(WEST PALM BEACH)-- Congressman Allen West (R-FL) and United States House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman on Agriculture and Rural Development Jack Kingston (R-GA) met with local farmers, business owners, and others involved in the South Florida Agricultural industry today during two roundtable discussions in South Florida. The events allowed farmers to discuss the current congressional issues affecting their businesses, ask questions and look ahead to the future of the South Florida farming industry.

Topics discussed included labor and immigration reform, pest and disease problems, funding for USDA research, the impact of environmental regulations, Farm Bill negotiations, and the impact of the Estate Tax.

"The forum was an open dialogue and both Congressman West and Congressman Kingston came to the table asking for input," said Rick Roth, owner of Roth Farms in Palm Beach County. "I've been to a lot of these over the years and this was one of the best. It is evident that both Congressmen understand the impact and importance of good agricultural legislation."

A dozen farmers and local business owners attended the West Palm Beach roundtable, held at the Farm Credit Office, while 20 individuals attended the Indiantown roundtable held at Sunlight Ranch.

"We had an informative, much needed discussion today with our local growers and agricultural business owners," West said. "The bottom line is as leaders we have to do everything we can to make sure agriculture remains a viable industry across the state of Florida."

During today's discussions, many farmers raised concerns of Mexican tomatoes flooding the Florida market. Congressman West will be sending a letter to both the United States Department of Agriculture as well as the World trade Organization to address those concerns in the following weeks.

"Congressman West gets it, he understands us," said Doug Bornique with Indian River Citrus. "We (local farmers) feel very comfortable knowing our interests are being taken seriously."

See photos of today's meetings: Palm Beach County, and Martin County.