

MCFA

Minor Crop Farmer Alliance

Sent via email to agsec@usda.gov

April 28, 2025

Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

On behalf of the members of the Minor Crop Farmer Alliance (MCFA) and other members of the agricultural community, this is to express our strong support for assuring the continuation of the Department's important Pesticide Data Program (PDP), administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service. Since 1991, the PDP activities have been particularly critical to specialty crops because they include the sampling, testing, and reporting of pesticide residues on agricultural commodities in the U.S. food supply, with an emphasis on those commodities highly consumed by infants and children. It is implemented through cooperation with State agriculture departments and other Federal agencies. The data developed by the national PDP:

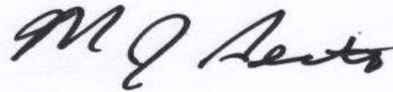
- Enables the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reliably assess actual dietary exposure.
- Empowers the Foreign Agricultural Service and others in supporting and facilitating the global marketing of U.S. agricultural products.
- Provides guidance for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other governmental agencies to make informed decisions.

MCFA is an alliance of national and regional organizations and individuals representing growers, shippers, packers, handlers and processors of various agricultural commodities, including food, fiber, turfgrass, nursery and landscape crops, and organizations involved with public health pesticides. MCFA's members are extremely interested in the development and safe use of pest management tools including crop protection chemicals that are environmentally sound, safe for applicators, workers and the public, and do not represent an unreasonable adverse risk to the environment, including humans and non-target organisms such as pollinators. While our commodities are often called "minor crops" or "specialty crops," they contribute to the diverse and highly nutritious diets available for the global population, and to safe and aesthetic surroundings for our homes, schools, and places of business. These U.S. farmers and producers grow more than 500 types of fruit, vegetable, tree nut, flower, ornamental nursery and turf grass crops in addition to the major bulk (row) commodity crops. Specialty crop production accounts for more than \$60 billion, or approximately 40% of total U.S. crop receipts.

We understand that the Administration is working on a range of initiatives aimed at reducing the size and scope of the federal government, including those programs managed by your Department. However, we urge your support for maintaining a robust PDP. The PDP has long been recognized as the type of successful, cost-effective program that the government should strive to emulate. It is critical that the PDP have the necessary resources, including knowledgeable personnel and funding, to assure that this important data collection effort continues. The data it generates directly impacts the ability of our members to produce and distribute their agricultural commodities. Additionally, specialty crop industries have learned from experience that pesticide residue data are essential in defending against misinformed or irresponsible claims that pesticide residues on specific foods are unsafe. American consumers also benefit by having access to the reliable residue information which the PDP develops. Those data help reaffirm that the government's restrictions involving pesticide residues and other food safety efforts are working well in protecting public health.

Because of the critical service and data the program provides, we urge you to take the steps necessary to assure that the PDP continues to have the requisite number of skilled personnel and adequate funding to effectively produce reliable pesticide residue data. We appreciate your consideration of this request. If you need any additional information regarding this request, please let me know at mike.aerts@ffva.com.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Aerts
Chairman of the MCFA Technical Committee

Almond Board of California
American Farm Bureau Federation
AmericanHort
American Pistachios
American Seed Trade Association
California Avocado Commission
California Citrus Quality Council
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Garlic and Onion Research Committee
California Prune Board
California Specialty Crops Council
California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance
Cherry Marketing Institute
Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
Cranberry Institute
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Citrus Packers
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Florida Tomato Exchange

Idaho Potato Commission
International Fresh Produce Association
Michigan Corn Growers Association
Michigan Vegetable Council
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Onion Association
National Potato Council
Northwest Horticultural Council
Pulse USA
Society of American Florists
Texas Citrus Mutual
US Apple Association
USA Rice
Washington Hops Commission
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington Wine Grape Growers Association
Western Growers Association
Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine