



# The Juice

## A Special Agriculture News Report From Congressman Adam Putnam



United States House of Representatives

Volume 1, Issue 1

### Citrus Canker

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) has recently completed a review of the Citrus Canker program. Through the Federal/State Cooperative Eradication Program, over 2 million citrus trees in 8 counties have been destroyed, including 600,000 residential and 1.5 million commercial citrus trees.

In order to carry out an aggressive and effective eradication program, Federal and State officials and the industry must work to address outstanding funding and legal issues that serve as an

impediment to the elimination of Citrus Canker. Furthermore, a concerted effort will have to be made at both the State and Federal level to secure needed eradication funds for the year to come, as well as provide compensation for those growers who have suffered losses due to this Citrus Canker this year. Lastly, scientific research efforts must continue in order to gain a greater understanding of this disease and methods to combat and eradicate Citrus Canker from Florida's \$9 billion citrus industry.

Since 1995, the State and Federal governments have



Congressman Putnam meets with Secretary Ann Veneman and Commissioner Charles Bronson to discuss Florida's agricultural problems at Polk County Farm Bureau.

invested roughly \$407 million to combat Citrus Canker, representing about a 60% federal, 40% state cost share.

*(continued pg. 2)*

### Farm Bill

As Florida's only member of the House Agriculture Committee, I welcome the opportunity to review federal agricultural policies affecting American agricultural production in the 2002 Farm Bill. The House of Representatives adopted the Agricultural Security Act (H.R. 2646) or "Farm Bill" in October 2001. House and Senate conferees are now engaged in Conference committee to resolve differences between the two versions of the Farm Bill legislation.

The Farm Bill, which reauthorizes farm policy for the next 10 years, represents the first step in assisting Florida farmers and ranchers in meeting their unique and varied agricultural challenges. The bill greatly expands conservation funding and tailors the programs to more closely address Florida's environmental needs, provides the Secretary of Agriculture greater authority to combat invasive species, expands export marketing

programs and agricultural research, and addresses other issues of priority to Florida agricultural producers.

Invasive Pests and Disease-  
The House Farm Bill contains an important feature to allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture immediate access to financial resources to combat outbreaks of plant and animal pests and diseases and prevent further spread of infestations from occurring. Current law requires

*(continued pg. 3)*

#### Contact Congressman Adam Putnam

*Florida Office:*  
710 East Main Street  
Bartow, FL 33830  
Phone: 863-534-3530  
Fax: 863-534-3559

*Washington Office:*  
506 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-1252  
Fax: 202-226-0585

To email Congressman  
Putnam go to his website at:  
[www.house.gov/putnam](http://www.house.gov/putnam)

## Death Tax

My vote to end the Death Tax was a vote to protect the livelihoods of small business owners, farmers and their employees.

The real casualties of the Death Tax are the growing businesses and farms that provide their owners a middle-class income and standard of living. Their money goes into their business, to pay their employees and take care of their families - not to pay

tax lawyers. When these small businesspeople and farmers die, their assets are subject to liquidation in order to raise the money needed to pay their tax liability.

I can't understand the rationale of those who would continue to destroy small businesses and family farms by preserving this outdated and unfair tax that raises only a small percentage of the government's

revenue. Making the Death Tax repeal permanent will protect the families of the small businesspeople and farmers who are the backbone of our economy in Central Florida.

It's time someone stood up for the interests of these small businesspeople, their families and their employees, and that's why I voted to end the Death Tax.

## Citrus Canker (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

The State of Florida and USDA have submitted a cooperative agreement now under review by the Administration to provide \$32 million to the State of Florida and \$33 million to USDA for tree removal and survey activities. On March 6, several Members of Congress, Commissioner Charles Bronson, the Governor's office and citrus industry leaders expressed to USDA the need for a strong and effective eradication program. Congress has asked USDA for an accounting of USDA's legal authority to combat the disease aimed toward permanent eradication of Canker from the state.

While Congress was able to allocate approximately \$13 million in Canker compensation funds through last year's Agriculture Appropriations Act, it now appears that an additional \$40 million will be needed to meet the anticipated grower needs for compensation through the end of the fiscal year. On March 5th, 17 members of the Florida congressional delegation voiced their support for continued funding for Citrus Canker compensation, and various legislative vehicles are currently being explored. To date, USDA has paid out over \$74 million in grower compensation claims for Citrus Canker.

