

AG ISSUES UPDATE
Edited by Brad Hollabaugh
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Trade Resumes with China: First Step Toward Broader Access

On October 29, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced an agreement had been reached with China and market access for Red and Golden Delicious apples from Washington would resume immediately. Regaining this important market and expanding access to all varieties from all states is a top priority for USApple and the entire industry.

China closed its market to Washington in 2012 due to concerns with a fungus that they claimed was not in China. Up until that time, China was emerging as a top market for Washington apples with growth potential for other states as well.

Chinese inspectors visited Washington in September coordinating with the Northwest Horticultural Council, Northwest Fruit Exporters and industry leaders and reached an agreement for increased control measures. Those same inspectors also visited growers in New York with an eye toward expanding access beyond Washington to other U.S. states and varieties.

USApple continues to follow this issue closely and is working with USDA and industry leaders to ensure the process continues to move forward. A bilateral meeting is planned for January in San Francisco where expanded access for all U.S. apples as well as China's request for access to the U.S. market will be front and center. USApple President & CEO Jim Bair will attend that meeting. (*USApple Bites*, 11/04/2014)

USDA to Provide \$4 Million for Honey Bee Habitat

USDA announced last week that more than \$4 million in technical and financial assistance will be provided to help farmers and ranchers in the Midwest improve the health of honey bees. The assistance will provide guidance and support to farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees. The 2014 Farm Bill kept pollinators as a high priority, and these conservation efforts are one way USDA is working to help improve pollinator habitat.

Applications are due Friday, November 21. For more on technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or a local USDA service center. (*USApple Bites*, 11/04/2014)

Toomey, Perry Turn Up Heat on the EPA

With the Environmental Protection Agency extending the comment period on its "waters of the U.S." rule, two members of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation are urging constituents to "ditch the rule."

Sen. Patrick Toomey and Rep. Scott Perry held a roundtable discussion with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and other organizations to collect details on the harm that would come from

the EPA's misguided rule. The members of Congress also held a press conference at the Pennsylvania Farm Show where they asked Pennsylvanians to contact the EPA and their elected officials to reverse the agency's attempt to expand its authority under the Clean Water Act.

"I like how Farm Bureau has put it," Toomey said during the press conference. "It is time to 'Ditch the Rule!'" The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers have attempted to expand their authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate nearly every water body in the country, including ditches and small streams.

During the press conference, PFB President Carl T. Shaffer said the proposed expansion of federal authority would have a detrimental impact on agriculture. Not only would it cause confusion over when farmers would need a permit for certain normal farming activities, but it would also undermine the current efforts that state and local regulators have made in working with the farming community to improve water quality.

SBA Tells the EPA to Ditch the Rule

The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) has expressed some concerns over the proposed expansion of the "waters of the U.S." rule, which would give the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency greater oversight in water regulations.

In a letter to the EPA, the Small Business Administration warned that businesses would suffer under the added weight of the expanded "waters of the U.S." rule. The SBA also took the EPA to task for failing to conduct a Small Business Advocacy Review Panel prior to announcing the proposed rule. There is still time to make your voice heard. The EPA recently extended the comment period for the rule to November 14. Join the thousands of Pennsylvanians who have already told the EPA to "Ditch the Rule" by submitting your comments to the agency. Use PFB's legislative contact tool "Act Now" to send a comment to the EPA by visiting www.pfb.com and clicking on the "Act Now" button.

Apple and Peach Crop Insurance Deadline Coming

Pennsylvania apple and peach growers have until **November 20, 2014** to apply for crop insurance on next year's crop. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing policies also have until November 20 to do so.

Crop insurance provides coverage against production losses due to damage caused by natural perils and adverse weather conditions such as hail, wind, frost, and drought. Your amount of coverage will be determined from your actual yields and the protection level you select. Protection levels for apples and peaches range for 50 to 75-percent of your average yield. Indemnity payments are made when actual production falls below the covered or guaranteed protection level. The lost production is multiplied by the applicable price election to determine the indemnity amount.

The price elections for 2015 will be \$12.75 per bushel for fresh apples and \$4.65 per bushel for processing apples. Apple Varietal Groups A, B, and C have been added for the 2015 crop year with different price elections for each group. See your crop insurance agent for apple

varieties and prices applicable to each varietal group. Peach price elections are \$20.00 per bushel for fresh peaches, and \$6.25 for processing peaches.

Crop insurance coverage for apples and peaches is available for all Pennsylvania counties. Buy-Up NAP protection is available for all non-insurable crops through FSA. The deadline for fruit, berries and other perennials is also November 20.

Fruit producers should consider making crop insurance and NAP an essential part of their overall risk management plan for each crop to help protect their operations from financial loss. For more information, producers are encouraged to visit the [RMA website](#), or contact their local crop insurance agent or FSA as soon as possible. *Source: Penn State*

RMA Develops Premium Subsidy for Diversified Farms

The federal Risk Management Agency has developed a premium subsidy to offer more affordable protection to diversified farms. The premium subsidy is part of the new Whole-Farm Revenue Protection insurance policy. The whole-farm policy, as required in the 2014 Farm Bill, will be offered through RMA managed crop insurance.

