



ASAAP Update



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August 2015

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

This past late spring and summer has been challenging weather-wise for our farmer leaders on the Board and Executive Committee. They are your customers too, so you know full well the many tough weather conditions many experienced.

Despite the above, our farmer leaders have been active in DC, in their states and in key foreign countries. With your valued support, good input on certain industry issues, and in many meetings with you, we have had many accomplishments and made good progress on many fronts since we last met together in March.

One area that ASA has been focusing on heavily is our new Strategic Plan that will place enhanced efforts on our policy and advocacy efforts, as well as stronger connections with our State Affiliates. Our valued relationships with our industry partners through ASAAP will continue as we gear up to tackle key issues for the benefit of the soy industry and soybean growers.

We will discuss much of this at our meeting this week. Thank you.

Here is a look at other items we've been working on, through the generous support of the ASAAP stakeholders.

ASA Staff

BIODIESEL

[ASA Commends EPA's Progress on RFS, but Encourages Higher Volumes in 2016, 2017](#) – ASA urged the Environmental Protection Agency to fully recognize and capitalize on the potential

for biodiesel in the nation's renewable energy discussion, while at the same time recognizing the agency's improvement in its approach to biomass-based diesel fuels in its proposed final rule for the Renewable Fuel Standard. In comments submitted this week, ASA pointed to the numerous benefits of soy-based biodiesel, including its contribution to a more diversified energy market; increased domestic energy production; reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; new jobs and economic development; expanded markets; and reduced soy meal feed costs.

[ASA Testifies Before EPA on Biodiesel Volumes in Kansas City](#)-In a hearing in late June on the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) held by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Kansas City, Kan., ASA Kansas Director Bob Henry pointed to the many benefits of renewable biodiesel produced from soybean oil as he called on the agency to maintain its commitment to clean, domestically-produced renewable energy. In his testimony, Henry called on EPA to "support more aggressive, but easily achievable, volume targets for biodiesel.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

[ASA Leads Charge on National Labeling Standard](#) – ASA welcomed the bipartisan House passage of the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act in late July. The bill would establish a consistent, science based national framework for labeling foods that do or do not contain GMOs. As a member of the steering committee of the Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food, ASA has been an integral part of the effort to rally congressional support for the legislation. ASA and our fellow farm groups are now focused on the Senate, which is expected to take up the legislation in September.

[ASA Weighs in with EPA on Importance of New Tools to Combat Fungal Diseases](#) – Citing the importance of new modes of action to combat resistance among fungal disease threats, ASA submitted comments calling on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to move forward with the registration of Solatenol, a fungicide marketed by Syngenta as Trivapro, and a new tool to combat soybean rust, as well as fungal diseases in corn, wheat and specialty crops. "Solatenol provides growers with a new option among fungicide products, which we are pleased to see. New modes of action like Solatenol and other products like it are critical tools for soybean farmers as we begin to address emerging and evolving threats in our fields, particularly the significant issue of resistance," wrote ASA. "With more options, farmers can alter their approaches to the rapidly growing challenge of resistance that arises, and we encourage the Agency to move forward on registration of Solatenol to better equip us as we tackle this problem."

[ASA: 'System That Impedes Development of Safe Products Benefits No One'](#)-ASA urged the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to remember the long history of safe use of biotechnology products and the benefits to agriculture as they consider possible changes to regulations. ASA also pointed

out U.S. growers have adopted biotech crops at an unprecedented rate because of the many environmental and economic benefits they provide.

[ASA Signs Brief Opposing Vermont's Biotech Labeling Law](#)-ASA, along with the National Corn Growers Association, the National Cotton Council and the Corn Refiners Association signed an Amici brief supporting the Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA) and others in challenging Vermont's law requiring that food products containing biotech ingredients be labeled. ASA and other farm organizations are supporting GMA's argument that the law would disrupt interstate commerce and be expensive for consumers, who would pay the cost of labeling and repackaging products sold in Vermont.

POLLINATOR HEALTH

[Soy Growers Support Honey Bee Colony Health Research, Funding](#)-The American Soybean Association (ASA) showed support for increased attention to honey bee research activities in a letter to Congress in later April. ASA and more than 40 other agricultural groups in the letter commended President Barack Obama's FY 2016 budget, which includes an increase to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) research budget for pollinator health among other honey bee analytics and projects. ASA asked Congress for assistance in ensuring funding to fully pursue pollinator health initiatives.

[ASA Comments on Two Pollinator Actions from EPA](#) - In late August, ASA submitted comments on two federal actions on pollinator health issues, given the potential ramifications of these actions for soybean farmers. The announcements from EPA--one dealing with an approach from the White House to stem the decline of Monarch butterfly populations, and the other with mandatory label restrictions on foliar pesticides in an effort to mitigate harm to honeybees during contract pollination--have the potential, if managed incorrectly, to place another barrier between farmers and the tools they need to farm more efficiently. While soybean operations do not utilize contract pollinators, ASA recognizes that the issue of pollinator health is a huge one for our industry, and is committed to working with our partners at EPA and USDA to work toward a solution.

REGULATORY

[Senate Committee Approves Bill to Force Withdrawal of WOTUS Rule](#)-The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved a bill that would require EPA to withdraw the final Waters of the U.S (WOTUS) rule and reissue a revised rule in June. ASA called on Congress to take legislative action to prevent the Clean Water Rule from taking effect. ASA specifically cited the nexus test as exceeding both the intent of Congress and the rulings of the Supreme Court. The House of Representatives passed HR 1732, the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015, on May 12.

