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# **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Horticulture Programs: Action in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress**

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## U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Horticulture Programs: Action in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress

The farm bill generally contains reauthorizations, amendments, and new programs that impact specialty crops, organic agriculture, local and regional food programs, hemp, and pest and disease management. Many of these programs are contained in the horticulture title, which was first added to a farm bill in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 farm bill; P.L. 110-234). The 2008 farm bill amended programs that were introduced in the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-465) (such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program), created new programs that primarily benefitted horticulture (such as the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program), and contained support for the National Organic Program (NOP). In subsequent farm bills, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 farm bill; P.L. 113-79) and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334), the horticulture title expanded to include support for local and urban agriculture and hemp production. Farm bill support for horticultural crops is not limited to the horticulture title; programs in other titles, such as the research and trade titles, also provide support for these crops.

The most recent farm bill, the 2018 farm bill, expired in 2023. It has been extended three times for a year at a time: in November 2023 to cover FY2024 and crop year 2024 (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102); in December 2024 to cover FY2025 and crop year 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101); and in November 2025 to cover FY2026 and crop year 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002).

The 119<sup>th</sup> Congress passed two laws that impact horticulture programs and provisions from the 2018 farm bill. These two laws are the FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21), which amended certain existing horticulture programs, and the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division B, §781), which amended the federal definition of *hemp* and extended the 2018 farm bill through FY2026.

P.L. 119-21 provided additional funding for certain mandatory spending programs in the horticulture title. The law did not reauthorize all expired or expiring programs from the 2018 farm bill. The law impacted horticulture programs with and without budget baseline. Programs with baseline that received increased funding in P.L. 119-21 include the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program, and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Horticulture programs without baseline that received funding from P.L. 119-21 include support programs for NOP; the Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Development Trust Fund; the Multiple Crop and Pesticide Use Survey; and the Urban, Indoor, and Other Emerging Agricultural Production, Research, Education, and Extension Initiative.

P.L. 119-37 amended the federal definition of hemp that was established in the 2018 farm bill. That prior definition allowed agricultural production and processing of hemp and hemp-derived products to fall outside of restrictions in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §§801-904) that otherwise affect cannabis. The new definition defines hemp on the basis of a total tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration of 0.3% on a dry weight basis rather than only delta-9 THC, while making explicit inclusions and exclusions.

On February 13, 2026, Representative Glenn “GT” Thompson, chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, introduced a farm bill, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567), which contains reauthorizations and amendments to horticulture programs. The bill was voted out of committee and ordered to be reported on March 4, 2026. On April 30, 2026, the bill was passed by the House. Some other Members of Congress also have introduced legislation that would impact horticulture programs.

In addition to the amendments to horticulture programs in P.L. 119-21 and P.L. 119-37, Congress may consider reauthorizing the program authority for existing horticulture programs that receive mandatory spending or reauthorizing programs that receive discretionary appropriations. Congress also could consider amending, expanding, or terminating existing horticulture programs and provisions related to hemp, specialty crops, local and regional food systems, and organic agriculture. Additionally, Congress could create new programs impacting these areas or take no action on horticulture programs.

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## Introduction

For nearly a century, Congress has passed farm bills, which are omnibus, multiyear laws that govern an array of agricultural and food programs.<sup>1</sup> Since 2008, farm bills have contained a horticulture title that reauthorizes, amends, and authorizes new programs that impact specialty crops, organic agriculture, local and regional food systems, hemp, and pest and disease management.<sup>2</sup> Areas covered under the horticulture title also may receive support from programs and authorizations in other titles, such as the research, trade, commodities, and crop insurance titles.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 farm bill; P.L. 110-234) was the first farm bill to contain a horticulture title.<sup>3</sup> Its horticulture title consisted of specialty crop programs, such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP); new programs that primarily benefitted horticulture, such as the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program; and financial support for the National Organic Program (NOP).<sup>4</sup> Congress expanded the horticulture title in the next two farm bills, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 farm bill; P.L. 113-79) and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 farm bill; P.L. 115-334), by including financial support for local and urban agriculture and addressing hemp production.<sup>5</sup>

Congress extended the 2018 farm bill, which expired in 2023, three times for a year at a time.<sup>6</sup> As of March 2026, the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress has passed two laws that impact programs and provisions from the horticulture title of the 2018 farm bill. The FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21) amended a number of existing horticulture programs.<sup>7</sup> The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37), provided an extension of the 2018 farm bill through FY2026, provided annual appropriations for agricultural programs through FY2026, and amended the statutory definition of *hemp*.

This report provides an overview of provisions in P.L. 119-21 and P.L. 119-37 that have affected farm bill horticulture title programs and related policies. This report does not discuss all farm bill

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<sup>1</sup> For background on farm bills, see CRS Report RS22131, *What Is the Farm Bill?*

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of the horticultural title generally centers around specialty crops, although not all horticultural crops are considered specialty crops (e.g., hemp). The statutory definition of *specialty crop* is “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture)” (7 U.S.C. §1621 note). For information on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) interpretation of the definition, see USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), “What is a Specialty Crop,” <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop>.

<sup>3</sup> For information on past farm bills, see CRS Report R45210, *Farm Bills: Major Legislative Actions, 1965-2024*.

<sup>4</sup> Many of these programs had been enacted in the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-465). For information on specialty crop programs in the farm bill, see CRS Report R48625, *Specialty Crops: Selected Farm Bill Programs*. The National Organic Program (NOP) was created in 1990 through the Organic Foods Production Act in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-624). NOP was fully implemented by USDA in 2002. For discussion of USDA support for organic agriculture, see CRS In Focus IF10278, *U.S. Farm Policy: USDA-Certified Organic Production*.

