

# 1990 Farm Bill Contains Fruit, Nut Crop Provisions

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Co.) — A number of issues are  
timely for horticulture, because of  
the season and legislative changes.

One of the most important is in  
the 1990 Farm Bill, which includes  
some provisions on target fruit and  
tree nut crops.

Other newsworthy information  
for the horticulturalist includes  
guidelines for pruning brambles  
and blueberries.

From George M. Greene's,  
"Fruit and Tree Nuts - Situation  
and Outlook Report," USDA, Econ-  
omic Research Service, Novem-  
ber 1990, it has become apparent  
that the 1990 farm bill includes  
several sections that will affect the  
U.S. fruit and tree nut industries  
beginning this month.

The Secretary of Agriculture  
must complete a study within 18  
months of enactment of the farm

bill to determine the condition of  
the domestic fruit and vegetable  
industry.

The requirement for the study  
was prompted by frequent recom-  
mendations from health organiza-  
tions and the Surgeon General of  
the United States stating that fruits  
and vegetables are an essential part  
of a healthy diet and of vital impor-  
tance to the nutrition of the U.S.  
population.

The study's findings will be  
used to promote domestically pro-  
duced fruit and vegetable prod-  
ucts, to increase the public's  
awareness of the difficulties  
domestic producers experience in  
the production, harvesting, and  
marketing of these products, and to  
aid in the development of new  
technologies that domestic pro-  
ducers will need to meet increased  
demand for fruits and vegetables in  
the future.

The study calls for interaction  
with other government agencies,

as deemed necessa-  
ry of Agricultur-

Secretary of Agriculture  
The new bill also adds apples,  
nectarines, plums, kiwifruit, and  
pistachio nuts to the list of  
imported commodities that may be  
covered by Federal marketing  
order standards under Section  
608e of the Agricultural Marketing  
Agreements Act of 1937. This will  
make it possible to require  
imported products to meet domes-  
tic U.S. grade, size, and quality  
standards.

The bill also extends the  
Targeted Export Assistance Pro-  
gram (now called the Market Pro-  
motion Program) for five years at a  
budgeted \$200 million per year.  
This program will have a positive  
effect on U.S. exports of many  
fruit and tree nut commodities.

Another provision calls for the  
establishment of a program in  
which the Secretary of Agricultur-  
e, in cooperation with the Com-  
missioner of Food and Drugs, pre-

scribes conditions under which  
food producers and sellers may  
label food products as "Grown in  
the United States" or as "Made of  
ingredients grown in the United  
States."

Within six months of the enact-  
ment of the farm bill, a com-  
prehensive review of all federal  
country-of-origin food labeling  
requirements will be submitted to  
the House and Senate Agriculture  
Committees. The report will anal-  
yze the adequacy of the current  
federal country-of-origin food  
labeling requirements and make  
recommendations concerning the  
improvement of country-of-origin  
information available to  
consumers.

The Secretary of Agriculture is  
also required to study the levels  
and trends of pesticide use for pro-  
ducing perishable commodities in  
the United States and to determine  
the extent that federal grades and  
standards impact pesticide use for

cosmetic appearance.

The research is also to deter-  
mine the effects of reducing the  
emphasis of cosmetic appearance  
on pesticide use, alternative pro-  
duction practices, marketing costs,  
trade, and consumer preferences.

Additionally, the Secretary of  
Agriculture is to conduct a study to  
determine how USDA might best  
work with and support the U.S.  
wine and wine grape industry.

Other provisions enable the  
establishment of:

- Research and promotion orders  
for mushrooms, limes, and pecans.
- Requirements that growers keep  
pesticide-use records.
- A program of national standards  
and labeling of organic  
commodities.
- A ban on planting fruit and veget-  
able crops on program crop-  
acreage base.

## Pruning Brambles

This month begins a two-part  
discussion of pruning for brambles  
and blueberries.

This section will discuss the  
"why" and "when" of pruning,  
while next month we'll delve into  
"how" to prune these crops.

Why prune?

Students of fruit production  
often ask this question.

Pruning actually decreases total  
yield in many fruit crops, however,  
it does so while increasing fruit  
size. So, the short answer is to  
increase fruit size and quality.

Quality is improved because the  
sugars that the plant produces are  
concentrated in a smaller number  
of fruit, and also because the  
pruned plant is more easily pene-  
trated by pesticides and light.

The longer answer, then, is that  
we prune to more effectively man-  
age plant environment, including  
management of light, pesticides,  
air circulation, and water and  
nutrient distribution in the plant.

When?

There continues to be some con-  
fusion as to the best time for prun-  
ing brambles and blueberries.

Many growers begin pruning in  
the fall to take advantage of labor  
that may still be present from the  
growing season, or to simply give  
themselves more time to complete  
this rather labor-intensive task.

We do not recommend fall prun-  
ing for either of these crops. There  
is good evidence which tells us that  
these perennials are actively  
"hardening off," or preparing for  
the cold weather well into fall;  
indeed in our climate with warm  
temperatures often occurring until  
late November, metabolic activity  
may continue until that time.

Specifically, blueberries and  
brambles, in spite of their dormant  
appearance, still are sending car-  
bohydrates from the stems to the  
roots up until this time.

—Barb Goulart

From the Jan. 15 FRUIT TIMES  
NEWSLETTER, Vol. 9, No. 15, from  
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