

American Congressional Committees vote \$40 million for sustainable agriculture research

In early work on the 1990 Farm Bill, both House and Senate Agriculture Committees have approved \$40 million authorizations for research in sustainable agriculture. "This stamp of approval by both committees greatly increases the likelihood that the authorization will become part of the final 1990 Farm Bill," says Jim Aidala, Institute for Alternative Agriculture Director of Policy Development. The language directs the USDA research and extension agencies to ensure that information on sustainable agriculture is developed and made available to growers.

Of the \$40 million, the Senate directs \$15 million to the current LISA (low input sustainable agriculture) program with the remainder devoted to developing technical, low input guides for farmers and to a new federal/state matching grants program. In the House bill an "Integrated crop management" program shares the \$15 million authorization for LISA. Both committees also authorized funds for an extension training program in sustainable agriculture.

It is still a long way to actual increases in funding, since a separate appropriation of these sums will have to be approved, but this is a tremendous start," Aidla says. The committees hope to complete work on the research and education portions of the 1990 Farm Bill by early June, aiming for action by the full House and Senate by midsummer.

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