

By Senator Collins

14-00593-24

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Florida Crop Diversification  
3 Commission; creating s. 570.233, F.S.; creating the  
4 commission adjunct to the Department of Agriculture  
5 and Consumer Services; providing the membership and  
6 duties of the commission; requiring the commission to  
7 submit an annual report to the Governor and the  
8 Legislature by a specified date; providing  
9 requirements for the report; providing an  
10 appropriation; providing an effective date.

11  
12 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that agricultural producers  
13 in this state are confronted by a continuous stream of deadly  
14 diseases and adverse weather conditions, including drought,  
15 wind, flooding, and hurricanes, which threaten their crops and  
16 their livelihoods, and

17 WHEREAS, these damaging diseases and weather conditions  
18 severely reduce agricultural production and cause a loss of jobs  
19 and severe economic losses to communities, families, and  
20 individual producers, and

21 WHEREAS, maintaining agricultural production is vital to  
22 this state's rural communities and overall economy, and

23 WHEREAS, preserving agricultural lands that produce crops,  
24 rather than developing them, has many ecological benefits,  
25 including maintaining wildlife habitats, absorbing carbon  
26 dioxide, recharging the aquifer, reducing greenhouse gases, and  
27 reducing erosion, and

28 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that the loss of  
29 agricultural infrastructure, jobs, economic opportunity, and

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30 wildlife habitat caused by deadly diseases and adverse weather  
31 conditions is not sustainable and has a negative impact on the  
32 quality of life for all of the residents of this state, NOW,  
33 THEREFORE,

34  
35 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

36  
37 Section 1. Section 570.233, Florida Statutes, is created to  
38 read:

39 570.233 Florida Crop Diversification Commission; powers and  
40 duties.-

41 (1) The Florida Crop Diversification Commission, a  
42 commission as defined in s. 20.03(4), is created adjunct to the  
43 department. The commission shall be composed of the following  
44 nine members:

45 (a) The commissioner or his or her designee.

46 (b) The dean for research of the Institute of Food and  
47 Agricultural Sciences of the University of Florida or his or her  
48 designee.

49 (c) The following members, appointed by the commissioner  
50 based upon their knowledge and experience in agricultural  
51 production, processing, or manufacturing:

52 1. Four members who are currently involved in agricultural  
53 production or who have been involved in agricultural production  
54 within the last 3 years.

55 2. One member who has experience in agricultural processing  
56 or manufacturing.

57 3. One member who has experience in the packing or  
58 processing of fresh agricultural products.

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59 4. One member who has experience in agricultural marketing  
60 analysis and the viability of agricultural products.

61 (2) The commission shall do all of the following:

62 (a) Evaluate alternative agricultural crops and determine  
63 whether there exists one or more viable crops or products that  
64 would provide an economic benefit to growers using current  
65 agricultural infrastructure on land that has been taken out of  
66 production by diseases or adverse weather conditions.

67 (b) Contract for the design and implementation of the  
68 Florida Crop Diversification Initiative. The initiative must  
69 provide direct cash payments to nurseries and agricultural  
70 producers in this state in order to rapidly stimulate the  
71 adoption of alternative crops, moderate the required economic  
72 outlay, and speed the economic recovery of producers, packers,  
73 nurseries, processors, and communities. The entity with which  
74 the commission contracts for the Florida Crop Diversification  
75 Initiative must be a nonprofit organization that has a history  
76 of focusing on alternative crops and has the organizational  
77 capacity to manage a statewide initiative and carry out the  
78 requirements of this paragraph.

79 (c) Develop best management practices for crops or products  
80 recommended by the commission.

81 (d) Assist local economic development councils in  
82 encouraging the development of manufacturing and processing  
83 facilities for new crops or products recommended by the  
84 commission.

85 (e) Publish the findings of the commission on an annual  
86 basis after review and approval by the commissioner.

87 (3) By July 1, 2026, and each July 1 thereafter, the

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88 commission shall submit a report to the Governor, the President  
89 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
90 which includes, at a minimum:

91 (a) Information about each crop or product recommended,  
92 detailing the environmental impact of each.

93 (b) An assessment of each recommended crop's suitability to  
94 this state's climate, and the expected economic benefit to  
95 growers and communities in this state.

96 (c) Recommendations for best practices to sustain and  
97 improve the agricultural industry in this state.

98 Section 2. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of  
99 \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General  
100 Revenue Fund to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer  
101 Services for the purpose of implementing s. 570.233, Florida  
102 Statutes, as created by this act.

103 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.