

# Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance

Working to Make American Agriculture Stronger

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release – January 2, 2013**

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## **Congress Sidelines Specialty Crop Funding in Tax Legislation**

*Tax measure extends 2008 Farm Bill, but excludes key specialty crop programs*

WASHINGTON, DC – The passage of a fiscal package late Tuesday evening excluded key specialty crop priorities. While the bill does avert the dreaded “fiscal cliff,” efforts to roll a new five-year Farm Bill into the bill were rejected in favor of a nine month extension of the 2008 law. The extension does not include funding for certain expiring programs such as the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and Clean Plant Network.

“It’s disappointing, to say the least,” said Mike Stuart, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association president and Alliance Co-Chair. “We had worked very hard with key members in the House and Senate to craft a Farm Bill that was fiscally responsible and gave producers resources, such as research funding for pest and disease programs, that they need to remain competitive and to ensure a safe, healthful supply of fruits and vegetables.”

The tax package bill was passed by a vote of 89-8 in the Senate, and was approved in the House with a vote of 257-167.

The Farm Bill will need to be redrafted in the coming months and reconsidered by both chambers before the September 30, 2013 deadline. The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance will continue to communicate the importance of specialty crop programs to lawmakers on Capitol Hill as this process moves forward in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

“While we are frustrated, we look forward to working with both committees and the dozens of members of Congress who helped complete the 2012 Farm Bill,” said John Keeling, National Potato Council executive vice president and CEO, and Alliance Co-Chair. “As has been the case for more than a decade, we will be working to ensure that innovative investments for the 50 percent of American agriculture represented by specialty crops are fairly accounted for in the Farm Bill.”

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*The **Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance** is a national coalition of more than 120 organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, nursery plants and other products. The alliance was established to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop agriculture and improve the health of Americans by broadening the scope of U.S. agricultural public policy. For more information, visit [www.strongeragriculture.org](http://www.strongeragriculture.org).*