<sup>5</sup> For information on local food programs in the farm bill, see CRS Report R46538, *Local and Urban Food Systems: Selected Farm Bill and Other Federal Programs*. For more on hemp, see CRS Report R44742, *Defining Hemp: A Fact Sheet*; and CRS In Focus IF13136, *Changes to the Statutory Definition of Hemp and Issues for Congress*.

<sup>6</sup> Programs may operate on a calendar year, fiscal year, or crop year. A *crop year* is the calendar year in which a commodity is harvested. The 2018 farm bill was extended in November 2023 to cover FY2024 and crop year 2024 (P.L. 118-22, Division B, §102); in December 2024 to cover FY2025 and crop year 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D, §4101); and in November 2025 to cover FY2026 and crop year 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division E, §5002).

<sup>7</sup> For more on the general impact of P.L. 119-21 on the farm bill, see CRS Report R48775, *The Farm Bill After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation: Frequently Asked Questions*.

provisions that may affect the horticultural sector, and it does not discuss discretionary appropriations in P.L. 119-37.<sup>8</sup> The report summarizes selected proposed legislation in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress relating to areas of the horticulture title, including the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567). Potential issues for Congress relating to horticulture programs and policies are discussed, including potential topics of debate and possible enactment of a future farm bill.

## Legislation Enacted in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress

This section provides an overview of the provisions enacted in P.L. 119-21 and P.L. 119-37 that impact farm bill horticulture programs and provisions.

### FY2025 Budget Reconciliation Law (P.L. 119-21)

The FY2025 budget reconciliation law (P.L. 119-21), enacted in July 2025, made changes to selected mandatory spending for farm bill programs relating to areas in the horticulture title. The law reauthorized some expired or expiring horticulture program provisions from the 2018 farm bill.<sup>9</sup>

Mandatory spending programs may have permanently authorized funding or may receive temporarily authorized funding that expires after a specific fiscal year.<sup>10</sup> Both types of programs may face disruptions to operations as a result of an expired program authority. Some farm bill horticulture programs are considered to have permanently authorized funding (baseline); that is, these programs are assumed to continue, from a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) budgetary perspective, beyond the end of their authorization period. These programs are included in the future government spending projections by CBO, regardless of whether their program authorization expires.<sup>11</sup> Some horticulture programs with permanently authorized funding have a separate program authorization (i.e., SCBGP grants to states, the Local Agriculture Marketing Program [LAMP], and the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative [OREI]).<sup>12</sup> Other programs may not continue in the CBO spending projections because the authorizing and

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<sup>8</sup> The horticulture titles of some farm bills have been used to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. §§136 et seq), a law that governs pesticide use in agricultural production. This report does not discuss potential amendments to FIFRA or all farm bill provisions that may affect the horticultural sector. For example, exporters of U.S. horticultural crops may benefit from USDA trade-related programs; see CRS In Focus IF12155, *Farm Bill Primer: Trade and Export Promotion Programs*. Additionally, horticultural crop producers may be impacted by changes to the federal crop insurance and disaster assistance programs, as these changes may increase the financial support offered to farmers; see CRS Report R48574, *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1): Title I, Farm Safety Net and Miscellaneous Provisions*.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the impacts of budget reconciliation on farm bill programs, see CRS Report R48775, *The Farm Bill After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation: Frequently Asked Questions*. For more on budget reconciliation, see CRS Report R48444, *The Reconciliation Process: Frequently Asked Questions*.

<sup>10</sup> Programs with *mandatory spending authority* are authorized for a period of years and have multiyear estimates of projected spending under current law (i.e., *baseline* projections). If legislation proposes policy changes for programs, the proposed changes' effects are evaluated as the additional costs or savings from the proposed provisions (i.e., budgetary *scores* of a bill) relative to the baseline projections.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of budget baseline, see CRS In Focus IF12115, *Farm Bill Primer: Programs Without a Budget Baseline*.

<sup>12</sup> For example, annual mandatory funding for the Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP) is permanently authorized as per 7 U.S.C. §1627c(i)(1), but the authorization to provide grants in the program expires at the end of FY2026, per 7 U.S.C. §1627c(d)(1) and the 2018 farm bill extension in P.L. 119-37.

budget committees did not provide funding past a particular fiscal year, which may lead CBO to assume that they will not continue.<sup>13</sup>

CBO estimated that the horticulture section of P.L. 119-21 (§10606) would increase spending by \$334 million from FY2025 to FY2034 compared with the (January 2025) baseline projections for the same budget window.<sup>14</sup> This scoring estimate reflects the changes in Section 10106; it does not include all spending on horticultural programs. In total, including other titles of the farm bill discussed in this report and itemized in the bullet lists in the next two headings, the budget projections from P.L. 119-21 increase spending by approximately \$1.3 billion from FY2025 to FY2034.<sup>15</sup> This implies that over the course of FY2025-FY2034, mandatory spending on the horticulture programs discussed in this report would be approximately \$1.3 billion more than if P.L. 119-21 had not been enacted. This estimate accounts for programs with permanent funding and those that received funding through FY2031 in P.L. 119-21.

