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Letter from CAWG President

Randy Wilks



Greetings to all on this summer day. I wish to introduce myself and my family to all members of CAWG.

My wife Belinda and I live and farm in and around

the Burlington area. We have four grown children and one grandchild. Our farming operation includes wheat, corn, alfalfa, sunflowers and various other crops from time to time. Our operation also includes a custom farming business that offers services from tillage to harvesting of various crops.

I hope that you had a good wheat harvest and that you are able to reap a profit for your efforts. This year's crop started out highly promising in eastern Colorado but lack of winter moisture and hot days in early May, combined with insects, plant disease and a late freeze, resulted in well-below average wheat yields in eastern Kit Carson County.

I was recently honored by being elected as your CAWG President for the 2005-06 fiscal year. I now have the honor

of representing you and other Colorado wheat growers at the state and national level. I anticipate that the upcoming year will be one of many achievements and accomplishments, along with many hard fought tasks.

We, as a CAWG board, continually evaluate and modify the direction of our organization to be the best suited to tackle the problems that effect wheat growers the most, especially those issues that effect net return. Of these issues, the 2007 Farm Bill will be one of our top priorities due to the level of economic impact it has on our farming operations. The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) and CAWG are working closely together to make sure that the interests of wheat growers are well represented and heard as the 2007 Farm Bill is developed.

In April 2005, CAWG along with the other 22 member states of NAWG met in Denver to brainstorm, debate and develop our top priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill. NAWG's recommendations to Congress, the Administration and USDA regarding the 2007 Farm Bill are outlined starting on page 1 of this publication. I urge you to take an active part in helping form the 2007 Farm Bill.

Overall, CAWG wants to maintain current funding levels in the areas of subsidy payments. We will work to maintain the level of support we have in the 2002 Farm Bill, while trying to stay within the disciplines of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and all the binding rules that apply in that arena.

Can we maintain current price supports in a new Farm Bill while the federal budget is in the shape it is? Yes, we can and will. There will be money for a new Farm Bill and the safety net that a Farm Bill promises producers. Remember, a Farm Bill not only supports agricultural producers, but creates an affordable, reliable, safe food supply for consumers, not to mention funding for the programs for poverty stricken Americans such as welfare and food stamps. So remind your city cousins that this is as much a program that benefits all who require daily nourishment as it is for those who produce the commodities that feed a hungry nation.

We will be working on many issues throughout the coming year and as always we value the input of all producers. Please call our office in Centennial at 1-800-WHEAT-10 if you have any questions, concerns or ideas. Thank you for your continuous support of CAWG. I look forward to serving you.



Congresswoman Musgrave Participates in Wheat Tour of Kit Carson and Lincoln Counties

U.S. Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, (R-4th), participated in a series of wheat-related events during an all-day tour of Kit Carson and Lincoln counties on August 8, hosted by the Colorado Association of Wheat Growers (CAWG) and the Colorado Wheat Administrative Committee (CWAC).

Congresswoman Musgrave's Fourth Congressional District includes 17 major winter wheat producing counties on Colorado's Eastern Plains. During 2004, the district accounted for 81 percent of Colorado's winter wheat production, valued at an estimated \$126.2 million (of state total of \$156.6 million).

The second term congresswoman serves on the powerful



U.S. Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, (R-4th), toured Homestead Farms northwest of Genoa in Lincoln County during the 3rd Annual Musgrave Wheat Tour hosted by the Colorado Association of Wheat Growers (CAWG) and the Colorado Wheat Administrative Committee (CWAC) on August 8. Pictured from left to right are CWAC President Cary Wickstrom of Orchard, Raymond Beedy of Genoa, Steve Beedy of Genoa, Congresswoman Musgrave, Steve Musgrave of Fort Morgan, Gary Beedy of Genoa, CAWG Vice President Dusty Tallman of Brandon and CAWG Secretary-Treasurer Nick Midcap of Wiggins.

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2007 Farm Bill Debate Begins

As Congress and the Administration begin making decisions on their priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) has prepared this document to outline the priorities of U.S. wheat producers and to answer the questions asked by USDA during the scheduled listening sessions.

NAWG's general recommendations for the 2007 Farm Bill are based on the direction given to NAWG at a national meeting of NAWG member state organizations, including CAWG, in Denver in April 2005 and its current resolutions.

Also included in this document are brief suggested answers to the six questions USDA is asking at the Farm Bill forums being held in Iowa, North Dakota, Minnesota, Tennessee and Wisconsin. You can also submit answers to the questions online at the address below if you cannot attend a forum. For more information about the forums, please see http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/farmbill?navtype=SU&navid=FARM_BILL_FORUMS

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NAWG Promotes Risk Management Accounts at Crop Insurance Hearing

Crop insurance is a critical risk management tool that needs "sharpening" to best work for American farmers, National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) Domestic Policy Committee Chairman Ray Buttars testified June 28 before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

Reforms needed include making premiums more affordable for the average farmer, reworking the Actual Production History (APH) formula and increasing the ability of farmers to insure a minimum harvestable value, he said.

