

SUPPORT EQUALITY IN FEDERAL FARM PROGRAMS



Sign on as an Original Cosponsor of
The Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act
(EAT Healthy Act)

March 9, 2007

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to become an original cosponsor of the Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act (EAT Healthy).

As you may know, specialty crops-including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and nursery products-are a critical part of our nation's agriculture industry, constituting nearly fifty percent of cash receipts. Specialty crops are produced in every U.S. state and their success has a considerable impact on local economies. We believe this important sector of American agriculture is deserving of full and equal consideration in the next Farm Bill through a significant investment of federal resources promoting their sustainability and competitiveness.

We have teamed up with leading specialty crop and environmental organizations from around the country to recognize specialty crops as a major contributor of our agriculture industry. Realizing a secure domestic food supply is imperative to national security, and that a globally competitive specialty crop industry is necessary for the production of an abundant, affordable supply of specialty crops, this legislation will increase market access, encourage and facilitate consumption of nutritious products, fund research programs and increase opportunities for family farmers in conservation programs.

More specifically, the EAT Healthy America Act focuses on the following issues:

Competitiveness: Increases access to valuable export markets by increasing the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program and the Market Access Program and by raising the profile of specialty crops within USDA, USTR, and other key federal agencies. Expands the Specialty Crop Block Grant program to assist local growers with the specific investments they need to increase competitiveness.

Nutrition: Requires federal feeding programs, including the school lunch and school breakfast programs, to adhere to the 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines. Expands the fruit and vegetable snack program in schools across the nation and develops new nutrition promotion programs to assist producers in enhancing their markets.

Research: Significant new investment in research priorities for specialty crops, through the National Research Initiative, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and Agriculture Research Service (ARS). Increases research into the prevention of invasive plant pests and diseases.

Conservation: Increases opportunities for specialty crop producers to access conservation programs by recognizing the unique characteristics of their farming operations in formula allocations and funding priorities.

The specialty crop industry from across the nation has been diligently working alongside us in putting together this legislation. It is the right time and the right thing to do to help our nation's farmers succeed in order to preserve the future of American farming.

To sign on as an original cosponsor, feel free to contact Anne Cannon w/ Cardoza (5-6131) or Karen Williams w/Putnam (5-1252).

Sincerely,

DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress

ADAM PUTNAM
Member of Congress

JOHN SALAZAR
Member of Congress

RANDY KUHL
Member of Congress

RICK LARSEN
Member of Congress

KEVIN MCCARTHY
Member of Congress

FAMILY FARMERS SUPPORT The EAT Healthy America Act

Alabama Watermelon Association
American Mushroom Institute
Arizona Winegrowers Association
Blue Diamond Growers
California Association of Wine Grape Growers
California Citrus Mutual
California Grape and Tree Fruit League
California Strawberry Commission

Cherry Marketing Institute
Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
Connecticut Vineyard & Winery Association
Empire State Potato Growers
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
Florida Strawberry Growers Association
Florida Tomato Exchange
Florida Watermelon Association
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Assn
Georgia Watermelon Association
Idaho Grower Shippers Association
Indian River Citrus League
Indiana-Illinois Watermelon Association
Maine Potato Board
Maryland-Delaware Watermelon Association
Missouri Wine & Grape Board
National Berry Crop Initiative
National Potato Council
National Watermelon Association
New England Vegetable and Berry Growers
New Mexico Wine Growers Association
New York Wine & Grape Foundation
North American Blueberry Council
North American Strawberry Growers Assn
North Carolina Strawberry Association
North Carolina Watermelon Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
Northern Plains Potato Growers
Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
Ohio Wine Producers Association
Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission
Oregon Winegrowers Association
South Carolina Watermelon Association
Sunkist Growers, Incorporated
Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Association
Texas Citrus Mutual
Texas Produce Association
U.S. Apple Association
United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association
Virginia Wineries Association
Washington Red Raspberry Commission
Washington State Potato Commission

Western Growers Association
Wine America
WineMichigan