

Agriculture

Florida's farmers and producers work hard every day to provide the food that American's serve on their dinner table. As a member of the Agriculture Committee, Tim Mahoney will work hard to protect and promote Florida's farmers so they can provide a safe and reliable source of food for our families. He will also fight to provide incentives for entrepreneurs who are researching ways to use our agriculture waste products as a source of fuel instead of relying on foreign oil.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (commonly known as the Farm Bill) passed the House on May 14, 2008 and cleared the Senate the next day. The bill is a victory for the State of Florida. Right from the beginning, Tim worked to craft legislation that benefits all aspects of Florida agriculture. Overall, the Farm Bill provides:

- \$224 million in flexible Block Grants to benefit specialty crop producers,
- \$ million for academic research relating to fruits, vegetables and nursery crops,
- \$1.02 billion for the USDA Snack Program, which helps schools provide healthy snacks to students during after-school activities,
- \$1.26 billion on increased funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to help stock food banks. This includes \$50 million to immediately address shortages at food pantries,
- \$33 million for Farmer's Market Promotions to enable producer to directly market their products to local consumers,
- \$200 million to assist producers in Florida and other states in accessing foreign markets for their products.

In addition, the Farm Bill;

- Removes statutory roadblocks that prevent federal and state agencies from mitigating pest and disease threats while providing \$377 million in mandatory funding to implement these much needed changes.
- Increases the sugar loan rate by $\frac{3}{4}$ cent, (From 18 cents to 18. $\frac{3}{4}$ cents).
- Directs that Mexican sugar that enters the US market because of implementation of the NAFTA agreement will be directed into ethanol production instead of flooding the US market, but only during times of excess sugar supply,
- Provides an overall \$1 billion to fund programs in the energy title that will leverage renewable energy industry investments in new technologies and new feedstocks. Specifically, this creates new jobs and opens a new market for Florida agriculture by establishing an Ethanol Loan Guarantee Program to provide financial incentives in the form of a loan guarantee for the construction of cellulosic biofuel plants. The bill also rewrites the definition of "biomass" to incorporate all of the waste and by-products that Florida producers. This innovative reform allows Florida to become a major player in the alternative energy movement.

For more information on agriculture policy, please visit the following websites:

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/>

House of Representatives, Agriculture Committee

<http://agriculture.house.gov/index.shtml>

US Department of Agriculture

<http://www.usda.gov/>

US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>

Press Releases:

[Mahoney Helps Jump Start Bio-Energy Business in Florida](#)

[House Agriculture Committee to Hold Hearing on the Labor Needs of American Agriculture](#)

[Mahoney Speaks at Farm to Fuel Summit](#)

[Farm Bill Reported out of Agriculture Committee](#)

[Mahoney, Putnam Introduce American Farm Improvement Act](#)

[Mahoney Meets with Farmers and Ranchers to Discuss 2007 Farm Bill](#)

Mahoney Introduces Bill to Keep Farms in the Family

House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson Joins Mahoney at Florida Ag Briefing

Mahoney get waiver to serve on Agriculture Committee