

What's the latest \$3.5T proposal got to do with ag?

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Negotiations over a \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation bill have been heating up in Congress this week.

The package would pump funding into education, healthcare, environmental programs and various industries, mostly paid for through tax increases. The budget reconciliation plan also includes \$66 billion for agriculture, forestry and rural development.

While many farm groups say the bill has some measures favorable to agriculture, such as research funds, others warn that it includes proposed changes to the estate tax exemption.

Republicans and moderate Dem-

ocrats say the spending package could increase the nation's inflation rate and debt, while progressive Democrats say the spending is a critical long-term investment.

It isn't clear yet whether the bill will pass Congress, as it faces resistance from centrist lawmakers, including West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin.

If the bill does pass, what does it have to do with agriculture?

Members of the House Agriculture Committee Monday voted along party lines to advance nearly \$66 billion in spending — \$40 billion for forestry programs, \$18 billion for rural development and \$7.75 billion for agricultural research initiatives.

Debate continues over a potential additional \$28 billion for "cli-

mate-smart" agriculture programs.

The \$40 billion earmarked for forestry includes \$14 billion in funding for hazardous fuels treatments, forest restoration, vegetation management and firefighting. It also includes millions of dollars in payments to forest owners and operators for implementing "climate-smart practices."

The rural development section includes investments in rural electric co-ops, renewable energy, bio-fuels and the Rural Energy for America Program, or REAP, which provides farmers with grants and loans to make energy efficiency improvements.

The agricultural research portion includes scholarships, grants, USDA program funding and investments in land-grant universities.

Farm groups initially had serious concerns about the bill, which originally included proposals to tax capital gains at death and to eliminate the stepped-up basis.

If a farmer decides to sell property he inherited, a stepped-up basis allows him to pay capital gains taxes only on a property's increase in value since it was inherited rather than from the time it was purchased by a parent.

"This would be devastating to American agriculture," Oregon Farm Bureau said prior to the vote. "Now is not the time to impose a massive new tax that could put families out of business."

Farm groups across the nation joined the outcry, calling on Congress to protect the stepped-up basis.

Lawmakers Monday debated the topic for hours. In the end, the proposal failed.

Ag groups, though happy the stepped-up basis was preserved, are still concerned over other tax language, particularly a proposal to shrink the current estate tax exemption — potentially tripling the number of Americans paying the estate tax.

"We are very pleased to see that the House Committee did not include the elimination of stepped-up basis within its initial text," National Corn Growers Association president John Linder said in a statement. "However, we are concerned with the provisions on the estate tax in the committee draft that could impact family farms."

Two serious viruses detected in Oregon horses

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

At least six horses in four counties scattered across southern and eastern Oregon have tested positive for West Nile virus in recent weeks, according to state agriculture officials.

None of the infected horses — two in Klamath County, two in Malheur County, one in Umatilla County and one in Baker County — had been recently vaccinated against the virus, said Ryan Scholz, state veterinarian for the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Three of the horses were euthanized, while the other three are recovering, Scholz said. One additional suspected case in northeast Oregon is still under investigation.

"We're seeing a lot of West Nile virus right now," Scholz said. "It's always unvaccinated horses that get infected."

Wild birds are the primary hosts for West Nile virus, though it can be transmitted to both humans and horses by mosquitoes. The effects of the disease in horses can range from mild flu-like symptoms to inflammation of the brain, which is fatal in



Capital Press File

Oregon officials have reported two serious viruses infecting horses.

approximately one-third of all cases. ODA encourages horse owners to vaccinate their animals to prevent further infections.

"It is an easily preventable disease," Scholz said.

Three horses on a farm in Linn County were also diagnosed with a different contagious disease called Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy, caused by the virus EHV-1.

The farm, which was placed under quarantine, had five horses exposed to EHV-1, Scholz said. Three of the horses tested positive on Sept. 9, and two were later euthanized. One is recovering, and the other two were not infected.

EHV-1 is highly transmissible between animals. However, Scholz said a preliminary investiga-

tion shows none of the five horses were moved off the farm or in contact with other horses within the past four weeks.

"We just want to reassure people that we do not know of any exposure risk at this point," Scholz said.