### Funding Increases for Programs with Permanently Authorized Funding

The following programs with permanently authorized funding received an increase in annual mandatory funding from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) under P.L. 119-21:<sup>16</sup>

- **Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI; 7 U.S.C. §7632).**<sup>17</sup> Annual CCC funding increased from \$80 million in FY2025 to \$175 million for FY2026 and each year thereafter to remain available until expended.
- **Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention (7 U.S.C. §7721).**<sup>18</sup> Annual CCC funding increased from \$75 million in FY2025 to \$90 million for FY2026 and each year thereafter.
- **SCBGP (7 U.S.C. §1621 note).**<sup>19</sup> Annual CCC funding increased from \$85 million in FY2025 to \$100 million for FY2026 and each year thereafter.

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the budget dynamics of the farm bill, see CRS In Focus IF12233, *Farm Bill Primer: Budget Dynamics*. For discussion of the broader impact of P.L. 119-21 on selected farm bill programs beyond horticulture, see CRS Insight IN12573, *Budget Reconciliation: Farm Bill Programs Without a Budget Baseline and Trade Promotion, Research, Horticulture, and Animal Health Programs with a Budget Baseline*.

<sup>14</sup> Report available at Congressional Budget Office (CBO), “Estimated Budgetary Effects of P.L. 119-21, to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Relative to CBO’s January 2025 Baseline,” July 21, 2025, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61570>.

<sup>15</sup> This estimate was calculated by CRS from CBO baseline estimates.

<sup>16</sup> The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) is the government-owned financial institution that finances authorized federal farm commodity price support and production programs. For more on the CCC, see CRS Report R44606, *The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)*. For an overview of horticulture programs with baseline, see CRS Report R48625, *Specialty Crops: Selected Farm Bill Programs*. The rules of budget reconciliation do not allow for all of the policy changes that may be proposed for some mandatory spending programs, particularly for discretionary spending programs that are usually in a farm bill.

<sup>17</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10604(e). An overview of the program and funding opportunities can be found at USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), “Specialty Crop Research Initiative,” <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/specialty-crop-research-initiative>.

<sup>18</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(a). For an overview of the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program under the Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS), see USDA, APHIS, “PPA 771: Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program,” <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/funding/ppdmdpp>.

<sup>19</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(b). An overview and program information for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program can be found at USDA, AMS, “Specialty Crop Block Grant Program,” <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgbp>.

## Funding for Programs Extended in P.L. 119-21

P.L. 119-21 also provided funding for certain horticulture programs that were not funded after FY2024. These programs received mandatory budget authority in the 2018 farm bill, but the funding expired along with the 2018 farm bill's expiration in 2023.<sup>20</sup> Some of these programs received one year of funding for FY2024 in the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024 (FY2024 farm bill extension; P.L. 118-22, Division B). P.L. 119-21 provided funding for these programs consistent with or higher than 2018 farm bill levels:

- **Urban, Indoor, and Other Emerging Agricultural Production Research, Education, and Extension Initiative** (7 U.S.C. §5925g).<sup>21</sup> P.L. 119-21 provides \$2 million annually for FY2025-FY2031. The 2018 farm bill funded the program with \$10 million in FY2019 to remain available until expended, and the FY2024 farm bill extension provided \$2 million in funding for FY2024.
- **Organic Production and Market Data Initiative** (7 U.S.C. §5925c).<sup>22</sup> P.L. 119-21 provides \$10 million in total for FY2026-FY2031 to remain available until expended. The 2018 farm bill provided \$5 million in total for FY2019-FY2023 to remain available until expended. The FY2024 farm bill extension provided \$1 million for FY2024.
- **Modernization and Improvement of International Trade Technology Systems and Data Collection** (7 U.S.C. §6522).<sup>23</sup> P.L. 119-21 provides \$1 million in funds for FY2025 and \$5 million in FY2026. The 2018 farm bill provided \$5 million for FY2019, and an additional \$1 million was provided for FY2024 in the FY2024 farm bill extension. Each allocation is to remain available until expended.
- **National Organic Certification Cost Share Program** (7 U.S.C. §6523).<sup>24</sup> P.L. 119-21 provides \$8 million annually for FY2025-FY2031. This is the same annual spending level as in the 2018 farm bill for FY2022 and FY2023 and in the FY2024 farm bill extension for FY2024. Each allocation is to remain available until expended.
- **Multiple Crop and Pesticide Use Survey** (not codified; see §10109(c) of P.L. 115-334).<sup>25</sup> P.L. 119-21 provided \$5 million of CCC funding for FY2026 to remain available until expended. This is an increase from the 2018 farm bill, which provided \$500,000 for FY2019 to remain available until expended.

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<sup>20</sup> For background on these programs, including discussion of one-year mandatory funding provided for some of these programs in a farm bill extension for FY2024, see CRS In Focus IF12115, *Farm Bill Primer: Programs Without a Budget Baseline*.

<sup>21</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10604(a). For more on the program and funding opportunities, see USDA, NIFA, "Urban, Indoor, and Emerging Agriculture," <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/urban-indoor-emerging-agriculture>.

<sup>22</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(c). The data outputs from the initiative can be found at USDA, AMS, "Organic Reports," <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/organic>.

<sup>23</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(d). This funding contributes to the USDA Organic Integrity Database, which contains information on USDA certified organic operations globally. For a link to the database, see USDA, AMS, "Organic Integrity Database," <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/Default>. For more on USDA organic enforcement, see CRS Report R48379, *Organic Agriculture Standards: Oversight and Enforcement*.

<sup>24</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(e). For more on the Organic Certification Cost-Share program and funding opportunities, see USDA, Farm Service Agency, "Organic Certification Cost Share Program," <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/organic-certification-cost-share-program-occcsp>.

<sup>25</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10606(f). For more on the survey, see USDA, "Notice of Request for Approval for Generic Clearance to Conduct Multiple Crop and Pesticide Use Surveys," 85 *Federal Register* 17304-17306, March 27, 2020.

