

**23 Sept 2005**

**Senate Passes Ag Appropriations Bill**

The Senate completed action on the FY 06 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2744) on Thursday morning by approving it in a 97 to 2 vote.

Sen. Robert Bennett (UT), chairman of the Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies subcommittee, led passage of the bill and will proceed to the House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences in the two versions of the legislation.

The Senate passed several amendments, among them an action by Sen. Bennett restricting the use of funds to publish, disseminate or distribute agricultural publications bulletin number 787, Trends in the U.S. Sheep Industry produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. It also directs the secretary of agriculture to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a comprehensive report on the economic development and current status of the sheep industry in the United States.

The sheep industry applauds Chairman Bennett for his leadership in the approval of the agricultural appropriations bill in the Senate, as well as the amendment addressing the problematic report on the sheep industry, stated Peter Orwick, American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) executive director.

Numerous meetings and correspondence have transpired over the last year in an attempt to correct the misleading and inaccurate information portrayed in this report. Unfortunately, the questions have not been resolved yet and these misconceptions have made their way into other policy decision documents, which is a great concern to U.S. producers, continued Orwick.

ASI will be working in support of the House-Senate conference committee on key issues of importance to sheep producers. At this time, it's uncertain when the conference committee will meet.

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