

Today is _____, _____ the _____. This is Ken Morgan's Northcoast Ag Report, our lead story is about _____ when we return

Senate Votes to Move Forward with Farm Bill Conference

Audio with Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

Now that the Senate has voted to negotiate a new farm bill with the House in September, the push is on to get the bill done before current farm law expires. And one lawmaker pushing the effort is the top man in the Senate.

If you want to get something done in the U.S. Senate, there's probably no better friend you could have than the Majority Leader—in this case, Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell...tape

Cut #1 :16 OC:...“this legislation.”

McConnell, on Senate Ag, has been a farm bill booster, since the committee included his amendment to legalize industrial hemp, key for his Kentucky producers.

The GOP leader told colleagues on the Senate floor this week...tape

Cut #2 :06 OC:...“its expiration.”

The current bill expires at the end of September, a tough goal amid a huge House-Senate difference on food stamp work requirements, that will need all the political capital available to overcome, and pass a final bill in both chambers.

But it's a goal, farm leaders are pushing in the wake of damaging tariff fights with China, Europe, Mexico and Canada, some five-years of low prices, and ethanol-demand-destroying oil refinery RFS waivers.

The Senate meantime, moved to pass a handful of key spending bills, including for USDA and FDA...tape

Cut #3

:21

OC:...“our waterways.”

The spending package also needs to be conferenced with the House.

U.S., China Reportedly Trying to Re-engage in Trade Talks

The U.S. and China are trying to restart trade talks as the two nations square off in a trade war. The attempt comes as the Trump administration readies a new round of tariffs against China. Bloomberg reports representatives of U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and China's Vice Premier are having private conversations as they look for ways to re-engage in negotiations. No timetable was offered, as the issues and format for any talks are not final, but both sides do apparently agree that more talks need to take place. The U.S. and China have been exchanging tariff announcements that started with Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs earlier this year. Negotiations have been stalled for weeks with both sides digging in. The U.S. and China have offered little indication publicly any will to restart negotiations. Last week, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said the trade tension with China are a “chronic problem,” while a trade official from China accused the U.S. of “extortion.”