fund the National Clean Plant Network
- Increased Food Insecurity Nutrition Initiative (FINI) funding levels and continued support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Continued strong funding of Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG)
- Improved access to foreign markets through increased funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) of at least \$200 million annually

- Strong language in SCRI, AFRI and the newly created AGARDA program focusing on mechanization as a priority
- Reforms to the National Organic Program (NOP) operation

“We are grateful to see such consistent, strong support of specialty crops in the Farm Bill. The bipartisan support of lawmakers in Congress is appreciated by the entire industry,” said **John Keeling, executive president and CEO of the National Potato Council**. “The programs included in the 2018 Farm Bill will help specialty crops compete in a global marketplace, develop research tools that improve the cultivation process, and contribute to a healthier America.”

“The passage of H.R. 2 is critically important to our producers and stakeholders,” said **Mike Stuart, CEO of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association**. “This bill is going to strengthen our industry by enhancing nutrition programs, continuing to support Specialty Crop Block Grants, combating invasive pest and diseases, supporting trade programs, and providing funding for research.”

“Specialty crops represent approximately \$70 billion in farm receipts annually, impacting large and small, rural and urban communities – and the entire specialty crops industry relies on the certainty and support that only a five-year Farm Bill can provide,” said **Tom Nassif, president and CEO of Western Growers Association**. “We are pleased the President recognizes the importance of the Farm Bill to agriculture and the value of the specialty crop industry in the United States.”

--30--

*The **Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance** is a national coalition of more than 120 organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, nursery plants and other products. The Alliance was established to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop agriculture and improve the health of Americans by broadening the scope of U.S. agricultural public policy. For more information, visit <http://www.farbillalliance.org>.*