



June 2019

HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL by Glenn Luedke

In the past month, the House and Senate have concentrated on key concerns coming from grass roots namely, disaster aid relief, trade tariffs, commodity prices, infrastructure repair and weather-related issues (late field prep situations, including late planting or non-planting opportunities for this entire crop year).

AG BIOTECHNOLOGY

White House Executive Order (EO): IMPLEMENT THE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL PROSPERITY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MODERNIZE AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY REGULATIONS

Foster policy to encourage agricultural innovation, encourage engagement and alignment at the global level and provide a firm foundation for the future of gene edited crops and livestock.

The Federal Government's current policy regarding agricultural biotechnology is to protect public health and the environment by adopting regulatory approaches that are proportionate to the risks such products pose and that avoid arbitrary or unjustifiable distinctions. The regulations should ensure public confidence and promote future innovation and competitiveness.

The Federal Government's six-step plan of action:

1. Base regulatory decisions on scientific and technical evidence and take into account economic factors.
2. Review regulatory applications in a timely manner.
3. Ensure the transparency, predictability and consistency of product regulation.
4. Develop regulations and guidance that provide fair notice to the public and allow for its participation.
5. Make regulatory determinations based on risks associated with the product and its intended end use.
6. Promote trade in products of agricultural biotechnology by urging trading partners to adopt science and risk-based regulatory approaches.

The Secretary of Agriculture will play a large role in implementing the EO and deliver a plan of action to facilitate engagement with consumers in order to build public confidence in and the acceptance of, the use of biotechnology in agriculture and the food system.

WOTUS

A federal court invalidated the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers 2015 expansion of federal jurisdiction over small and isolated waters. Scores of lawsuits were filed by a large number of state governments and trade groups. This is the first court to reach a final decision regarding the lawfulness of the 2015 WOTUS rule. Under the current Administration, the EPA and Corps of Engineers have proposed to repeal the rule and issue a new regulation that appropriately defines federal waters. The Senate has held hearings and all agreed on the need for clean water, but disagreed if the Administration's WOTUS rule will work. Several state Commissioners of Agriculture agreed it is important to reduce the scope of the jurisdiction of the federal government over WOTUS. Several witnesses representing local jurisdictions voiced concern that turning over more authority to the states could become a problem because two-thirds of the states have laws prohibiting state regulations from being more stringent than the Clean Water Act.

EPA

The EPA has announced it has canceled registrations for twelve products that kill pests with compounds belonging to the neonicotinoid group. This action by the EPA is one part of a legal settlement. The lawsuit was prompted by the non-profit advocacy group, Center for Food Safety. Experts state this action by the EPA is not common. During the final months of 2018, three major agricultural chemical companies agreed to EPA's demand that the products be removed from the supply chain.

EPA Administrator Wheeler signed off on the final rule to exempt animal waste from emissions reporting. This rule provides more clarity and certainty to the regulated community that animal waste emissions do not need to be reported under EPCRA. Administrator Wheeler also issued a memo directing EPA leadership to develop rules that outline how cost/benefit considerations will be applied to future rule making processes. The goal is to follow guidelines by providing clarity, consistency and transparency when regulations are written.

EPA is reviewing a recent university/Environmental Defense Fund study that states that the nitrogen manufacturing process creates a large amount of methane and the study maintains the amounts emitted substantially exceed the amount reported by the EPA. Authors of the study results suggest their findings present opportunities for the industry to re-evaluate the manufacturing process. The Fertilizer Institute questioned the results of the study and EPA stated they are reviewing the report.

EPA has held public hearings to present proposed revisions of methods for conducting national level threatened and endangered species biological evaluations for pesticides. The procedure reviews were designed to improve the assessment process by better use of pesticide data provided by the USDA and additional sources to improve assessment accuracy. This method will position the assessments more in line with sound science and increase transparency.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE / ENROLLMENT 2020

The NAICC 2019 Leadership Program participants John Gottula, Anna Meszaros, and Melissa Nelson completed their second module of the program this spring. They traveled to Washington, DC with a delegation of NAICC members to meet with policy and lawmakers and to attend the NAICC 22nd Annual Crawfish Boil on the Hill event. They are now preparing for the Site Visit module by selecting from a group of NAICC host members from across the United States. Their goal is to learn about a type of agriculture or a crop that they know very little (or nothing about). A QA member from the southeast may choose to travel to visit a NAICC member in the northwest to experience a day (or two) in the life of a west coast crop consultant and then also visit a research consultant in that area. John, Anna and Melissa are preparing to ask a lot of questions, take note of all the answers and snap a lot of pictures so they can report back to us about how their “agricultural world” has expanded from their Leadership Program opportunity.

Enrollment is open for the 2020 Leadership Program until November 1st. If you are interested (or know someone who would be) click on [Leadership Program](#) for more information and an application. You can also email our Leadership Committee Chair Bree Goldschmidt bree@moarkag.com or Allison Jones AllisonJones@NAICC.org. If you are interested in being a host location for a Leadership candidate, please contact Allison for more details.

Have a Hot! Topic?

If you have any hot topics that you would like to appear in the newsletter or a News Short, please email to Lisa at lwheelock@greatlakesag.com. What is important to one NAICC member is important to the organization!

Happy Summer! Take some time out of the field to enjoy it!

NAICC

Your professional society representing the nation’s crop production, research consultants and quality assurance professionals.

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