GROWERTALKS

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JZ on D.C.

Jennifer Zurko

Farm Bill Clears the House

In early May, House Republicans passed a long-delayed bipartisan farm bill (H.R. 7567) by a 224–200 vote, advancing comprehensive legislation for the first time since 2018. Fourteen Democrats supported the bill, while three Republicans voted against the bill. The package extends key agriculture, nutrition, conservation and rural programs through 2031, though it faces a challenging path in the Senate, where bipartisan support will be required. AmericanHort welcomed House passage as a step toward more certainty for the horticulture industry and specialty crop growers, highlighting provisions that strengthen disaster recovery, invest in research and innovation, expand risk management tools, and improve access to financing for greenhouse, nursery and landscape businesses.

The bill includes targeted wins for the industry, including an amendment led by Rep. Adam Gray (D-CA-13). The amendment protects the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program from additional requirements and cost-sharing burdens, making sure the program remains accessible and effective for growers.

Further, the Farm Bill establishes a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee to advise the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation on the research, development and improvement of insurance policies or plans for specialty crops.

AmericanHort secured report language to ensure there's representation from the ornamental horticulture industry on the Advisory Committee: "To ensure input from all perspectives of the industry is heard on the advisory committee, RMA should require one of the growers on the advisory committee to be from the Horticultural industry to provide feedback, information and specialties related to the non-food side of the Specialty Crops industry."

Alternatively, House lawmakers voted to remove language that would have preempted state and local pesticide labeling laws, exposing ongoing divisions within agriculture policy debates. The issue is expected to resurface in the Senate, where disagreements over pesticide regulation, liability and food system impacts remain unresolved. **GT**

—Rachel Pick & Matt Mika, AmericanHort

Interior Spending Bill Sets Stage for EPA Pesticide Funding

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies held a markup for the Fiscal Year 2027 spending bill, beginning the annual process of determining funding levels for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and related programs that directly impact the horticulture industry.

For horticulture industry professionals, the legislation is particularly important because it could shape funding for

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs and implementation of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA), which supports timely pesticide registrations, label amendments and regulatory reviews important to growers and the broader horticulture industry. The markup will provide an early indication of congressional priorities for EPA pesticide program funding and related regulatory activities heading into the FY2027 appropriations process. **GT**
—Frida Mendez, DCLRS

DOL Releases FAQs on English Proficiency Requirements for Commercial Drivers
The Department of Labor has released new FAQs outlining the U.S. Department of Transportation's English language proficiency (ELP) requirements for commercial motor vehicle operators and employer obligations when filing foreign labor applications with the Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC).

As of June 15, 2026, OFLC will require employers to include specific ELP language in applications for positions involving the operation of commercial motor vehicles, including drivers operating under agricultural exemptions, not just CDL holders. The guidance states drivers must be able to read and speak English sufficiently to communicate with the public, understand traffic signs, respond to official inquiries, and complete reports and records. **GT**
—Tal Coley, FNGLA; Rachel Pick, AmericanHort

APHIS Finalizes Rose Federal Order
APHIS has released its finalized Federal Order updating import requirements for Rosa spp. plants for planting because of concerns related to Ralstonia solanacearum Race 3 biovar 2. Importantly, the final order preserves the ability for rose plants for planting from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to continue entering the United States under post-entry quarantine, provided the exporting National Plant Protection Organization certifies the place of production or production site as pest free for Rs R3bv2, consistent with ISPM 10.

This outcome is a significant win for the horticulture industry. Through direct grower feedback and close collaboration with USDA-APHIS, AmericanHort was able to help demonstrate the real-world impacts that earlier proposed approaches would have had on rose importers, breeders and the broader supply chain. The final order reflects a more practical pathway that maintains strong plant health safeguards while allowing critical rose genetics to continue moving into the United States.

AmericanHort appreciates USDA-APHIS' willingness to listen, engage with the industry and work toward a solution that protects U.S. agriculture without unnecessarily disrupting trade. We also thank the growers and industry partners who provided the feedback needed to help shape this outcome. As implementation begins, AmericanHort will continue working with APHIS and industry members to monitor how the new requirements are applied and address any challenges that may arise. **GT**
—Kamron Newberry, AmericanHort

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