

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Agriculture

CS/HB 1197 — Agriculture

by State Affairs Committee; Rep. Horner and others (CS/SB 1132 by General Government Appropriations Committee and Senators Hays, Montford, and Evers)

Stormwater Management Assessments

The bill prohibits governmental entities, excluding water control districts established under ch. 298, F.S., or a special district created by special act for water management purposes, from charging storm water management assessments on land classified as agricultural if the farm operation has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, an environmental resource permit, or works-of-the-district permit or implements best management practices adopted as rules under ch. 120, F.S. (Administrative Procedure Act).

Citrus Harvesting Equipment and Citrus Loaders

The bill authorizes the use of citrus harvesting equipment and citrus fruit loaders to transport citrus between farms on public state highways without violating the public highway use restriction and for the purpose of qualifying for a refund of motor fuel taxes.

Commercial Feed or Feedstuff

The bill requires DACS to adopt rules establishing standards for the sale, use, and distribution of commercial feed or feedstuff, which standards must be developed in consultation with the Commercial Feed Technical Council.

Florida Farm Operations

The bill revises the definitions of “farm operations” and “farm product” and creates a definition for “apiculture” so that honeybee and apiary activities and products are provided protections afforded by the Florida Right to Farm Act. It preempts to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) the statewide authority to regulate, inspect, permit, and determine placement of managed honeybee colonies and to adopt rules for this purpose after consulting with local governments and other affected stakeholders.

The bill creates a definition for “farm sign” which will result in farm signs being exempt from the Florida Building Code and any county or municipal code subject to certain restrictions on location, lighting, and use of certain words on the signs.

Florida Farm Winery Program

The bill reduces the minimum acreage required to qualify as a certified Florida Farm Winery from 10 to 5 acres of land which produces commodities used in the production of wine. It also requires that 60 percent of the wine produced must be made from Florida agricultural products.

Artificial Dying or Coloring of Certain Animals

The bill repeals a statute that prohibits the artificial dying or coloring of any animal or fowl or the use of very young animals or fowl as merchandising premiums.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2012.

Vote: Senate 33-3; House 109-5