Citrus Canker research remains a critical component of the program. In the last two years, over \$10 million has been allocated by Congress for this purpose, with over \$5 million going to IFAS' Lake Alfred Citrus Research Station. Research challenges remain, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to continue this vital research initiative.

The current Citrus Canker eradication program is concentrated in 12 major quarantine areas located in 8 counties covering 1450 square miles. Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson



*1.5 million commercial trees have been burned since 1996.*

announced the first lifting of a Citrus Canker quarantine area in Hillsborough County in early February. At present, there are about 200,000 exposed trees awaiting removal in South Florida, pending resolution of legal issues. The State legislature is currently considering legislation to codify the 1,900 foot rule for removal of exposed trees.

## Food Security

The events of September 11th highlighted the critical nature of securing our food supply from intentional and unintentional threats to U.S. agricultural goods. For this reason, I introduced the Food Safety and Agricultural Terrorism Prevention and Response Act, H.R. 3198. This legislation is designed to prevent agro-terrorism, by breaking

down the barriers to cooperation between agencies in protecting our borders and detecting and fighting agricultural diseases.

USDA has subsequently established a department wide Homeland Security Council to provide policy oversight and coordinate efforts on food security issues. The Council's goal is to

safeguard our nation's food supply and agriculture production, the protection of USDA facilities and infrastructure through increased surveillance, detection and interdiction of threats to our food supply. USDA received \$367 million in new funds to increase Bio-security efforts involving crops and livestock.



*Keeping AMERICA'S Food and Agriculture SAFE!*

## Farm Bill (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

lengthy review by other agencies before funds may be released to address emergency occurrences.

**Methyl Bromide** - The Secretary of Agriculture would be allowed to approve the continued use of Methyl Bromide in keeping with the Montreal Protocol for the "official control of pests by a national plant, animal or environmental protection agency" including USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

**Country of Origin** - Both the House and Senate version of the Farm Bill require that perishable agricultural goods, including fruits and vegetable be labeled according to their county of origin.

**Mechanical Harvesting**- The bill authorizes research and extension grants for improved harvesting productivity of fruits and vegetables, including research on mechanical harvesting, robotics, and abscission chemicals.

**Export Promotion** - Funding for the Market

Access Program (MAP) was more than doubled in the Farm Bill from \$90 million to \$200 million per year. **This program has been very successful in assisting in marketing Florida products abroad**

**Flex Acres** - The Farm Bill retains the current prohibition on the planting of fruits and vegetables on subsidized contract acres, to



Florida agriculture leaders testify on the effect of invasive pests and disease to Florida agriculture.

maintain an equitable market environment.

**Conservation** - One area in which Florida farmers have been overlooked in years past is access to conservation assistance. This Farm Bill expands current conservation funding by 75% and tailors programs to more adequately reflect the challenges faced by Florida farmers and ranchers. The current Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was increased six fold from \$200 million per year

to \$1.6 billion per year and program criteria were modified to reflect the unique conservation needs of Florida producers including increased emphasis on the protection of water resources, improvement of water quality, irrigation, control of invasive species, wetland protection, wildlife habitat, and preservation of farmland.

**Sugar and Peanuts** - Both the sugar and peanut provisions of the bill provide important safeguards for producers while at the same time balancing international trading markets and domestic production. The marketing assessment on

sugar was eliminated, and the Secretary of Agriculture was given authority to designate domestic marketing allotments. The peanut program was reformed from the traditional quota system to a farm subsidy program.

These provisions have not passed into law as of this printing. To receive more information on the Farm Bill, please go to my website at [www.house.gov/putnam](http://www.house.gov/putnam) and sign up to receive future agriculture email newsletters.