- **Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Development Trust Fund** (7 U.S.C. §7632 note).<sup>26</sup> P.L. 119-21 provides for a transfer of \$25 million annually from the CCC for FY2025-FY2031 to remain available until expended. This funding level is the same as in the 2018 farm bill and as the level provided for in the FY2024 farm bill extension for FY2024.

## **Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37)**

P.L. 119-37 provides an extension of the 2018 farm bill through FY2026 and annual appropriations for agricultural programs through FY2026. The law also amends the statutory definition of hemp in 7 U.S.C. §1639o. P.L. 119-37 extends through FY2026 the 2018 farm bill authorization to provide grants through some programs, such as SCBGP.<sup>27</sup> The law also extends through FY2026 authorizations of appropriations for some farm bill programs, such as the allocation to Specialty Crop Market News.<sup>28</sup>

### **Statutory Definition of Hemp**

The 2018 farm bill excluded hemp from the definition of marijuana in the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) and defined hemp.<sup>29</sup> Hemp and marijuana are varieties of the same plant, *cannabis sativa*.<sup>30</sup> In the 2018 farm bill, Congress amended the CSA definition of marijuana to reflect the differences in the chemical and psychoactive properties between hemp and marijuana. The 2018 farm bill referred only to the level of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to distinguish hemp from marijuana and did not include in the definition the other cannabinoids found within the cannabis plant.<sup>31</sup>

P.L. 119-37 amended the statutory definition of hemp in 7 U.S.C. §1639o. P.L. 119-37 changed the limit in the hemp definition to a *total THC concentration* of less than 0.3% on a dry weight basis, rather than 0.3% of delta-9 THC only.<sup>32</sup> The new definition of hemp also explicitly includes

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<sup>26</sup> P.L. 119-21, §10607(f). An overview of the trust fund and its projects and funding opportunities can be found at USDA, NIFA, “Emergency Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program,” <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/emergency-citrus-disease-research-extension-program>.

<sup>27</sup> For more on the implications of the 2018 farm bill extension, see this report’s “Potential Issues for Congress” section.

<sup>28</sup> 7 U.S.C. §1622b.

<sup>29</sup> *Marijuana* is defined in 21 U.S.C. §802. *Hemp* is defined in 7 U.S.C §1639o; the amended definition is denoted under the “Amendment of Section” in 7 U.S.C. §1639o.

<sup>30</sup> For more on hemp as an agricultural commodity, see CRS Report R44742, *Defining Hemp: A Fact Sheet*.

<sup>31</sup> *Cannabinoids* refer to the unique chemical compounds produced in cannabis. Delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the primary intoxicant cannabinoid in cannabis but is not the only naturally occurring THC compound in the plant. For more on the chemical composition of cannabis, see CRS Report R44742, *Defining Hemp: A Fact Sheet*. Congress considered similar amendments to the statutory definition and hemp production programs in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. For more on the prior legislative actions and issues that led to the change in the definition of hemp, see CRS In Focus IF13136, *Changes to the Statutory Definition of Hemp and Issues for Congress*.

<sup>32</sup> For a more detailed description of these changes and potential implications, see CRS In Focus IF13136, *Changes to the Statutory Definition of Hemp and Issues for Congress*; CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11381, *Changes to the Federal Definition of Hemp: Legal Considerations Under the Controlled Substances Act*; and CRS Insight IN12620, *Change to Federal Definition of Hemp and Implications for Federal Enforcement*.

*industrial hemp*—which generally is hemp grown for non-cannabinoid purposes—and establishes exclusions from the new hemp definition, such as

- seeds from a cannabis plant exceeding a 0.3% total THC concentration,
- intermediate hemp-derived products exceeding a 0.3% total THC concentration, and
- final hemp-derived cannabinoid products containing more than 0.4 milligrams of THC per “container.”

Congress directed that the change to the definition of hemp is to go into effect 365 days after enactment of P.L. 119-37.

By being excluded from the new hemp definition, these seeds and products, listed above, remain subject to the CSA definition of marijuana; this seemingly alters the legal status of many hemp products currently available on the market, though it remains unclear if and how federal law enforcement will enforce the new prohibitions when the new definition goes into effect. The new hemp definition also excludes hemp-derived cannabinoid products that contain cannabinoids that are not naturally produced by the cannabis plant or are capable of being naturally produced but were synthesized or manufactured outside the plant.<sup>33</sup> P.L. 119-37 also requires the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) within 90 days of enactment to publish lists of naturally occurring cannabinoids, THC-class cannabinoids, and all known cannabinoids that have similar effects as THC-class cannabinoids. FDA also is to further define the term *container*.

## Legislation Introduced in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress

Since enactment of P.L. 119-21 and P.L. 119-37, Congress has been working on a new farm bill.<sup>34</sup> On February 13, 2026, House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson introduced the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567), which was ordered to be reported on March 4, 2026, and reported in the House on April 21, 2026. On April 30, 2026, H.R. 7567 was passed by the House. Some other Members of Congress also have introduced legislation related to federal horticulture programs. This section describes selected legislation introduced in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress that would impact horticulture programs and provisions.<sup>35</sup>

### The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567)

H.R. 7567 would reauthorize and amend selected horticulture programs and their appropriations and create new programs.

H.R. 7567 would reauthorize the program authority through FY2031 for horticulture programs in the farm bill that receive mandatory spending, such as the SCBGP, LAMP (7 U.S.C. §1627c), and OREI (7 U.S.C. §5925b).<sup>36</sup> In addition to reauthorization, the bill would prevent USDA from requiring a cost share for states and sub-awardees in the SCBGP.