Herpesviruses are common in horses, Scholz said. Normally, EHV-1 results in a mild respiratory disease, though it can mutate to develop potentially serious neurological symptoms, such as a lack of coordination, hind limb weakness, inability to urinate and inability to rise, among others.

Scholz said it appears this mutation happened in one horse at the farm in Linn County before spreading to the other two. No other animals appear to be at risk.

Seed company charged with misprison of a felony

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Federal prosecutors have charged an Oregon grass seed company with misprison of a felony for allegedly concealing bogus commissions and price mark-ups.

The U.S. Attorney's Office alleges that Proseeds Marketing of Jefferson, Ore., helped the head of another grass seed dealer commit fraud that recently landed him behind bars.

Misprison of a felony occurs when someone knows a felony has been committed but does not inform the authorities about it.

Proseeds would buy grass seed from the Jacklin Seed facility in Albany, Ore., and then immediately sell it back to the company at a higher price, according to court documents filed by the federal government.

Most of the profit was then sent to Chris Claypool, Jacklin's general manager who lived in Spokane, the government said. Earlier this year, Claypool pleaded guilty to fraud charges for these and other schemes,

for which he was sentenced to three years in prison.

The mark-up scheme was committed a dozen times between late 2018 and mid-2019, generating nearly \$475,000 in ill-gotten gains, the prosecutors allege.

As a salaried employee, Claypool wasn't eligible to receive commissions from Jacklin, so he relied on Proseeds' help to get around this limitation, the government said in court documents.

Proseeds acted as an "unnecessary middleman" for Claypool, serving as an intermediary for sales of Jacklin's grass seed to foreign buyers at marked-up prices, the government alleged.

The company then paid "fraudulent commissions" to Claypool through "straw corporate entities" he'd set up to look like independent seed brokers and consultants, the government said.

If convicted, Proseeds Marketing could be sentenced to five years probation and a \$500,000 fine. The company refused to comment on the allegations.

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To Recommend or Not To Recommend — A Crop Consultant's Internal Debate

Teraxxa™ Seed Treatment suggestion hits the mark

It's someone's crop—their livelihood. No crop consultant makes recommendations lightly. But sometimes, after watching farmers continuously battle a devastating insect like wireworms, a crop consultant will decide enough is enough and recommend a new solution.

Brandon Vining, owner of ProGro Consulting, had one such farmer—Russell Schwendiman from Ririe, Idaho—who he watched struggle with wireworms, a devastating insect that feeds on the roots of healthy wheat plants.

"Russell farms quite a bit of wheat and had encountered severe wireworm damage," Vining said.

Over the years, Brandon and Russell tried several solutions, ranging from neonic seed treatments to various in-furrow insecticide applications.

“He'd lose 10- to 15-acre areas at a time due to wireworms.”

— Brandon Vining, owner of ProGro Consulting



Untreated



Treated with Teraxxa F4 Seed Treatment

Brandon attended a BASF Teraxxa Seed Treatment meeting, and, after gathering some information, he decided to take a different approach with wireworms. He called Russell and suggested he give Teraxxa Seed Treatment a try.

WHERE'D THEY GO?

In years past, Brandon would dig and see live wireworms feeding on roots. This year, after trying Teraxxa Seed Treatment, his observations were quite different.

"We've pulled plants and haven't seen any live or dead wireworms on the roots," Vining said. "Wireworms work from deeper in the soil profile to the roots. I don't know if they are dead in the soil and we got them early, but they aren't there."

It's not to say wireworms have disappeared from their geography. In fact, they have some untreated acres.

"Those acres look as they always did—areas of stand loss," Vining said. "Early stand evaluations were as good as they can be. From what I've seen on Teraxxa treated spring wheat acres, I would recommend winter wheat growers consider Teraxxa F4 Seed Treatment."

EXPERIENCE TERAXXA F4 SEED TREATMENT IN WINTER WHEAT

As you prepare for winter wheat planting this fall, consider using Teraxxa F4 Seed Treatment. Wireworm damage isn't limited to spring wheat or wheat grown in the Pacific Northwest. Wireworm damage occurs in nearly all wheat-growing geographies. Experience better stand quality and reduced wireworm pressure with Teraxxa F4 Seed Treatment, designed specifically for winter wheat growers.

Find out more at TeraxxaF4.com. ■

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