Buttars, who also serves as President of the Idaho Grain Producers Association, explained NAWG's proposed Risk Management Accounts, which would allow policyholders to deposit a percentage of the value of their crop in a tax deferred account each year, along with a smaller federal contribution, for use when yields produced are less than 92.5 percent of APH. These accounts would be available to farmers who buy a crop insurance policy, and would be linked to the value of the crops insured, Buttars said.

"Over the past few years Congress has passed disaster legislation to provide risk protection where crop insurance could not," said Buttars. "America's wheat farmers have listed crop insurance improvement as one of their top priorities."

In his testimony, Buttars said that, even with the existing premium support, most farmers can only afford either 65 or 70 percent coverage. At 70 percent coverage, a farmer loses three years worth of profit before any claim is paid.

"Higher coverage is critical," he said. "However, it must also be affordable."

Buttars explained that NAWG has requested Group Risk Plans be made available to wheat growers, but that while these policies are more affordable, they will only work for some farmers because counties in the Wheat Belt tend to be large and have multiple climates, soil types, and agronomic conditions.

Ultimately, he testified, greater premium subsidies for the 75 to 85 percent levels appear to be the only real solution to making these higher levels attractive.

Another area of crop insurance that needs to be reformed is the calculation of APH, Buttars said. Currently, a producer's past crops - including lost crops - are used in the APH calculation, decreasing the amount of the crop that is insurable after a bad year. The reduction compounds after a series of bad years. Better ways to do this might be to use the producer's previous APH or to index the producer's APH to a trendline of county yields, Buttars said.

Strategic Priorities of the Colorado Association of Wheat Growers (CAWG), Colorado Wheat Administrative Committee (CWAC) and Colorado Wheat Research Foundation (CWRP)

- Increase state and national legislative and education activities to assure support of Colorado wheat industry

- * Create a Colorado WheatPAC

- * Address TABOR, Amendment 23 and Gallagher to preserve CSU breeding/research and extension programs

- Enhance the demand/marketability of Colorado wheat

- * Be the industry leader in producing and marketing Hard White Wheat

- * Develop and implement a marketing plan targeting Mexico

- * Further improve the image of Colorado to one of a "high quality" producer

- Support development and commercialization of value-added novel traits/systems that increase demand and profitability

- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of technology transfer and communication

- * Increase producer awareness, interest and participation in priority Colorado Wheat programs

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2007 Farm Bill Debate Begins

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U.S. wheat producers, like most family farmers would like to expand their operations and plant and harvest more acres. While the amount of farm payments is currently limited by the 2002 Farm Bill, NAWG members continue to believe that maintaining the current payment limit structure of \$40,000 for Direct Payments or further lowering it, punishes the producers that have made their operations a success.

NAWG also opposes any kinds of means testing for eligibility or to restrict participation in federal farm programs.

4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

NAWG supports the current program structure if it is streamlined and simplified. For example greater data sharing between programs would allow a general sign-up to be used to determine which program would be best suited to the conservation needs of a producer.

The biggest problem has been an underfunding of existing conservation title programs. The Conservation Security Program needs to be fully funded with mandatory funding as originally intended. The concept of "priority watersheds" should be abolished and all qualified producers should be eligible for participation.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) should be refocused on those most environmentally sensitive highly erodible lands. Acreage under expiring CRP contracts, not re-enrolled in CRP but placed back in production should have original program base acres restored.

Conservation program funding should not be used to offset or supplant existing commodity title program funding.

5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective

assistance in rural areas?

U.S. wheat producers know first hand that the success of rural America depends on the successes of those that live and work there, and that farm program payments pay a large role in helping finance and support rural America. The financial support farmers receive for their commodities goes into local communities - directly to local businesses and through local and state taxes. By continuing to provide farm program payments, the U.S. government is making a strong investment in rural America.

NAWG believes that rural development programs are an important part of any farm bill, however, NAWG does not support decreasing income support mechanisms, such as the Direct Payment, in order to fund rural development initiatives.

6. How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

In order to be able to compete in a world market, focus must always be kept on quality, and progress on quality starts with research. Wheat should have a stronger presence in the next research title with an equal emphasis on cereal disease research and on new and improved traits and quality. Research to complete the mapping of the wheat genome should be a high priority. Funding for research remains an annual struggle for an ever shrinking share of research dollars. Consideration should be given to identifying a dedicated revenue stream that could provide a stable ongoing base for research funding.

One of the most promising areas of value added market development is in the area of biofuels and biorefining. A recent USDA/DOE study concluded that there currently exists the sustainable capacity in the U.S. to produce 1.3 billion

tons of agriculture and forestland residue per year, enough biomass feedstock to produce biofuels to meet more than one third of our current petroleum transportation fuel needs.