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<sup>33</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Synthetic Cannabinoids,” <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/synthetic-cannabinoids>.

<sup>34</sup> For more on the potential farm bill, see CRS Report R48775, *The Farm Bill After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation: Frequently Asked Questions*.

<sup>35</sup> The section discusses legislation introduced as of May 22, 2026.

<sup>36</sup> For more on the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative, funding opportunities, and eligibility, see USDA, NIFA, “Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative,” [https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-\(continued...\)](https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-(continued...))

H.R. 7567 would reauthorize appropriations for selected horticulture programs through FY2031. These programs include OREI; SCRI; Specialty Crop Market News (7 U.S.C. §1622b); the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP) (7 U.S.C. §6923); the National Plant Diagnostic Network (7 U.S.C. §8914); the Acer Access and Development Program (7 U.S.C. §1632c); the organic production and market data initiative; and NOP (7 U.S.C. §6522).<sup>37</sup>

Section 10005 of H.R. 7567 would amend the state and tribal hemp production plans and USDA hemp production plans in statute.<sup>38</sup> The bill would amend the testing standard for hemp to total THC rather than delta-9 THC only. Additionally, the bill would require states, Tribes, and USDA to provide procedures in their hemp production plans for producers to designate if they are producing solely industrial hemp or hemp for other purposes (i.e., for cannabinoid uses). The bill also allows states, Tribes, and USDA to relax testing requirements for industrial hemp producers by eliminating the requirements for total THC testing and instead developing inspection procedures. The bill would amend enforcement procedures in the hemp production plans and require USDA to collaborate with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to accredit laboratories for testing hemp.

H.R. 7567 would amend SCRI and other horticulture programs, including NOP and LAMP. The bill includes an allocation of \$30 million in its mandatory funding to go toward a newly created Specialty Crop Mechanization and Automation Research and Extension Program as part of SCRI.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the bill would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the matching funds requirement for SCRI.<sup>40</sup> Section 10003 would amend OUAIP by expanding its responsibilities and focus. For example, it would expand the ability of the office to enter into cooperative agreements with eligible entities to support the development of urban and innovative production. Section 10105 would amend organic certification and include the option for USDA to offer technical assistance, outreach, and education to support organic production through existing programs at USDA agencies.<sup>41</sup> Section 10102 would amend LAMP by expanding the types of businesses that can participate in LAMP programs, expand the eligible activities for grants to include the purchase of equipment for certain purposes, and simplify the application process for specified eligible entities. Section 10107 would provide amendments to NOP, including definitions for *oversight protocols* and *risk to organic integrity*. Section 10108 of the bill would maintain requirements for compliance inspections but allow virtual inspections for domestic operations that are less likely to be found in violation of the organic standards. Section 10109 would require USDA to conduct a study on whether NOP should restructure its oversight protocols. Section 12414 would require USDA to submit a report to the agriculture committees in

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opportunities/organic-agriculture-research-extension-initiative. For more on the programs in LAMP, see USDA, AMS, “Local Agriculture Market Program,” <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lamp>. The relevant sections of H.R. 7567 for these reauthorizations are §§7205, 10001, and 10102.

<sup>37</sup> For more on data collection from Specialty Crop Market News, see USDA, AMS, “Specialty Crops,” <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/fruits-vegetables>. For an overview, eligibility, and funding opportunities within the National Plant Diagnostic Network, see USDA, NIFA, “Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative National Plant Diagnostic Network,” <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/fadi/fadi-npdn>. For more on the Acer Access and Development Program and funding opportunities, see USDA, AMS, “Acer Access and Development Program,” <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/acer>. The relevant sections for these reauthorizations in H.R. 7567 are §§7205, 7305, 10002, 10003, 10004, 10103, 10104, and 10105.

<sup>38</sup> State and tribal hemp production plan requirements are found at 7 U.S.C. §1639p. USDA’s hemp production plan requirements are found at 7 U.S.C. §1639q.

<sup>39</sup> Currently, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) can fund projects dedicated to specialty crop mechanization but does not have any set funds for these projects, which generally are awarded through competitive grants.

<sup>40</sup> H.R. 3656 also would waive the matching funds requirement for SCRI.

<sup>41</sup> H.R. 7567 includes price reporting and requirements for data for organic milk.

both chambers that discusses the barriers for organic farms to participate in federal programs. The report also would contain steps that USDA can take to remove barriers for organic farmers and any actions needed from Congress for this purpose.

Section 4306 would create the Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Program, a new program that would support local food and require USDA to enter into cooperative purchasing agreements with state, tribal, and territorial governments to purchase food from local and regional producers and distribute it to organizations with experience in food distribution, such as certain nonprofits. The bill would authorize \$200 million in appropriations through FY2031 for the program.

Some other provisions would impact individual crops. Section 7613 would require the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to conduct a survey on grape production in each state. Additionally, Section 12421 would require that any honey packed, repacked, labeled, marketed, or sold in interstate commerce in the United States (including imports) is honey, pure honey, or meets acceptable standards determined by USDA. The bill requires the honey to be tested in a qualified laboratory in the United States. A foreign certificate alone would not be sufficient. Section 12416 would require federal agencies (including USDA) to collaborate with domestic honey producers and land-grant universities to establish a harmonized federal definition and standards for honey.

## Other Selected Legislation

Some Members of Congress have introduced other legislation in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress that would impact horticulture programs and farm bill provisions.

