

ASA Submits 2009 Policy Priorities to Obama Administration

The American Soybean Association (ASA) submitted a document outlining its 2009 policy priorities to the Obama Administration in January, ahead of the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States on January 20, 2009. By developing and advocating soybean farmer top policy priorities to the new Obama Administration, ASA continues its rich tradition of working in the best interest of U.S. soybean farmers.

"ASA looks forward to working closely with the Obama Administration to achieve these policy priorities, which not only make sense for soybean farmers, but also benefit our entire country through reduced dependence on foreign oil, job creation, increased U.S. exports and a modernized infrastructure system," said ASA President Johnny Dodson, a soybean producer from Halls, Tenn.

Highlights of ASA's priorities as submitted to the Obama Administration are as follows:

- **Biodiesel:** ASA's top policy priority for 2009 is long-term enactment of the biodiesel tax credit before it expires on December 31, 2009. The biodiesel tax incentive and Bioenergy Program payments make U.S. biodiesel producers more competitive with petroleum-based diesel and with biodiesel imports, which benefit from foreign government subsidies. Biodiesel production reduces U.S. dependence on foreign oil while creating jobs and demand for homegrown renewable soybean oil.
- **2008 Farm Bill Implementation:** ASA supports maintaining an effective safety net for soybean producers to protect against declines in commodity prices and farm income that are beyond their control. ASA strongly supports the 2008 Farm Bill and opposes reopening it through its expiration in 2012. ASA also supports funding to upgrade the Farm Service Agency computer system, which is outdated and is causing problems in service delivery. Under the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, ASA supports regulations for biodiesel that pay on all gallons, not just incremental production.
- **International Trade:** U.S. soybean producers depend on export markets for soybeans, soybean meal and oil, and livestock products for 50 percent of their annual production. ASA strongly supports renewal of Presidential Trade Promotion Authority as soon as possible.

ASA supports Congressional passage as soon as possible of the Colombia, South Korea and Panama Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

- **Agricultural Biotechnology and Productivity:** ASA strongly supports agricultural biotechnology as one of the most effective means for increasing yields, aiding in conservation efforts, improving quality traits and reducing production costs. ASA urges the Administration to address slow or non-functioning import approval systems in foreign countries that could negatively affect U.S. soy exports, including working toward improvements in approval systems in the European Union, China and South Korea.
- **Biobased Preferred Product and Labeling Program Implementation:** ASA has championed implementation of the biobased label and the criteria for attaining the label to help distinguish true biobased products and pull them into the market. ASA supports acceleration of the implementation of the BioPreferred Procurement Program so that more products are approved as eligible. ASA supports enactment of a tax credit for biobased products.
- **Climate Change:** Soybean farmers recognize that opportunities exist for growers under climate change legislation, through providing offsets and participation in carbon credit markets. ASA will not support emissions caps or additional regulations for agriculture under climate change legislation or regulations.
- **Transportation:** ASA is encouraged that President Obama recognizes the multiple benefits to be realized from infrastructure investment. We strongly support funding for upgrade of locks and dams in economic stimulus legislation and/or Energy and Water appropriations bills. For rail, we encourage rail and/or investment incentives for rail infrastructure and appropriate policies to address rail rates and service issues.

The full text of ASA's submission may be found at www.soygrowers.com/policy/2009priorities.pdf.

ASA is a national, not-for-profit, grassroots membership organization that develops and implements policies to increase the profitability of its members and the entire U.S. soybean industry.