RESEARCH

[ASA Discusses Increasing Ag Research Efforts with White House Science Office](#)-ASA and other research-focused organizations met in June with Dr. Jo Handelsman, the associate director for science at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The group discussed how to sustain efforts for increased agriculture research across all United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs.

SOYFOODS

[In Trans Fat Decision, FDA Adds Time for High Oleic Soybean Oil to Meet Market Needs](#)-Following a final ruling from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in mid-June that rescinds the generally regarded as safe (GRAS) designation for partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), ASA noted the industry's ongoing progress at removing trans fats from American diets, and thanked FDA for the three-year time period – until June of 2018 – for the food industry to replace most uses of PHOs. ASA believes this compliance period will allow the U.S. soybean industry to ramp up production of high oleic soybean oil that can safely replace PHOs and highly saturated fats such as palm oil in many food applications.

TAX

[Senate Finance Committee Passes Two-Year Extenders Package](#) - The Senate Finance Committee held a mark-up in July of a bill to extend certain expired tax provisions, commonly referred to as "tax extenders." The tax extenders package, which comprises 52 tax provisions and carries a total cost of \$95 billion, includes several items strongly supported by ASA, including two year extensions of the higher Section 179 expensing limits, 50 percent bonus depreciation and the dollar-per-gallon biodiesel tax credit.

TRADE

[President Obama Signs Trade Promotion Authority into Law](#)-Trade promotion authority (TPA) will soon help create and strengthen international trade agreements, opening valuable markets and providing an advantage for U.S. farmers. President Barack Obama signed TPA into law on Monday, June 29, 2015. TPA was a key priority for ASA in the 114th Congress. The bill gives the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) the ability to get the best deal possible, and it provides Congress the oversight it needs to ensure every agreement will work for American farmers.

[ASA: EU's Opt-Out Proposal Would Disrupt Trade Policy, Economy](#) - ASA and United States Biotech Crops Alliance (USBCA) urged the European Union (EU) to withdraw its biotechnology

“opt-out” proposal before it disrupts trade policy and the economy. ASA and the USBCA provided comments to the World Trade Organization (WTO) last week stating the proposal cannot be supported under international trade rules or on practical grounds. In April, the European Commission proposed amending its approvals process for biotechnology traits. The proposal would allow individual member states to opt out of the import of products containing those traits for food and feed use, including products already being imported, even though such traits have been fully approved by European Union (EU) food safety officials.

[ASA Leaders Appointed to USDA Trade Advisory Committees](#)-USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and United States Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman appointed ASA CEO Steve Censky and ASA Director Joe Steinkamp, Evansville, Ind., to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) and ASA Director Matt Stutzman, Adrian, Mich., to the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) for Trade in Grains, Feed, Oilseeds and Planting Seeds.

[ASA Lauds House Passage of COOL Repeal](#)-In early June, the House of Representatives passed a bill to repeal the country of origin labeling standards for meat products sold in the United States. The legislation followed a final ruling from the World Trade Organization that the COOL statute represents a violation of U.S. commitments under the WTO. ASA has supported repeal of the COOL rule based on potential retaliatory tariffs on U.S. soy exports, and on adverse impacts to the livestock industry, which represents the largest consumer of domestically produced soybean meal.

[Soy Growers Talk Freedom to Operate During Annual IOPD, ISGA Meetings](#)- U.S. soy leaders joined oilseed grower representatives from around the world in Chicago, Ill. to discuss the freedom to operate issues producers are facing and how they can work together to address those issues. The annual International Oilseed Producers Dialogue (IOPD) meeting, hosted by the U.S. soy family, was held in the United States for the first time in six years and welcomed participants from 11 major oilseed producing countries spanning North America, South America, Europe, Australia, and Malaysia.

[Soy Producers Around the Globe Discuss Biotech, More in China](#)-The International Soy Grower Alliance (ISGA) held its second mission to China in April, where discussion focused on delays in biotechnology trait approvals, among other soy issues. American Soybean Association (ASA) President Wade Cowan participated in the weeklong meetings in Beijing, where he said having the soy exporting countries come together, sent a strong message. U.S. Soy Grower Leaders Discuss Biotech, Share Innovative Ideas in Europe-U.S. soy grower leaders met with European farmers in March to exchange information on modern and innovative farming and to gain support for science behind the introduction of new technologies. Delegates included American Soybean Association (ASA) Director Kevin Scott. Transportation and Supply Chain

ASA Commends House on Passage of Grain Standards Act Reauthorization, Calls on Senate for Quick Action-ASA commended the House of Representatives on passage of a bill to reauthorize the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA), and called on the Senate to act quickly on its version of the legislation. Unless a bill is enacted by Sept. 30, important provisions of the current USGSA will expire, putting the reliability of export inspection of soybeans and grain at risk.

Soy Growers Relieved by New West Coast Ports Labor Contract-The members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) voted 82 percent in favor of ratifying the agreement reached earlier this year with the Pacific Maritime Administration (PMA) after a lengthy and disruptive negotiation. ASA and other industry organizations impacted by the slowdown that occurred at the ports during the negotiation, are relieved the new agreement was ratified and hope that the ILWU and the PMA will work to ensure that there are no further disruption of port operations.

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 Executive Committee and Staff