Since enactment of P.L. 119-37, which amended the definition of hemp, some Members have introduced legislation to extend the effective date for the new definition to three years (H.R. 7024, H.R. 7010, S. 3686), and one bill would repeal the new hemp definition (H.R. 6209). Additionally, some Members have introduced legislation that would provide regulatory frameworks for hemp cannabinoid products (H.R. 7212, S. 3474).

Other bills in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress would amend or create new horticulture programs. For example, some Members have introduced legislation that would create grants to support mechanization for specialty crop producers (H.R. 5097) or to promote specialty crops broadly (H.R. 5059). Some legislation would require that a certain fraction of SCRI funding is spent on research relating to projects focused on climate (H.R. 3077, S. 1507). Additional proposals would amend organic agriculture programs, such as proposals to expand organic research (H.R. 5703, S. 1385), modify organic import testing requirements (S. 1398), or create organic market development grants (H.R. 6593, S. 3427). Some bills would create a program, similar to Section 4306 of H.R. 7567, to procure and distribute local foods (H.R. 4782, H.R. 6697, H.R. 6706, S. 2338).<sup>42</sup> Other proposals would amend LAMP to increase CCC funding transferred to the program (H.R. 6775), distribute the funding allocations differently across priorities (H.R. 3077, S. 1507, H.R. 6775), or both.

## Potential Issues for Congress

Following enactment of P.L. 119-21 and P.L. 119-37, with respect to horticulture programs and policies, Congress may consider whether or not to undertake any additional farm bill reauthorizations, create new agricultural programs, amend existing programs and provisions, or

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<sup>42</sup> H.R. 4782 was cited as legislation included in H.R. 7567 as per House Committee on Agriculture, *Standalone Legislation Included in H.R. 7567, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026*, [https://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/ffns26\\_markerbill\\_tracker.pdf](https://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/ffns26_markerbill_tracker.pdf).

eliminate programs. This section provides discussion of potential issues for Congress on various horticulture policy topics, including specialty crops, organic agriculture, hemp, and local and regional food systems.

## Reauthorization of Expiring Programs

Congress may consider whether to reauthorize horticulture programs that receive mandatory spending and whether to adjust those spending levels. These programs are SCBGP, LAMP, and OREI. Although these programs have permanently authorized spending, their authorization to operate expires at the end of FY2026 when the farm bill extension in P.L. 119-37 expires.<sup>43</sup> H.R. 7567 includes reauthorizations of these programs through FY2031 and would not alter the mandatory funding allocations.

Additionally, Congress may consider whether to reauthorize and whether to change the authorized levels of appropriations for horticulture programs that receive discretionary spending, such as OREI; the Urban, Indoor, and Other Emerging Agricultural Production, Research, Education, and Extension Initiative; and Specialty Crop Market News.<sup>44</sup> The authorizations for appropriations for these programs and initiatives are set to expire at the end of FY2026 when the farm bill extension in P.L. 119-37 expires. H.R. 7567 includes reauthorizations of appropriations for these programs at current levels through FY2031.

Congress may consider another short-term extension (e.g., one year) of the 2018 farm bill if new farm bill legislation is not passed in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. Another extension of the farm bill would continue the authorization to provide grants through programs such as SCBGP, LAMP, and OREI for the length of the extension. If an extension were not enacted in this circumstance, the authorization to provide grants in these programs would expire. An extension would extend the authorization of appropriations for discretionary programs. Additionally, an extension generally would not include amendments to the programs, such as those offered in H.R. 7567. Programs that received funding through P.L. 119-21 would continue to operate and would not be impacted by a farm bill extension unless their authorization is separate from their funding, such as with SCBGP. Additionally, Congress could consider allowing these programs to expire and cease operations.

## Specialty Crop Programs

Congress may consider whether or not to amend or expand horticulture programs or decrease funding or eliminate such programs. For example, Congress could change the allocation of funds for specialty crop research in the SCRI program to support mechanization and automation research. Current law highlights mechanization research as a priority of the program—such projects are eligible to receive funding, but these activities are not given a formal allocation in the mandatory funding. H.R. 7567 would allocate \$30 million of SCRI’s annual funding of \$175 million to mechanization and automation projects. Other legislation would prioritize SCRI research projects focused on climate (H.R. 3077, S. 1507). Some legislation introduced in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress would promote mechanization and specialty crops broadly (H.R. 5059; H.R. 5097). Industry groups have expressed support for specialty crop mechanization programs

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<sup>43</sup> For more on expiring authorizations, see CRS Report R48775, *The Farm Bill After FY2025 Budget Reconciliation: Frequently Asked Questions*.

<sup>44</sup> For more on the work of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, see USDA, “Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production,” <https://www.usda.gov/farming-and-ranching/agricultural-education-and-outreach/urban-agriculture-and-innovative-production>. For more programs for which Congress may consider reauthorizing appropriations, see this report’s “H.R. 7567” section.

through research or market promotion for specialty crops broadly.<sup>45</sup> Others may be of the opinion that farmers have sufficient funding opportunities for these efforts or that they are commercial or nongovernmental activities. Additionally, Congress may consider evaluating cost-sharing requirements for horticulture programs (e.g., H.R. 7567 would prohibit USDA from imposing cost-share requirements).

