

NHC NEWS

A Monthly Bulletin of the Northwest Horticultural Council

CONGRESS IN 2008

As Abraham Lincoln once said in a much more serious time, “the clouds on the political horizon are dark and lowering.” With the presidential election set for November 4 and the two great political parties narrowly divided in terms of power on Capitol Hill, only legislative measures of stark necessity or of little controversy likely will emerge from the second session of the 110th Congress.

Immigration reform will languish. Food safety will be the subject of spirited hearings, but fundamental changes in law will probably await a new Administration. Trade initiatives, such as the Korea–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, will twist in the wind.

The Farm Bill, with different versions emerging from the House of Representatives and the Senate in 2007, is likely to be passed after a conference committee of the two bodies works its magic in January. Few members of Congress with rural interests desire to come home in November empty-handed to face the local voters. However, since he is now removed from this untidy circumstance, President Bush will wield great power with his veto threat issued over certain provisions of the Farm Bill. These mainly relate to what may be called adjusted funding mechanisms or increased taxes, depending on the viewpoint.

At the end of the day and after much back and forth between the White House and Capitol Hill, a new Farm Bill will likely be enacted into law in early 2008--with many provisions of importance to tree fruit growers and shippers of the Pacific Northwest, as well as the rest of the nation’s produce industry. Thanks to the work over the past two years of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance recognition has been at last granted to research, nutrition, export marketing, and other policy area needs of our

diverse but quite significant sector of U.S. agriculture. The political support from our area’s Congressional delegation, coupled with significant help from the delegations representing California, Florida, New York, Michigan and other such non-Farm Belt states, have moved the Farm Bill debate away from this nation’s decades old focus on only the traditional program crops, such as dairy, cotton, and sugar. A new day of national farm policy may emerge out of an otherwise dreary legislative year.

CHEMICAL USE SURVEY

The NHC is following with great concern the decision by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to discontinue its biannual fruit and vegetable chemical use survey due to budgetary concerns. These surveys are the only publicly available and trustworthy source of pesticide use data for crops grown by our industry. NHC staff use this information virtually daily in working with the Environmental Protection Agency and other pesticide regulatory bodies. EPA has indicated that without the NASS data it would, in many cases, have to assume that 100% of a crop was treated with a given pesticide, substantially inflating potential risk. The United States Apple Association has agreed to take the lead on this issue on behalf of our industry, supported by NHC, in our quest to restore these useful surveys as soon as possible.

WELCOME

A founding member of the Northwest Horticultural Council has taken a new name. Effective January 1, the Hood River Grower-Shipper Association became the Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers. The name change was a result of a merger of the HRGSA and a sister tree fruit industry association up stream, the Wasco County Fruit and Produce League.

Travel

Christian Schlect

January 13-19 – Meetings of the USDA/AMS Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee and U.S. Apple Association's Public Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.

Mike Willett.

January 8-12 – Annual meeting of the Western Orchard Pest and Disease Management, Portland, Oregon.

Mark Powers

January 7-11 – Routine visits to Capitol Hill, USDA and USTR, Washington, D.C.

January 24 – Agriculture Transportation Coalition Workshop, Seattle, Washington.

In the spring of 1937, when the president tried to pack the Supreme Court with new appointees, suspicion of his intentions crossed the minds of many other Americans as well. As Schumpeter wrote in his diary, 'Roosevelt can't—won't—take an apple without upsetting the whole applecart.'

Thomas K. McCraw
***Prophet of Innovation:
Joseph Schumpeter and Creative Destruction***

The Northwest Horticultural Council represents the deciduous tree fruit industry of Idaho, Oregon and Washington on national and international policy matters of interest to growers and shippers. Its full and associate members are:

- *Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers*
- *Fruit Growers League*
- *Idaho Apple Commission*
- *Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*
- *Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service*
- *Washington Apple Commission*
- *Washington State Fruit Commission*
- *Washington Tree Fruit Research Comm.*
- *Wenatchee Valley Traffic Assn.*
- *Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Assn.*

The NHC also advises the Fresh Pear Committee (Portland) on certain issues related to food safety, crisis control and international trade.



- **Christian Schlect**, President
- **Mark Powers**, Vice President
- **Michael J. Willett, Ph.D.**, Vice President for Scientific Affairs
- **Deborah Carter**, Technical Issues Manager

Street address:
105 So. 18th Street
Suite 105
Yakima, Washington 98901 USA

Telephone: (509) 453-3193
Facsimile: (509) 457-7615
E-mail: general@nwhort.org
Web site: www.nwhort.org