ASA Members Heard in Washington

At the end of March, following the American Soybean Association (ASA) annual Board meeting in Washington, D.C., farmer-leaders and staff from ASA and state associations will participate in the annual "Hill Day" visits to voice policy priorities for U.S. soybean growers. Delegations representing various soybean state associations will meet with their Senators and Representatives to discuss important issues that affect soybean producers.

The grassroots nature of ASA's policy-setting process, along with the strength ASA gains from its 25 state affiliates, has allowed ASA to be extremely successful in representing U.S. growers interests.

"The American Soybean Association is the voice of U.S. soybean producers and has been that voice for more than 80 years," said Stephen Censky, ASA CEO. "ASA's mission is to improve U.S. soybean farmer profitability, and we do that by representing their farm and trade policy interests in Washington, D.C. and around the world."

State soybean associations work with ASA on national and international policies and represent members in their state legislatures.

"ASA successfully lobbied in Washington and in state capitols to enact policies that are benefiting U.S. soybean producers, from a better income safety net for soybeans under farm programs to opening up foreign markets to creating new markets through biodiesel and the soy protein health claim," Censky said.

ASA is focused on a variety of important issues for 2003. ASA is taking a lead role in pursuing action with regard to biodiesel legislation, soy research appropriations, soymilk in federal nutrition programs, soy in food aid and World Trade Organization negotiations.

ASA is also actively participating in issues surrounding river transportation infrastructure, export promotion and assistance programs, sanctions reform, conservation and tax legislation.

"The strength ASA gains from its state affiliates has allowed the Association to be extremely successful in representing U.S. grower interests," said Neil Caskey, Special Assistant to the CEO. "It was ASA and members of the state affiliates that successfully fought to make soybeans a full-fledged program crop in the 2002 Farm Bill, making producers eligible for a 44-cent per bushel fixed payment and a $5.80 per bushel target price."

ASA continues to tirelessly work to increase grower profitability by building demand for soy in the U.S. and abroad.

"Because ASA is a grassroots organization, membership is key to strong representation," said Sue Derscheid, ASA Membership & Marketing Director. "ASA is made up of members who are farmers just like you who want the best for their operation and yours."

More than 25,000 soybean farmers pay annual dues to belong to the American Soybean Association because ASA represents their voice in Washington and is committed to improving the profitability of all U.S. soybean producers.

For more information, or to become a member of the American Soybean Association, contact the ASA Membership Department at 800/688-7692, or join online at www.soygrowers.com.

During "Hill Day" visits in Washington, D.C., leaders and staff from the Nebraska Soybean Association met with their elected officials to discuss soybean issues.

A delegation of Illinois Soybean Association leaders and staff visited their Senators and Representatives in Washington, D.C., to voice policy priorities for U.S. soybean growers.

The American Soybean Association is a national commodity organization with 25,000 members and affiliation with 25 states. For membership details, call 1-800-688-7692.

ASA Presents Soy Conference in Tunisia

Nearly 100 participants from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia attended ASA's two-day conference "Soy for Food Products" at the Golden Tulip Hotel Carthage in La Marsa, Tunisia, December 17-18, 2002. Organized by ASA Europe and Maghreb, the conference was also supported by major soy ingredient producers.

Speakers presented applications for the bakery, dairy and meat sector, focusing on the economical, functional and nutritional benefits and the high potential for new product introductions in the Maghreb market.

ASA presented methods for evaluating the protein quality of soy foods and outlined opportunities for soy foods in Maghreb. Guest speakers covered topics such as bakery applications of soy flour and ingredients, production and application of textured soy products, soy production and application of soy in dairy alternatives, health benefits of soy protein isolates, protein concentrates in meat applications, soy milk and derived products, and formulating mainstream foods with soy.

Conferences such as this are one of the tools utilized by ASA to increase demand for U.S. soybeans and soybean products.

At a soy food conference, ASA/Europe & Maghreb Marketing Manager Ignace Debruyne (far right) explained methods for evaluating the protein quality of soy foods and talked about opportunities for soy foods in Maghreb. (ASA photo by Dr. Riadh Karma, ASA Tunisia)

ASA Helps Introduce Soy Products to the World

In many of the world's fastest growing countries, people are getting a taste for high-protein U.S. soy products thanks to the American Soybean Association's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) program. Since soybean growers helped launched WISHH in 2000, the program has helped find new uses for U.S. soy by leveraging checkoff dollars with the U.S. government's international programs, as well as the efforts of multiple non-profit organizations.

ASA WISHH has worked with both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development to approve defatted soy flour, textured soy protein, concentrated soy protein, soy protein isolates and soy milk replacer for use in international programs. As a result, hunger-fighting organizations can now request these soy products for use in their overseas efforts. WISHH is also providing technical assistance to aid successful use of the products as well as helping launch commercial food markets in rapidly growing countries such as Egypt.

"Global recognition for U.S. soy protein's value, versatility and health benefits is on the rise," said Jim Hershey, ASA WISHH Director. "Soy is also an excellent source of protein for countries where other sources of protein are often scarce."

Soy-fortified wheat flour and textured soy protein provide excellent examples of recent uses of high-protein soy products.

In cooperation with WISHH, the North American Millers' Association funded sending two food technologists to Tajikistan in the fall of 2002. The trials showed that soy flour could add much-needed protein to bread and many other foods that are staples in the diets of millions of people in Central Asia. In Indonesia, WISHH and ASA are working with the International Relief and Development organization to use soy flour to increase the protein content of noodles eaten by school children.

Florida-based Food For The Poor requested and received 500 metric tons of textured soy protein from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for distribution in Guyana. In the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, Counterpart International started using textured soy protein after learning about it from WISHH. In Angola, Africare is using textured soy protein and soy flour at feeding centers for children.

These programs are helping needy people today, and building future commercial markets for U.S. soybean producers.