

Area Crop Report 11/11 – 11/15

Who Will Serve as the New Secretary of Agriculture Under Newly Elected President Trump?

After reclaiming the White House, as only the second candidate in U.S. history to win nonconsecutive terms, many in the agriculture sector are wondering who he will elect as the new USDA secretary. Current Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, is the second longest serving secretary, but he is not being seen as continuing his role once Trump's administration takes office. Trump has expressed a desire to pursue even more aggressive trade policies, including broader tariffs. While there is a list of names out there who look to be possible candidates, Abel Maldonado seems to be towards the top of possibilities. He was considered for the USDA Secretary by Trump in 2017, but was ultimately not selected. Former House Ag Chairman Mike Conaway is another name who seems to be floating towards the top as well. In previous obligations, Mr. Conaway negotiated a farm bill (currently in a lame duck period), led an investigation resulting in debunking the Russia hoax, understands rural America, and was aligned with Trump on needed SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) reforms. The final selection will largely be based on various factors, such as the candidates' relationship with Trump, ability to navigate Washington politics, and alignment with Trump's vision into his second term, as he looks to assemble his full economic and foreign policy teams.

How Close is Legislature to a Farm Bill?

Congress is coming back this week for the first time post-election with the future of the farm bill still up in the air. Ag lawmakers have made miniscule, if any at all, progress in the past few months on a new farm bill reauthorization. These lawmakers will likely push for a one-year farm bill extension to a federal funding stop-gap measure or another must-pass bill before end of year, along with some money for commodity farmers who are reeling from economic losses and the named "orphan programs" which focus around conservation, energy, research, etc. Senate Ag Chair Debbie Stabenow has voiced she wants to get the farm bill over the finish line before her retirement at year's end, and House Republican Ag Committee Chair Glenn Thompson has made it clear he wants to pass a farm bill this year as well. With the newly elected U.S. President, House Democrats could be more willing to negotiate with Republican counterparts as they understand negotiation position will be weaker next year, but I am not holding my breath. A new congressional term means the farm bill would have to go through the Congressional Budget Office scoring process again. Funding levels previously agreed to could then be in jeopardy. The House Republican proposal is also calling for the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be moved into the farm bill. There will be less IRA money available next year, meaning lawmakers would need to find other avenues to pay for their plan.

What would you like to hear more about or gain further insight on going into the winter months? Contact Ethan Goff at ethan.goff@pcacoop.com or 620-238-3351.

"Sometimes you need to scorch everything to the ground, and start over. After burning the soil is richer, and new things can grow. People are like that, too. They start over. They find a way."



"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" – Joseph Campbell

We express our deep gratitude, not just today but every day, for the veterans and women and men actively fighting for our freedom. Thank you from all of us at Producers Cooperative Association.

Celeste Ng, *Little Fires Everywhere*