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House Vote on Farm Bill Possible on Thursday

The latest news from Washington D.C. indicates a vote on the House floor on their version of the 2013 Farm Bill may come Thursday, June 20. At this time, amendments to the bill have been limited. Several amendments to add or include programs and reforms near and dear to sustainable agriculture advocates have been shut out.

But of the amendments the House is willing to consider, KRC urges support for the Fortenberry amendment #93, which would restore common sense and fiscal integrity by capping total commodity benefits at \$250,000 per year for any one farm. Under the amendment, the annual per-farm cap on payments would be \$50,000 (\$100,000 for married couples) and the cap on marketing loan gain benefits would be \$75,000 (\$150,000 for married couples), for a combined total of \$250,000 per married couple. This amendment would also close existing loopholes to ensure that payments are targeted to the intended recipients, working farmers.

Another amendment warranting support is the Thompson-Fortenberry amendment #28 which links commodity crop insurance payments with conservation requirements. This amendment is the first step toward linking conservation accountability to crop insurance subsidies.

And finally, an amendment to oppose is the McClintock amendment #92 which would eliminate funding for Farmers Market Programs and the Local Food Promotion program. It appears that good local food amendments, which had strong possibilities of bi-partisan passage, were deliberately stripped from the bill in order to focus the final debate on SNAP or food stamp benefits, and split the final vote on clear party lines.

Stay tuned for more information. A separate KRC alert or update will be sent out on the farm bill as more news becomes available