

ASA Addresses Issues that Impact Soybean Farmers








Biobased Products — An American Soybean Association (ASA) Washington representative participated in meetings in August with Senate Agriculture Committee staff working on the biobased products provisions in the new Farm Bill. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is keenly interested in expanding and streamlining the biobased products program in the 2007 Farm Bill. It requires federal agencies to buy biobased products. Senator Harkin wants federal procurement of biobased products to drive the market for state and local governments as well as the private sector. Biobased products benefit soybean farmer income because many products, ranging from lubricants to carpet backing, are made from soybean oil.

Rail Issues — ASA is continuing its efforts to address captive rail shipper issues. The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing on September 20 on Rail Competition and Service. Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) has introduced the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act of

2007 (HR 2125), a comprehensive bill supported by ASA that addresses rail competition issues. ASA Washington staff has also been participating in an Ag Transportation Working Group, a coalition of agriculture groups with shared interests in addressing rail issues.

Food Aid — ASA joined with other agricultural organizations to respond to a New York Times article published in August that claimed the U.S. Farm Bill's approach to food aid is "further enriching heavily subsidized farmers as well as the shipping industry." In the letter distributed to staff on Capitol Hill, ASA and the other groups stated that the article shows a lack of knowledge about the current food aid system. Commodity donations for food aid are not seen as a way to subsidize farmers, but are a source of pride to American taxpayers, farmers, food processors and agribusinesses. "We need to keep our commodity food aid in place so those suffering overseas can continue to receive actual food when droughts, conflicts and other things arise in the region that prevent local food from being available," the groups stated in their letter.

American Soybean Association (ASA) Responsibilities Compared to the Soybean Checkoff

| | Voluntary ASA Membership | Mandatory Soybean Checkoff |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| PURSUE fair and favorable legislation for U.S. soybean growers |  | |
| FIGHT for reasonable regulation |  | |
| NEGOTIATE for expanded trade |  | |
| LOBBY for Federal soy research |  | |
| INFORM and educate legislators about soybean issues |  | |
| PROVIDE direct access to lawmakers |  | |
| PROVIDE international marketing strategic direction to the U.S. Soybean Export Council |  | ✓ |
| IMPLEMENT soybean farmer-funded domestic marketing activities | | ✓ |
| IMPLEMENT soybean farmer-funded research and new uses activities | | ✓ |

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