



## What's ahead for Washington this week

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Washington, Nov. 29 – All eyes this week will be focused on what President Obama announces Tuesday evening from West Point – and then focused on reactions and implications both here and around the world. It's expected that he will explain he's sending between 30,000 and 35,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan, and that NATO will contribute another 5,000, bringing total reinforcements to around the 40,000 that U.S. military commanders have recommended. It's a delicate balance because many Democrats are hesitant to add any more troops or any more cost. Meanwhile Republicans like Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) say that Obama should beef up the war effort not only by sending at least the 40,000 requested but also by postponing other legislative business including the health care, climate change, and financial reform bills until next year.

So expect an impassioned health care debate to continue all week in the U.S. Senate. And expect the bill's Republican opponents to escalate their calls to postpone the debate so that all the Senate's energy instead can go into supplying more troops for Afghanistan, more jobs for unemployed Americans, and more ways to control the ballooning federal deficit.

Even before his Afghanistan speech Tuesday, Obama is sure to use his Monday meeting with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to seek Rudd's support both for U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and for securing a preliminary "prompt start" global agreement on climate change in the Copenhagen negotiations which begin Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.

Besides health care and climate change, some specific ag issues will also be in play this week. On Monday, USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan opens USDA's "Future Trends in Animal Agriculture Symposium" to discuss prospects for animal ag in 2030. Participants include Organic Trade Association CEO Christine Bushway, Humane Society of the United States President Paul Shapiro, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Rep. David Scott (D-GA), and Ron DeHaven of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

On Wednesday, the Senate Agriculture Committee holds a hearing on OTC derivatives while the Senate Energy Committee will consider policy options for dealing with greenhouse gas emissions. The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research holds a Wednesday hearing on climate change's potential

economic impacts on the farm sector. That's continued in the subcommittee's Thursday hearing on the potential costs and benefits of agriculture offsets being proposed in climate change legislation that's been passed by the House and now is being considered in the Senate.

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