

National Association of Wheat Growers: Weekly Update

House Committee on Agriculture Hearing Re The Next Farm Bill: The Future of International Food Aid and Agricultural Development

On Wednesday, June 07, 2017, the House Committee on Agriculture held a hearing on food aid programs. Most notably, Ron Suppes, Kansas grower and former USW Chairman, testified on food aid and his recent trip to Tanzania where he saw programs that used wheat. The majority of his testimony focused on Food for Progress and monetization, two issues that other commodities have not testified on in the past but are important to the wheat industry. Additional panelists included Dr. Thomas Jayne, on behalf of the Farm Journal Foundation; Mr. Brian Schoeneman on behalf of USA Maritime; Ms. Navyn Salem, founder and CEO, Edesia Nutrition; and Ms. Margaret Schuler, Senior Vice President of the International Programs Group, World Vision.

While the panel was diverse, all delivered a similar message: the U.S. should continue to fund food aid programs. Witnesses assured the Committee that these programs put America first by supplying jobs, supporting farmers, and creating good relationships with other countries. One common question asked by Committee members was how do these programs help countries become self-sufficient rather than reliant on aid. The speakers argued that U.S. food aid's true purpose is to stimulate economic growth and ultimately produce future trading partners. Specifically, Suppes responded "these people aren't looking for charity, but rather for a way to build a better life for their families and communities."

House Committee on Appropriations Re Commodity Futures Trading Commission – Budget Hearing

The House Ag Appropriations Subcommittee held on hearing on June 8th to review the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Budget. J. Christopher Giancarlo, Acting Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, testified before the committee. Hard Red Winter (HRW) wheat contracts were brought up in a question from Representative Kevin Yoder of Kansas. The question surrounded the issue of a significant spread between the farmer's local cash price and the futures price, with some farmers getting a cash price more than a dollar less than what was on the board. This past April, The CME Group announced that it would implement a Variable Storage Rate (VSR) on the Kansas City HRW futures contract beginning in March 2018. Representative Yoder asked for an update on that process. Chairman Giancarlo stated the application will be processed by July, that everything is on schedule with the application, and that he expects a successful result from that application. He also stated he will watch the outcome to make sure the issue is resolved.

The U.S. and Mexico Reach Trade Agreement on Sugar

On June 06, 2017, The U.S. and Mexico announced a preliminary agreement on a new system to regulate the flow of Mexican sugar into the U.S. Mexico first agreed to the limit on its sugar exports as part of a "suspension agreement" in December 2014, after the U.S. threatened to levy stiff countervailing and anti-dumping duties. That limit effectively cut Mexican exports in half and dictated that only 53 percent could be refined product. In his statement, USDA Secretary Purdue stated that "the accord sharply reduces the percentage of Mexican refined sugar that may be imported into the United States and also lowers the polarity dividing line between refined and raw sugar. We also achieved better pricing agreements for the

industry.” Specifically, the new agreement requires that 70 percent of imports from Mexico be raw and allows the remaining 30 percent to be refined.

USTR Requests Comments and Schedules Hearing on NAFTA Negotiations

On May 23, 2017, The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) published in the Federal Register a Notice of a “Request for Comments on Negotiating Objectives Regarding Modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement With Canada and Mexico.” In the Notice, USTR advised that it will accept written comments by June 12, 2017 and will hold a public hearing at the U.S. International Trade Commission in Washington, DC, on June 27, 2017 regarding the upcoming renegotiation of NAFTA. USTR’s solicitation of comments and scheduling of a public hearing follow upon the notice provided by USTR Robert Lighthizer to Congress on May 18, 2017 indicating the Administration’s intent to renegotiate NAFTA.

FONA: Dinner Under the Stars

Each year in June, when the Arboretum grounds are in full bloom, Friend of the National Arboretum (FONA) hosts its Annual Dinner Under the Stars. With a cocktail reception in the National Herb Garden and dinner in the meadow overlooking the Capitol Columns, the Dinner brings together people from business, government and the community to support the gardens and programs at the Arboretum. NAWG CEO and FONA Board Member Chandler Goule kicked off the June 6 dinner with welcoming remarks. Additionally, NAWG staff attended the event and had an opportunity to meet Secretary Sonny Purdue.

Established in 1927 by an Act of Congress, the Arboretum is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service. Its 446 acres are located in Northeast Washington, D.C. to serve the public need for scientific research, and education of plants and conservation.

USDA: 2017 Census of Agriculture

The census is the only complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It includes even the smallest plots of land – rural or urban – growing fruits, vegetables, or raising food animals, if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. The information produced by the Census of Agriculture guides Congress, agribusiness, policymakers, researchers, local governments and many others on the creation and funding of agricultural programs and services – decisions that can directly impact your local operations and the future of the agriculture industry for years to come.

Please note that new farmers or existing farmers who have not participated in a prior Census of Agriculture still have time to sign up to be counted through the end of June at <https://www.agcounts.usda.gov/cgi-bin/counts/>. The survey takes less than a minute – and will ensure that you receive a Census form (that you can fill out in paper form or online.) If a farmer/rancher is not on our list frame by June 30th, 2017, the producer will not have an opportunity to participate in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. For more information about the census, please visit www.agcensus.usda.gov, follow NASS on Twitter @usda_nass, or call (800) 727-9540.

NCSGGA Upcoming Events

June 20th - 22nd / 9:00a - 3:00p
NC FFA State Convention
Convention Center Raleigh, NC

July 12th / 8:30am - 3:00pm
Research & Education Mtg.
NCSGGA Office
3822 Bland Road
Raleigh, NC

July 27th
Northeast Ag Expo Field Day
R&R Farms
106 Riddick Grove Rd.
Belvidere, NC 27919

August 1st / 10:00am – 12:00pm
Touch a Tractor Event
4020 Market At North Hills St.
Raleigh, NC 27609

August 2nd, 2017
Blacklands Farm Managers Tour
Green Valley Farms
7014 NC-94
Columbia, NC 27925

August 10th - 11th
NCSGGA Board Meeting
Sheraton Imperial Hotel
Durham, NC

*Note***If you know of someone that does not have access to a computer/internet and would like to receive printed hard copies of the Wheat Beat please have them call Nikki Johnson at 919-809-8657 to setup a mailing delivery address. *****