Congress may consider expanding or reducing the responsibilities and projects of OUAIP. Currently, the office promotes urban, indoor, and emerging agricultural practices that include operations such as community gardens and farms in urban areas, rooftop farms, greenhouses, hydroponic farms, and others. The office manages programs that support the above operations, coordinates within USDA to update programs, engages in stakeholder relations, and has other responsibilities.<sup>46</sup> H.R. 7567 proposes to expand the office's mission to include controlled environment agriculture. The bill also proposes to add technical assistance to operations and promotion of conservation techniques to the office's responsibilities. Additionally, the bill would authorize the office to enter into cooperative agreements to support urban and innovative agricultural production. Some in the industry have supported expansion of OUAIP's activities and an increase of funding for the office.<sup>47</sup> Others may question the federal role in assisting urban agriculture and argue that the resources supporting urban agriculture should be spent elsewhere.

Congress may also consider specific provisions and amendments to statutes for individual crops. For example, H.R. 7567 would require NASS to collect additional survey data on grape production.<sup>48</sup> Congress may consider whether this activity might be needed for additional crops. Congress also may choose to amend the inspection and certification standards for various crops in interstate commerce. For example, H.R. 7567 would amend the identification requirements for honey in 7 U.S.C. §1622(h)(6).<sup>49</sup> The bill would introduce requirements that honey in the domestic U.S. market, including imports, is to be inspected in certified laboratories to ensure that the product meets standards of identification set by USDA. Currently, honey imports may be marketed as honey when certified by a foreign entity. Additionally, the bill would require USDA and other agencies to establish a national definition for honey. These legislative actions follow concerns from the FDA and the honey industry surrounding the prevalence of fraudulent honey on the market.<sup>50</sup> Others may question the role of the federal government in food standards and identity.

## Organic Agriculture

Congress may consider whether or not to change policies within NOP or programs that support agricultural production certified under NOP. Possible changes could include directing USDA to offer technical assistance, outreach, and education to support organic production through existing programs at USDA agencies or reauthorizing or changing appropriations levels for NOP, as proposed in H.R. 7567. Congress also could consider requiring USDA to report on potential

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<sup>45</sup> Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA), *Farm Bill Policy Recommendations*, <https://farmbillalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/SCFBA-Recommendations-119th-Congress-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> 7 U.S.C. §6923.

<sup>47</sup> National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), *2023 Farm Bill Platform*, August 5, 2025, <https://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2023-Farm-Bill-Platform.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Similar provisions are proposed in H.R. 4205 in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress.

<sup>49</sup> Similar provisions are proposed in H.R. 2162 in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress.

<sup>50</sup> See Food and Drug Administration (FDA), "FDA Releases FY25 Sampling Results on Economically Motivated Adulteration in Honey," <https://www.fda.gov/food/hfp-constituent-updates/fda-releases-fy25-sampling-results-economically-motivated-adulteration-honey>; and CRS In Focus IF12185, *Ongoing Efforts to Address Fraud and Adulteration of Honey*.

barriers to access for organic farmers to receive federal assistance, which is also proposed in H.R. 7567. Congress may consider amending NOP's inspection and oversight requirements similarly to H.R. 7567, which bases the requirements on the potential for an operation to violate the NOP standards or whether the operation is domestic or international. These standards would require additional inspection and oversight of international operations and operations that are deemed "higher risk" for violating organic standards while reducing the oversight protocols of on-site inspections to once every three years among operations deemed "lower risk." Additionally, Congress could consider allowing for virtual inspections for operations that are deemed lower risk for violations of organic standards. Congress also may consider making no further amendments to organic standards and enforcement and continuing to conduct oversight of the current standards.<sup>51</sup> Congress might consider other options, such as expanding organic research (H.R. 5703, S. 1385), modifying regulations for organic imports (S. 1398), or creating marketing and promotion grants (H.R. 6593, S. 3427). Some stakeholders have expressed support for efforts to improve organic regulations, market access, and research.<sup>52</sup> Others may question the federal role in assisting and promoting organic agriculture or express that there is no need to amend or update the current NOP standards.<sup>53</sup>

## Local and Regional Food Systems

Congress may consider creating new local food programs, expanding existing ones, or decreasing funding or eliminating such programs. For example, H.R. 7567 would codify a program similar to the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA). USDA created and implemented LFPA using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2) and from the CCC to enter into cooperative purchasing agreements with qualifying local and regional producers, who then distributed the commodities.<sup>54</sup> Data from USAspending.gov reflect a rescission of funds for LFPA in 2025.<sup>55</sup> H.R. 7567 would authorize appropriations for its version of the program without using CCC funding. Prior to the introduction of H.R. 7567, some Members of Congress introduced bills that would codify the program in various forms (H.R. 4782, H.R. 6697, H.R. 6706, S. 2338).<sup>56</sup>

Congress also may consider amending other programs, such as LAMP. Such program amendments could resemble those in H.R. 7567, which proposes to expand the types of eligible businesses that may participate in LAMP or the activities eligible to receive grant support, such as the purchase of equipment. Congress also could choose to amend the mandatory CCC funding to LAMP (H.R. 6775) or reorganize the mandatory funding allocations differently across LAMP programs (H.R. 3077, S. 1507, H.R. 6775).

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<sup>51</sup> For more on the current oversight and reporting following the 2018 farm bill, see CRS Report R48379, *Organic Agriculture Standards: Oversight and Enforcement*.

<sup>52</sup> Organic Trade Association, "Farm Bill," <https://ota.com/advocacy/policy-positions/organic-trade-association-farm-bill-priorities>; and NSAC, *2023 Farm Bill Platform*.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Peter Van Doren, "Should Taxpayers Back the 'Organic' Label?," *Cato at Liberty* (blog), Cato Institute, May 5, 2017, <https://www.cato.org/blog/should-taxpayers-back-organic-label>.