## Farmland Stewardship Program

Central to the Conservation title of the Farm Bill is establishment of a **Farmland Stewardship Program**, based on legislation I introduced to recognize responsible care and stewardship of our natural resources by private property owners. The Farmland Stewardship Program was crafted and endorsed by a wide range of Florida agricultural and environmental groups. It would provide incentive-based initiatives aimed at assisting farmers and ranchers in meeting stewardship goals including the

protection and maintenance of endangered habitat, wetlands, improved water quality and water access, treatment of on-farm discharge, deterrence of invasive species and other important environmental challenges.

The *Farmland Stewardship Program* is a blending tool that may be used to tie together many conservation programs available at the local, state, and federal level, and tailor them to meet site-specific environmental needs. The Act provides for

greater local involvement in conservation practices through increased cooperation between landowners, local, state, and federal officials.

A voluntary program, the *Farmland Stewardship Program* would encourage greater protection of natural resources by providing economic assistance to agricultural producers to improve and or protect natural resources, and recognizing the environmental benefits of sound agricultural practices.



"The Farmland Stewardship Program would encourage greater protection of natural sources ... recognizing the environmental benefits of sound agricultural practices."

Congressman Adam Putnam

## Trade

On December 6, 2001, the House of Representatives approved passage of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), legislation granting the President authority to negotiate trade agreements subject to an up or down vote of Congress. Despite extensive efforts to include specific safeguards for Florida agriculture, the legislation did not include language sufficient to meet all of the objectives of Florida agricultural producers. However, language was included in the bill to require consultative procedures before Congress



*U.S. Trade Representative for Agriculture Allen Jobson meets with Rep. Putnam and Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson to discuss Florida agricultural trade issues at Florida Citrus Mutual.*

and a report by the International Trade Commission on any proposed reduction of tariffs on import sensitive commodities, such as citrus and many other fruit, vegetable, and sugar products.

Throughout the process, the trade issues of importance to Florida agriculture were raised with the Administration, including President Bush, the U.S. Trade Representative for Agriculture and the Secretary of Agriculture. The Senate is expected to consider Trade Promotion Authority this spring and I will continue to work to ensure that the interests of

Florida Agriculture are represented in the process and that we have the tools to remain competitive in the world market.

## Disaster Assistance

On February 11, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture announced issuance of long-awaited Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) regulations, enabling disaster aid to Florida farmers affected by the freezing conditions in early 2001. Florida farmers, especially tropical fish and fruit and vegetable growers, suffered losses of over \$179 million in early 2001 due to freezing temperatures. Since that time, members of the Florida congressional delegation have worked with USDA to facilitate these disaster payments, which were delayed due to the reissuance of program regulations. For more information, please contact your local Farm Service Agency county office.

### **Pasco County**

San Antonio Service Center  
30407 Commerce Drive  
San Antonio, FL 33576-8003  
Phone: 352-588-5211  
Fax: 352-588-5472

### **Polk County**

Bartow Service Center  
1700 Highway 17  
Bartow, FL 33830  
Phone: 863-533-2051  
Fax: 863-533-1884

### **Hillsborough County**

Plant City Service Center  
201 S Collins St. Ste B  
Plant City, FL 33566-5537  
Phone: 813-759-6450  
Fax: 813-759-6530

### **Highlands County**

Sebring Service Center  
4505/4507 George Blvd.  
Sebring, FL 33872  
Phone: 863-385-7853  
Fax: 863-385-7028

### **Hardee County**

Wauchula Service Center  
316 North 7th Avenue  
Wauchula, FL 33873-2606  
Phone: 863-773-4764  
Fax: 863-773-2445

### **DeSoto County**

Wauchula Service Center  
316 North 7th Avenue  
Wauchula, FL 33873-2606  
Phone: 863-773-4764  
Fax: 863-773-2445

***Or check out their websites!***  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/default.asp>

## Crop Insurance

Efforts are ongoing to improve federal crop insurance programs to more closely meet the specific needs to Florida agricultural producers. On February 13, the House Agriculture Committee held an oversight hearing to review the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, which substantially reformed the crop insurance program. Issues were raised concerning USDA's implementation of the law concerning special consideration and resources for the development of policies for

specialty crop producers. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) was urged to give consideration to the development of a



cost of production policy for Florida citrus. RMA is currently working with the industry to improve the present Citrus tree crop

insurance policy, as well as the development of a revenue based insurance policy for Florida citrus. In addition, the University of Florida has entered into a cooperative agreement with RMA to develop and tailor crop insurance programs for other specialty crop producers.

