

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION,
EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS (NAREEE)
ADVISORY BOARD**

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Greetings!

The Specialty Crop Committee of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board, created in accordance with the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 under Title III, Section 303 of Public Law 108-465, seeks your input to effectively conduct its work. The Committee is holding a listening session to obtain stakeholder input on specific issues related to specialty crops. This effort is being conducted as part of a congressionally-mandated study on the scope and effectiveness of research, extension and economics programs affecting the specialty crop industry. The Committee's findings and recommendations will be developed into a final report and submitted through the NAREEE Advisory Board to the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress.

We are pleased to invite you to the following Specialty Crop Listening Session:

March 13, 2009, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the headquarters of the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, 800 Trafalgar Court, Suite 200, Maitland, FL 32794-8153, (321)-214-5200.

Participants will be given up to five minutes to present oral remarks and then provide written versions of those remarks. You may also submit a document without making oral comments at the meeting. All written submissions are not to exceed 2 pages in length, a must address one or more specific issues listed in the attached Committee Charge (#1-5). The issue(s) addressed must be identified at the top of the page by reference to specific number and letter as listed. Name, affiliation and contact information must also be provided at the top of the page.

Regional and national perspectives are sought that elaborate on topics to be included in the Committee's report, such as the role of specialty crops in health and nutrition, rural economic development, trade policy and international marketing. Other topics of interest (as they relate to specialty crops) include: conservation and natural resources; economic sustainability for the industry; risk management; water quantity and quality; agricultural labor; and pre-and post-harvest food safety.

Written materials should be submitted to Bruce Mertz, Acting Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board at bmertz@csrees.usda.gov or Shirley Morgan, Program Coordinator, NAREEE Advisory Board at shirley.morgan@ars.usda.gov, **prior to or up to two weeks following the**

respective listening sessions. Comments must focus on the scope and effectiveness of research, extension and economics programs affecting the specialty crop industry, not on regulatory and/or other issues.

If you know that you plan to attend and make comments, please notify us so that we may plan the agenda accordingly. However, you are welcome to participate even if you do not notify us prior to the session.

We hope that you will be able to attend this Specialty Crop listening session to share your insights with the Committee.