<sup>54</sup> For more on the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, see USDA, AMS, "Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program," <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfpacp>. For more on the CCC funding, see CRS Report R44606, *The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)*.

<sup>55</sup> See USAspending.gov, "Advanced Search," <https://www.usaspending.gov/search?hash=628f314b21490d2b9da9ca26c2b80bf1>.

<sup>56</sup> H.R. 4782 was cited as legislation included in H.R. 7567, in House Committee on Agriculture, *Standalone Legislation Included in H.R. 7567, The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026*, [https://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/ffns26\\_markerbill\\_tally-by-title\\_final.pdf](https://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/ffns26_markerbill_tally-by-title_final.pdf).

Some industry groups have supported such proposed changes and funding expansion for commodity procurement and local food grant programs.<sup>57</sup> Others have supported reducing funding and emphasis for local food programs.<sup>58</sup>

## Hemp

A variety of stakeholders have advocated for various federal definitions of hemp. Prior to enactment of P.L. 119-37, some regulatory groups and attorneys general in several states expressed a desire for Congress to amend the statutory definition of hemp along the lines of the current law.<sup>59</sup> The concerns of these groups include interpretations of the 2018 farm bill definition that led to the production of hemp products that contained less than 0.3% delta-9 THC but had a total THC concentration that exceeded 0.3% total THC, with potential to be intoxicating (known to some as the “farm bill loophole”).<sup>60</sup> Other groups have expressed opposition to the definitional changes in P.L. 119-37 and support a delay in the effective date of the new definition or a repeal of the language. These groups also have supported regulation of the market of hemp-derived consumer products through agencies such as the FDA.<sup>61</sup>

Since the passage of the new hemp definition in P.L. 119-37, some in Congress have desired a three-year extension of the effective date for the new definition or a repeal of the new hemp definition. In conjunction with these proposals, some Members have introduced legislation that would create regulatory frameworks for hemp cannabinoid production and products. During the House Committee on Agriculture markup of H.R. 7567, an amendment was offered and subsequently withdrawn to delay the implementation of the new hemp definition.<sup>62</sup> Prior to the markup, it was reported that House Agriculture Committee Chairman Thompson expressed concern that a delay of the implementation of the definition of hemp was not germane and falls “under the jurisdiction of the House Energy and Commerce Committee,” implying that the farm bill is not the proper vehicle for consideration of any delays to the implementation of the definition.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> SCFBA, *Farm Bill Policy Recommendations*; NSAC, “Senate Bill Offers a Pathway to Sustain Local Food Purchasing Program,” *NSAC’s Blog*, April 12, 2024, <https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/senate-bill-offers-a-pathway-to-sustain-local-food-purchasing-program/>.

<sup>58</sup> Aimee Picchi, “USDA cancels \$1 billion in funding for schools and food banks to buy food from local suppliers,” *CBS News*, updated March 13, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/usda-cancels-local-food-purchasing-food-banks-school-meals/>.

<sup>59</sup> For example, see Letter from Gillian Schauer, PhD, et al., executive director, Cannabis Regulators Association, to Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson et al., chairman, House Committee on Agriculture, September 15, 2023, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f7e577e23ad7c718c269776/t/65046e14c614b50e07d952c8/1694789140786/CANNRA+Letter\\_Farm+Bill\\_Sept2023\\_FINAL.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f7e577e23ad7c718c269776/t/65046e14c614b50e07d952c8/1694789140786/CANNRA+Letter_Farm+Bill_Sept2023_FINAL.pdf); and National Association of Attorneys General, “39 State and Territory Attorneys General Call for Clarification of Federal ‘Hemp’ Definition,” press release, October 24, 2025, <https://www.naag.org/press-releases/bipartisan-coalition-of-39-state-and-territory-attorneys-general-urges-clarify-federal-definition-of-hemp/>.

<sup>60</sup> For more on legal interpretations of the 2018 farm bill’s definition of hemp, see CRS Report R48637, *The 2018 Farm Bill’s Hemp Definition and Legal Challenges to State Laws Restricting Certain THC Products*.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Hemp Roundtable, “This is an inflection point for hemp,” November 24, 2025, <https://hempsupporter.com/news/this-is-an-inflection-point-for-hemp/>.

<sup>62</sup> See “Amendment offered by Mr. Baird of Indiana,” in U.S. House of Representatives Committee Repository, “Markup of “To Consider H.R. 7567, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026,”” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AG/AG00/20260303/118990/BILLS-119-15-B001307-Amdt-15.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Olivia M. Bridges, “Thompson finds Baird’s hemp amendment to farm bill isn’t germane,” *CQ News*, February 25, 2026.

The 2018 farm bill established hemp production plan requirements for states, territories, and Tribes that desire to have primary regulatory authority of hemp production in their locales.<sup>64</sup> The 2018 farm bill also directed USDA to establish regulations that would monitor and regulate hemp production for states, territories, and Tribes that do not have a USDA-approved hemp production plan.<sup>65</sup> Congress may consider adopting the amendments to hemp production plans in H.R. 7567, which would provide amendments to the state and tribal hemp production plans and USDA hemp production plans in statute. The amendments in the bill would mirror the definitional change in P.L. 119-37 by updating the testing standard for hemp to total THC rather than delta-9 THC only. The bill also would allow states, territories, and Tribes to reduce or relax testing requirements for industrial hemp. In addition, Congress may consider conducting oversight of the implementation of the new hemp definition across federal departments and agencies, including USDA, the FDA, and the DEA.

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<sup>64</sup> 7 U.S.C. §1639p.

<sup>65</sup> 7 U.S.C. §1639q.