



ASAAP Update



Looking ahead to 2017...

The American Soybean Association (ASA) will pursue an aggressive legislative and regulatory policy agenda in 2017. Legislative efforts will focus on expected congressional action on the 2018 Farm Bill, tax reform, and transportation infrastructure, while regulatory work will focus on rolling back Obama-era regulations on water quality, improving the regulatory approval timeline in the U.S. and export markets for new biotech traits. ASA will also continue our effort to establish and expand trade relationships with our partners abroad.

Moving into discussions on the 2018 Farm Bill, we recognize the importance of keeping farm bill stakeholders unified and supportive of one another throughout the process, and we are at the forefront of efforts to build coalitions among those stakeholders. As part of that work, ASA will look at ways to strengthen the risk management systems in place for farmers, and what changes need to be made within risk management programs so that they can function to their highest potential. This may include fixes to the ARC county-level option for corn and soy, and to programs for cotton and dairy.

Outside of Title 1, ASA will support increased funding for export promotion programs like MAP and FMD, Energy Title programs such as the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, Biodiesel Education Program and Biobased Market Program, as well as for ag research and a stronger role for USDA in global food security programs. ASA will support a strong federal crop insurance system as well, and the continued inclusion of nutrition programs within the farm bill. ASA will continue to oppose reduced funding, additional eligibility requirements, or means testing for conservation programs or crop insurance.

Comprehensive tax reform is a top priority of the Republican led Congress and President Trump. The dramatic changes being considered would have a significant economic impact on the nation and on farm operations. Some of the major components include reducing corporate and individual tax rates, eliminating the estate tax entirely, allowing full and immediate expensing of capital investments, and imposing a border adjustability tax. As part of the tax reform effort or any other tax vehicles that are considered, ASA will continue to push for extension and reform of the biodiesel tax credit, which expired at the end of 2016.

With the election of Donald Trump and his campaign pledges to significantly boost federal infrastructure investments, there is renewed optimism for major transportation infrastructure initiatives. As part of any infrastructure initiatives that are considered, ASA will continue to advocate funding to upgrade inland waterways and ports and harbors, given the important nature of transportation infrastructure as our competitive advantage over our South American competitors.

On the regulatory front, ASA's efforts will support withdrawal or block implementation of the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule.

In the field of biotechnology, ASA will work collaboratively with the Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food to implement the National Biotech Food Labeling Standard that will exempt products with ingredients derived through plant breeding techniques and that do not contain rDNA protein. ASA will also continue our work to ensure regulatory reform by APHIS enhances the timeliness of biotech trait approvals and exempts plant breeding from pre-market approval. We will urge the Trump Administration to be proactive in developing a Low Level Presence (LLP) strategy for unapproved biotech traits and to lead efforts to reach agreement on an international LLP policy.

On crop protection, ASA will support the use of sound science in approving new products, and we will continue to engage on pollinator health issues, including habitat restoration and pesticide registrations. We will keep a watchful eye on the ongoing trend of mergers within the agriculture industry and will develop and communicate recommendations on these where appropriate.

In the 115th Congress and with the Trump Administration, ASA will support maintaining and establishing appropriate annual volume requirements for biodiesel within the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). ASA will also support enforcement responses to trade violations by biodiesel importers.

Trade continues to be a critical issue for soybean farmers, and will take on even greater importance in 2017. ASA will work directly with the Trump Administration to align its policies to reflect the dependence of U.S. agriculture, and soybeans in particular, on exports, including continuing regional and bilateral trade agreements and maintaining an open and positive trading relationship with China. Our work in 2017 will include support for revising TPP as needed to make enactment possible; support for NAFTA, including current market access benefits in the event it is renegotiated; and support for a TTIP with the European Union that satisfies ASA's market access goals. These goals require the EU to meet its biotech approvals timelines; acceptance by the EU of U.S. compliance with RED requirements; assessment of protein crop production under CAP reform's "coupled option"; removal of sanitary restrictions on imports of U.S. livestock products; assessment of the impact of the EU's new pesticide law on imports; and engagement in negotiations on new bilateral agreements.

In the all-important Chinese market, ASA will work with the Trump Administration to maintain market access to China for U.S. agriculture, including soybeans, and we will bolster our efforts to improve timely approvals of new biotech products.

As you can see, ASA has our work cut out for us in order to see this bold agenda fulfilled in the coming year. We look forward to engaging with the Trump Administration and with our allies old and new in the House and Senate to achieve success on behalf of American soybean farmers.