



## ASAAP Update



### ASAAP Update

April 2015

Dear ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP) Members and Industry Stakeholders,

It was wonderful to see many of you in Phoenix at Commodity Classic in February and just a few weeks ago in Washington, D.C., for the annual spring ASA board meeting and ASA Action Partnership Update meeting. At that meeting, our DC staff provided an update on major issues, both pending and those we are working on now.

In just the short few months since our last update in January, we have seen some significant movement on issues critical to ASA. While we still await resolution of several large matters, including the [EPA's biodiesel volumes for 2014 through 2016](#), a looming [revisit of the Waters of the U.S. rule](#), and others, we were able to secure a [key defense of crop insurance and other farm bill programs](#) throughout the budget process in the House and the Senate. We were also able to successfully urge the White House to intervene in the [labor dispute along the west coast](#) that kept our soybeans from reaching their export markets.

Additionally, here is a look at other items we're working on, through the generous support of the ASAAP stakeholders:

#### BIOTECHNOLOGY

[ASA: National Non-GMO Label Would Provide Clarity](#) – ASA issued its firm support for a bill introduced and referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee that would provide for a national labeling standard for non-GMO foods. The bill, brought forward by Reps. Mike Pompeo, of Kansas, and G.K. Butterfield, of North Carolina, bypasses a potentially conflicting patchwork of state laws and regulations governing the labeling of GMO and non-GMO foods, as well as multiple private sector non-GMO labeling standards, by establishing one common framework for labeling at the national level.

[U.S. Soy Family Leaders Meet with Chinese Government and Industry on Biotech](#) - The CEOs of ASA, USB and USSEC, along with USSEC Chair Laura Foell met with Chinese government officials and industry leaders about China's biotech approval process. China's biotech approvals process has gone from slow but predictable -- taking approximately 28 months -- to now taking 40 months or more. The purpose of this trip is to assess potential strategies to accomplish this goal. A key point emphasized was that farmers worldwide need access to new seed technologies if they are to meet growing Chinese and world demand for soy in the face of increasing weed and disease pressures.



### [ASA Calls on European Union to Issue Import Approvals for 13 Biotech Traits Without Further Delay-](#)

In a letter sent to European Health & Food Safety Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, ASA and fellow farm groups urged that draft import authorizations for 13 new biotechnology products be considered without further delay by the EU's College of Commissioners. Import authorizations for 13 new biotechnology products, including soybeans, corn, canola and cotton, are pending, some for well over a year. The ASA and the other groups noted that, while the process for approving new biotech traits had slowed in recent years, it now appears to have come to a "complete stop."

## **FARM BILL**

### [House, Senate Pass Budgets without Major Attacks to Crop Insurance, Commodity Programs](#) – After

the House passed a budget that included a cut to agricultural programs of \$1 billion over 10 years, ASA mobilized its members to contact their Senate offices and urge Senators to oppose all amendments that would trim from farm bill programs, including several attacks directed at the crop insurance and commodity support programs in the law. In the end, the budget package passed the Senate without the ASA-opposed amendments.

### [ASA Echoes House Ag Committee Call to Protect Farm Bill from Budget Cuts](#) - Following a letter from

the House Agriculture Committee to House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) urging that the budget panel take into account the sizable savings previously contributed by the farm bill when weighing future cuts under a potential budget reconciliation measure, ASA President Wade Cowan expressed ASA's full support for the agriculture committee's request.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

### [ASA Makes Statement on IARC Ruling on Glyphosate](#) – Following notification from the International

Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) on its reclassification of glyphosate herbicide, ASA issued a statement reiterating the repeated verification of glyphosate as safe by numerous testing agencies. "From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to its counterparts in Germany, Australia, Canada and elsewhere," wrote ASA, "risk assessment and safety agencies confirm the safety of glyphosate herbicide. Glyphosate has a 40-year track record of completely safe use in American fields, and we've been able to make great strides in reducing herbicide use in a sustainable manner during this period."

### [ASA: Neonicotinoid Seed Treatments Critical for Certain Soybean Operations](#) - In comments

submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the ASA disagreed with the conclusions of a recent report from EPA that calls into question the efficacy of neonicotinoid seed treatments in soybean operations. In the association's comments, ASA President and Brownfield, Texas, farmer Wade Cowan pointed out that "...soybean producers use neonicotinoid seed treatments where they are needed and effective, and don't use them where not." Cowan also argued that recent research from Mississippi showing approximately 90 percent adoption of neonicotinoid seed treatments signals that the technology does work for farmers in certain areas.

## **TAXATION**

### [ASA Hails Senate Passage of One-Year Tax Extenders Package, Renews Call for Longer-Term Solution](#)

- The Senate passed a one-year extension of multiple tax incentives and credits, including several that



have direct impacts on soybean farmers. ASA welcomed passage of the bill, which would extend the dollar-per-gallon Biodiesel Tax Incentive, as well as the Section 179 expensing provision that farmers and other business owners use when purchasing new equipment and infrastructure, among other items.

## **TRADE**

[\*\*Soy Growers Welcome Bill to Lift Cuban Embargo\*\*](#) - ASA welcomed legislation introduced by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and backed by a bipartisan group of senators including Sens. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Dick Durbin, (D-Ill.) that would end the United States' trade embargo with Cuba.

[\*\*ASA Pushes Congress to Take Up and Pass TPA\*\*](#) - ASA, as part of a larger coalition of agriculture and food industry organizations, sent a letter to members of Congress encouraging them to support the immediate introduction and enactment of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation. ASA has a particularly valuable stake in global trade, as soybeans represent the largest American agricultural export.

[\*\*ASA Welcomes News of Tentative West Coast Ports Labor Deal, Calls on PMA, ILWU to Ratify and Move Forward\*\*](#) - The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) reached a tentative deal on a new contract, according to the Associated Press, that would resume operations at ports along the west coast. The PMA and ILWU were embroiled in a labor standoff that wrought havoc on the export of soybeans and other agriculture commodities that utilize west coast ports. ASA, along with more than 90 fellow farm and food organizations, called on representatives on both sides of the labor dispute, impacting operations at five west coast ports, to resolve the issue that caused extreme congestion, delays, uncertainty and cost the agriculture industry millions of dollars for every week that the negotiations and slowdowns continued. ASA President Wade Cowan noted the association's relief at the conflict's resolution.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

[\*\*ASA Points to Truck Weight Limit Study, Urges Congress to Include Increased Truck Capacity and Efficiency in 2015 Highway Bill\*\*](#) - ASA is touting a research project released by the Soy Transportation Coalition (STC) that examines the effects of increasing truck weight limits on federal highways. The project, titled, "Heavier Semis: A Good Idea?" was funded by the soybean checkoff and is an update of a 2009 report that looks at the impact of increasing truck weight limits on federal roads and bridges from the current 80,000 lbs., with a five axle configuration to 97,000 lbs., with the addition of a sixth axle. The analysis specifically looked at the impacts on motorist safety, infrastructure wear and tear, and potential cost savings and efficiency gains for agriculture and the U.S. economy.

Again, on behalf of the ASA staff and Executive Committee, we thank you for your partnership as we work on behalf of American soybean growers, but also for the industry on many issues that impact all of us.

*-ASA Staff and Executive Committee*