To learn more about the partnership between RMA and the University of Florida go to the USDA RMA's website at: [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov).



## House Approves 2003 Federal Budget for Agriculture

*Budget Committee  
Member Adam Putnam  
Stresses Funding for Pest and  
Disease Prevention*

The House of Representatives approved the fiscal year 2003 Budget Resolution on March 20, setting the budget parameters for agriculture and other federal fiscal spending for 2003. Congressman Putnam, a member of both the House Budget Committee and House Agriculture Committee, provided the following advisory language to the Budget Resolution Committee Report:

Ensuring the continued strength of our nation's agricultural infrastructure requires an investment in services to protect farmers, ranchers, and consumers from the threats of crop and animal pests and diseases. The FY 2003 Budget sets the framework to safeguard U.S. plant and animal resources from inadvertent as well as intentional pests and disease threats.

The FY 2003 Federal Budget strengthens USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS) reflecting the continued challenges to protecting U.S. agriculture at our borders. These resources will be used to more effectively detect and respond to a pest or disease outbreak as well as enhance monitoring and surveillance systems. Once detected, prompt eradication of an outbreak is essential to limit damages and reduce overall control costs. The 2003 budget continues an emphasis on funding of several critical eradication programs, including the Citrus Canker eradication program, vital to Florida.

The Federal Budget includes \$23.6 billion in budget authority for Agriculture and \$73.5 billion over 10 years for enactment of the farm bill. The budget resolution provides recommendations for spending including:

- **Port of Entry Inspections** - The resolution increases Agricultural Quarantine Service funds by \$19 million to beef up point of entry security at high-risk border crossings with Canada, Mexico, and other

sensitive areas.

- **Animal Health** - The Federal Budget increases funding by \$48 million for animal health monitoring to improve our emergency management system that coordinates and implements rapid responses to animal or plant pest or disease outbreak.
- **Food Safety** - The resolution provides a \$28 million increase to the Food Safety and Inspection Services to enhance consumer protection efforts regarding meat, poultry, and egg products.
- **Research** - The budget increases research spending by \$34 million to support research aimed at protecting the nation's agriculture and food system from attack by animal and plant diseases, insects and other pests as well as other threats to our food supply.

For more Budget information go to [www.budget.house.gov](http://www.budget.house.gov)



## Sign Up Today!

To receive inside up-to-date information on agricultural issues affecting the 12th District of Florida from Congressman Adam Putnam, go to his website at [www.house.gov/putnam](http://www.house.gov/putnam).



Congressman Putnam will provide breaking news on legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

M.C. Presorted Standard

*Adam Putnam*

# Congressman Adam Putnam Agriculture Newsletter

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United States House  
of Representatives  
DC Office:  
506 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-0912  
District Office:  
710 East Main Street  
Barrow, FL 33830



From the desk of...  
**Congressman Adam H. Putnam**

Dear Friend:

Welcome to the inaugural edition of my Florida Agriculture Newsletter. This publication is designed to provide important information on critical issues facing Florida farmers and ranchers. It is also designed to be short-lived in print form. As we build up a database of email addresses, this will be available only in electronic format. So sign up for future issues and forward it to your friends. It will reach more people and save the taxpayers' money.

Florida is one of the most diverse and important agricultural states in the nation, ranking 1st in the nation in citrus production, 2nd in vegetables and horticulture production and 4th in overall crop cash receipts. However, Florida farmers and ranchers face a host of challenges including growing threats from pests and disease, ever-increasing government regulations, steep production costs and challenging international markets.

Actions taken by the Congress and other federal agencies have a direct effect on the ability of Florida farmers and ranchers to maintain economic viability. It is my hope that these publications will provide a forum to communicate issues of importance to Florida agriculture. I encourage your insight and participation in this process. Please sign up on my website at [www.house.gov/putnam](http://www.house.gov/putnam) to receive this newsletter on a regular basis.

With over a \$20 billion direct impact on Florida's economy - our state's agriculture sector is more important than ever.

Sincerely,  
*Adam*

**The Juice**