The policy will give fruit and vegetable farmers with diversified farms a more flexible and affordable risk management program. The program will be available to produce farmers who sell to wholesale markets, local markets or direct markets.

"Crop insurance options continue to adapt to meet the farm safety net needs of today's farmers," said RMA Administrator Brandon Willis. "Whole-Farm Revenue Protection insurance will expand options for specialty crop, organic and diversified crop producers, allowing them to insure all the crops at once instead of one commodity at a time. That gives them the option of promoting crop diversity and helps support the production of a wider variety of healthy foods."

The whole-farm premium subsidy will be available to farms with two or more commodities as long as diversification requirements are met. This gives diversified farms a higher premium subsidy than was available. Whole farm insurance allows producers to insure all crops and livestock on their farm under one policy. Farmers will be able to choose insurance coverage based on their risk management needs—from 50 to 85 percent.

New Invasive Pest Found in Berks County

State agriculture officials say a new invasive species that could threaten grape, fruit and hardwood trees has been discovered in two townships in Berks County. The Spotted Lanternfly, an inch-long red and white spotted insect, is native to Asia. In Korea, where it's become an invasive pest, it has attacked 25 plant species that also grow in Pennsylvania.

"Since this is new to the country we are taking every precaution possible," said Agriculture Secretary George Greig. "We need to do everything we can to stop the spread of the Spotted Lanternfly."

The invasive pest often attacked grapes, apples and stone fruits. Adults cluster in groups and lay eggs on flat surfaces. To help thwart the spread of the lanternfly, PDA has quarantined the movement of any material that can spread the pest in two Berks County townships.

Natural Gas Transparency Bill Approved By Governor

A bill that would bring greater transparency to natural gas leasing has been signed by Gov. Tom Corbett. House Bill 402, introduced by Rep. Tina Pickett, requires the owner of subsurface rights under a gas or oil lease to file with county recording offices a notice of termination or satisfaction of a lease within 30 days of the date the lease ends.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau supported the bill over concerns that landowners have expressed over some aspects of the leasing process. The bill gives landowners greater confidence that lease obligations will be managed responsibly.

Farm Show Manager Passes Away

Mike Waugh, executive director of the Pennsylvania Farm Show and former state senator, has died. Waugh, who served in the General Assembly for 21 years, represented York County before taking a position earlier this year with the Farm Show. He was also a longtime advocate for the state's agriculture industry.

"Mike Waugh was the quintessential citizen-statesman, who divided his time between the work of the independent businessman and the challenging world of public policy," Gov. Tom Corbett said in a statement. "His values were the values of the Pennsylvania small businessman and farmer: thrift, hard work and civic spirit."

Both SHAP and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau extend their sympathy to Waugh's family and friends.

Agriculture Building Bill Approved

A bill that amends the state uniform construction code to clarify the types of buildings exempt from regulations has been approved by Gov. Tom Corbett. House Bill 1440, sponsored by Rep. Karen Boback, clarifies that buildings used for planting and growing of agriculture and horticulture products qualifies for the building code's "agriculture building" exemption. Previously, there was confusion as to whether buildings such as high tunnels had to follow the state uniform construction code.

"House Bill 1440 is just a common sense extension of the exemption already existing in the state building code. The code currently exempts farm structures that store farm products. In fact, many municipal code enforcers are already interpreting the code's 'agricultural building' exemption to include structures used in seeding and growing these products as well," said PFB President Carl T. Shaffer.

"House Bill 1440 will ensure the exemption is uniformly applied statewide to greenhouses and other structures that farmers may use to lengthen their growing seasons in production of vegetables, fruits and other horticultural products."

PA Reaches Farmland Preservation Milestone

For more than 25 years, Pennsylvania farmers have seen the value of setting their land aside from development, and preserving farmland for the next generation.

This October, Pennsylvania farmers reached a milestone, preserving 500,000 acres of prime farmland from development. The amount of acreage preserved is equal to nearly the size of Allegheny County— home to the city of Pittsburgh. It also makes Pennsylvania the leading state in the nation for the size and scope of its farmland preservation program.

To mark the milestone, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture hosted a celebration at Flinchbaugh's Orchard & Farm Market in York County. The acceptance of Flinchbaugh farms into the state's farmland preservation program pushed the total state acreage over the 500,000 mark. Gov. Tom Corbett, who joined in the event at Flinchbaugh's, said Pennsylvania farmers should be proud of their efforts to protect farmland for future generations.

Pennsylvania's farmland preservation program began in 1988, with voters approving a \$100 million bond to put toward farmland preservation. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau played a key role in advocating for the creation of the program and public education on the value of setting farmland aside from development.

PFB Produced TV Show to Appear on RFD-TV

"Cultivating Farming Knowledge" is the theme of a new Pennsylvania Farm Bureau produced television program scheduled to be broadcast nationally on RFD-TV next week.

The program, *Voices of Agriculture*, focuses on farmer-supported agricultural education outreach efforts designed to inform students and the general public about the important role farmers play in feeding, clothing and providing energy for Americans. The show includes a school visit of PFB's Mobile Ag Ed Science Lab, a trip to the W.B. Saul School in Philadelphia, coverage of the National Ag in the Classroom Conference and stops at two farms hosting tours of grade school students. The show will be available on PFB's website—www.pfb.com—starting in mid-November.