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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 12, 2018

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Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance Applauds Farm Bill Passage Through Congress

H.R. 2 (115) Includes Programs Supporting Specialty Crop Industry

WASHINGTON, D.C – The [Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance](#) (SCFBA), representing over 120 specialty crop organizations across the United States, released the following statement after H.R. 2 (115), the Farm Bill, was passed through the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives during in the final Congressional session of 2018:

The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance applauds the efforts of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer along with the members of the U.S. Senate in passing the Farm Bill 87-16 on December 11, and those of Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi along with the members of the U.S. House in passing the Farm Bill 369-47 on December 12.

The Alliance is pleased to see the following programs and funding allowances included in the 2018 Farm Bill:

- Enhanced funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), allowing all specialty crops to compete for the full \$80 million annually for the SCRI program
- An annual trust fund of \$25 million annually to maintain resources for the citrus industry for combating citrus greening
- Full \$9 million annual funding of the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program, which encourages reduction of bureaucratic impediments to make the program more efficient in overcoming trade barriers
- Continued support for programs that combat invasive pests and diseases at \$75 million annually, with the goal of enhancing its funding in five years by \$7.5 million to fund the National Clean Plant Network
- Increased Food Insecurity Nutrition Initiative (FINI) funding levels and continued support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Continued strong funding of Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG)
- Improved access to foreign markets through increased funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) of at least \$200 million annually
- Strong language in SCRI, AFRI and the newly created AGARDA program focusing on mechanization as a priority
- Reforms to the National Organic Program (NOP) operation

These programs play a critical role in the success and advancement of the specialty crop industry. It is vital for this bipartisan legislation to be signed into law by the President before the end of the year.

“Our specialty crop producers provide consumers with healthy eating options every single day,” said **John Keeling, executive president and CEO of the National Potato Council**. “By expanding the consumption of fruits and vegetables, bolstering research and pest management and supporting grower initiatives to improve competitiveness, we are feeding our country and the world.”

“We appreciate the bipartisan support of lawmakers and the leadership of the House and Senate agriculture committees in moving this important legislation across the finish line in Congress,” said **Mike Stuart, chief executive officer of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association**. “This bill is good news for consumers as well as specialty crop producers. It invests in programs to ensure schoolchildren are eating nutritious produce. It also will help specialty crop agriculture fight plant pests and diseases such as citrus greening. And it bolsters programs that helps us expand markets for our crops.”

“The Alliance is grateful for the overwhelming support of specialty crops in the Farm Bill and for Congress continued commitment to policies that are tremendously important to the industry,” said **Tom Nassif, president and CEO of Western Growers Association**. “We strongly urge the President to recognize the value Congress sees in these crucial programs, and sign H.R. 2 into law by the end of the 2018 session.”

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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 <http://www.farmbillalliance.org>.*