

House Farm Bill Initially Fails, Delaying Process

Friday, May 18, 2018

By Mary Jane Buerkle

Farmers and ranchers will have to continue to wait on much-needed policy, as the U.S. House of Representatives failed to pass H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, on Friday with a vote of 198 Yeas and 213 Nays.

Fortunately, House Speaker Paul Ryan immediately called for a motion to reconsider the vote and the vote on his motion was postponed, which means the bill still is alive and in play.

"We expect negotiations between House leadership and Freedom Caucus members to continue throughout the coming days, and another vote on final passage of the farm bill to occur in the coming weeks," PCG's Kody Bessent said, noting that once that vote does happen, the House can only revote on the bill in its current form, so it cannot be opened back up for further amendments.

No Democrat voted for the bill, and 30 Republicans also voted against it, keeping the bill from reaching the votes it needed to pass. In addition to the Democratic opposition largely surrounding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program portion of the bill, the Freedom Caucus was a significant contributor to the bill's collapse, as they demanded a vote on controversial immigration policy first before they would lend their support toward the overall package.

"Although we are extremely disappointed with the initial vote, the motion to reconsider means that this is not over yet," Bessent said. "One positive is that since the bill can't be changed, we don't have to worry about any further harmful amendments to defeat."

PCG President Stacy Smith, a grower from New Home, expressed his disappointment.

"It is regrettable that partisan politics and single-issue priorities prevented the initial passage of the House's version of the bill," Smith said. "This Farm Bill is critical to help preserve the future of not only our family farms, but our entire industry."

Before today's vote on final passage, agriculture coalitions had experienced many victories with the defeat of several harmful amendments to the bill, including an amendment proposed by Rep. McClintock of California to fully repeal Title I policy programs such as PLC, ARC, and Marketing Loans over the span of the next 10 years. That amendment was defeated soundly on a vote of 34-380.

"We experienced a setback today after a streak of victories all week," House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway said in a statement. "We may be down, but we are not out. We will deliver a strong, new farm bill on time as the President of the United States has called on us to do. Our nation's farmers and ranchers and rural America deserve nothing less."

The Senate is expected to take up their version of the bill in the coming weeks.

NCC Selects Participants for Emerging Leaders Program

May 2018

From the National Cotton Council

Eleven U.S. cotton industry members have been chosen to participate in the National Cotton Council's Emerging Leaders Program for 2018-19.

They are: PRODUCERS – Philip Edwards, III, Smithfield, VA; Mark Korn, Dyersburg, TN; Darryl Mendes, Riverdale, CA; and Reid Nichols, Altus, OK; GINNER – Tony Newton, Slaton, TX; MERCHANTS – Roberto Ferrer and Nick Peay, both of Cordova, TN; and Barret Folk, Houston, TX; WAREHOUSER – Jordan Grier, Taylor, TX; MARKETING COOPERATIVE – Chris McClain, Grenada, MS; and COTTONSEED – Amy West, Overland Park, KS.

Now in its 6th year, the NCC's Emerging Leaders Program is supported by a grant to The Cotton Foundation from Monsanto.

Overall, the Emerging Leaders Program provides participants with a better understanding of how the NCC carries out its mission of ensuring the U.S. cotton industry's seven segments can compete effectively and profitably in the raw cotton, oilseed and U.S.-manufactured product markets at home and abroad.

Specifically, participants get an in-depth look at: 1) the U.S. cotton industry infrastructure and the issues affecting the industry's economic well-being; 2) the U.S. political process; 3) the NCC's programs as well as its policy development and implementation process and 4) Cotton Council International's activities aimed at developing and maintaining export markets for U.S. cotton, manufactured cotton products and cottonseed products.

The Emerging Leaders Program also provides participants with professional development and communications training such as presentation and business etiquette, instruction for engaging with the news media, and utilizing social media tools and tactics.

Class members will participate in three sessions. The first session, set for the week of June 17, 2018, in Memphis and St. Louis, will provide an orientation to the NCC, professional development, communication skills training, and an agribusiness briefing. During the second session, class members will see policy development at the NCC's 2019 Annual Meeting in February. The third session, to be conducted later in 2019 in Washington, D.C., will provide a focus on policy implementation and international market development.

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