



Providing United States Winegrape Growers a Voice

Newsletter

Save the Date for 2023 D.C. Policy Conference

Annually, Winegrape Growers of America convenes in Washington D.C. to deliver a unified message to policymakers on priority legislative and regulatory issues. This year's policy conference will be Tuesday-Wednesday, May 9 and 10. Save the dates to join your U.S. colleagues for collective briefings and Hill visits. The Policy Conference is a joint effort with WineAmerica.

Legislative Update

On December 23, Congress passed and the President signed into law the \$1.7 trillion Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. This bill, which contains the 12 annual appropriations acts, funds federal agencies and programs through September 30, 2023, and includes several important provisions for which WGA has advocated on behalf of its members.

The bill contains \$1.17 billion for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), an increase of \$61 million above the FY 2022 funding level. It also provides \$216.1 million for specialty crop pests, including \$500,000 for control and eradication of the spotted lanternfly, and an additional \$500,000 for smoke taint research.

The omnibus bill includes legislative language that continues to prohibit the Food and Drug Administration from enforcing the Produce Safety Rule requirements for winegrapes.

Guidance contained in the bill encourages the National Agricultural Statistics service (NASS) to reinstate the 5-year Vineyard and Orchard Study and resume data collection and reporting so that grape, wine and juice producers can remain competitive.

The omnibus package also contains \$40.6 billion for recovery from hurricanes, wildfires and droughts, and several changes to retirement savings plans.

The most recent Farm Bill was passed by Congress in 2018. Key programs in the Farm Bill that are important to the grape and wine industry include: the Market Access Program (MAP); Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and grape research by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS); Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG), Plant Pest and Disease Programs, Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS) and the National Clean Plant Program (NCPN); and Crop Insurance. A new Farm Bill must be passed by the end of September 2023 to reauthorize these programs/agencies and ensure their continued existence. The new Farm Bill will be an action for the 118th Congress, which convenes in January 2023.

Farm Bill Update

Every five years, Congress passes legislation known as the “Farm Bill” to establish national policy for agriculture, conservation, forestry and nutrition. The most recent Farm Bill was passed by Congress in 2018.

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A new Farm Bill must be passed by the end of September 2023 to reauthorize these programs/agencies and ensure their continued existence. The process for a new Farm Bill began with hearings by the House Agriculture Committee and Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee during 2022. Passage of the 2023 Farm Bill will become the responsibility of the 118th Congress, which convenes in January 2023.

West Coast Smoke Exposure Task Force Steering Committee

The Steering Committee, made up of wine and grape organizations met earlier this month to discuss how additional members were added to the Task Force Membership to ensure adequate and balanced representation between industry and growers/vintners.

Steering Committee members confirmed their interest in setting quarterly meetings between ARS researchers, university researchers and industry members to discuss both short-term and long-term research needs and progress on projects. Additionally, meetings will be set twice per year with ARS and industry stakeholders for coordination, prioritization and communication.

The concept of an International Smoke Summit was discussed with possible topics, speakers, sponsors and overall focus confirmed. Proposed date is November 2023. A West Coast Smoke Summit was also discussed with early June 2023 dates suggested.

2023 WGA Annual Leadership Luncheon

It's that time of year where industry members come together from across the country for the Winegrape Growers of America annual Leadership Luncheon during the Unified Symposium in Sacramento, CA. Join WGA for lunch, networking, and honoring an individual with the Rich Smith Distinguished Service Award. The date is January 25, 2023, from 11:30AM - 1:30PM, again at the Hyatt Regency Capital View Room. Tickets are \$75/person and you don't need to be a member to attend. [Click here.](#)

We must continue to represent the interests of growers impacted by public policies that affect their bottom line. Please join us and renew your WGA annual membership.

Our goal is to get every state with a grower related organization as a member! Learn more at: www.winegrapegrowersofamerica.org. To renew your membership, contact us and we can send you an invoice. If you have questions, call us at 509.782.8234 or email vicky@wawinegrowers.org.