Technology currently exists to begin refining agriculture and forestland residue into ethanol and other valuable bi-products. Financing remains a roadblock, and a program of loan guarantees and other incentives targeted toward the development of commercial biorefining facilities is needed to fully realize the potential value-added market this would create for agriculture producers while contributing to the national security goal of reducing our dependence on foreign imported petroleum.

A program of targeted research and development funding is also needed to achieve the scientific breakthroughs required for expanded development of biobased fuels and products. A program similar to the Bioenergy/Bioproducts provisions recently adopted as part of the comprehensive energy legislation (S. 10) should have supplementary provisions in the next Farm Bill. This would include a program of R&D with increased emphasis on feedstock production and delivery, including technologies for harvest, handling and transport of crop residues. Also included should be a program of production incentives to deliver the first billion gallons of annual cellulosic biofuels production. The next Farm Bill should set a goal of establishing a viable commercial biorefining industry by the completion of the next Farm Bill authorization cycle (year 2013).

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NAWG President Testifies on Expiring CRP Contracts

National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) President Sherman Reese testified on July 27 before Congress on how to handle the high number of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts expected to expire in the next year. Reese, a wheat grower from eastern Oregon, testified before the Senate Agriculture Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization Subcommittee chaired by Senator Mike Crapo, (R-ID).

Reese pointed out in his testimony that four out of the five top CRP enrolled states are among the top wheat producing states: Kansas (2.3 million acres enrolled and 2 million expiring by 2008); North Dakota (3.3 million enrolled and 2.2 million expiring); Montana (3.4 million enrolled and 2.4 million set to expire); and Texas (3.9 million acres with 3 million acres expiring). Several other big wheat states are not far behind.

"The concentration of CRP acres in major wheat producing states gives NAWG a very strong interest in the present and future management of CRP," he said.

NAWG offered several suggestions on the challenge of managing these expirations. Reese expressed support for USDA's recent announcement that producers with CRP contracts set to expire this year may extend their contracts for one year. NAWG would support the continued use of short term contract extensions to ease the administrative burdens of processing a large volume of contract expirations in any given

year. These extensions should be staggered through extensions ranging from one to five years with longer extensions for lands with higher environmental benefits index (EBI) rankings.

NAWG discouraged the use of early or automatic re-enrollments and strongly suggested that any acreage re-enrolled be administered through the competitive bid system. Reese proposed the application of revised rental rates to all full term re-enrollments to ensure that payment rates are up to date and reflect actual local land rental market conditions.

For acreage that is not re-enrolled and is put back into production, NAWG urged that USDA restore crop base acres that were lost when the land was initially enrolled into CRP. Nearly 30 percent of farm program base acres currently enrolled in CRP are wheat base acres.

For longer range farm bill policy issues, Reese suggested that USDA and Congress look for ways to make adjustments in the EBI so that CRP is focused on the most environmentally sensitive lands. Conservation policy should also allow for CRP cover vegetation that has a dual use as biomass feedstock. There may be opportunities to offset CRP program costs through the value derived from biomass vegetation cover.

Reese closed his testimony by suggesting that the fundamental issue here is one of balance – "determining where we place the fulcrum to balance equally important competing interests of conservation with the ability to produce a crop that allows the farmer to remain on the land in the first place."

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2007 Farm Bill Debate Begins

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National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG)

Wheat is the United States' third largest crop, behind only corn and soybeans. In the 2003 crop year, about 2.3 billion bushels of wheat were produced in the United States. Nearly half of the wheat produced in the U.S. is exported. The National Association of Wheat Growers - or NAWG - is a nonprofit organization formed in 1950 to promote wheat and policies friendly to the wheat industry. NAWG now has more than 25,000 members in more than 20 states.

Recommendations

NAWG recommends that the 2007 Farm Bill build on the successes of the 2002 Farm Bill by keeping basic farm support in place, and that nothing be done to jeopardize planting flexibility, as NAWG members believe that the market, and not government policy, should dictate planting choices.

NAWG members support the full preservation of domestic support within the commodity title at no less than authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, but recognize the importance of meeting WTO commitments and keeping farm program policy in the "green box."

As stated in the Commission on 21st Century Agriculture Report, NAWG members also believe federal farm program payments should "provide an effective and adequate income safety net for farmers with minimal market distortion."

Continuing with the recommendation given by the Commission, NAWG also believes that farm program support should meet WTO commitments, and therefore income supports, rather than price support mechanisms should be the centerpiece of any new Farm Bill.

The current Direct Payment clearly fits within these criteria, and is a

top priority for U.S. wheat producers as the debate on the 2007 Farm Bill begins. Even though the Direct Payment is currently capped at \$40,000 annually per entity, creditors, suppliers and landlords currently rely on the assurances that the Direct Payment offers. Furthermore, because the Direct Payment is non-trade distorting, the Direct Payment fits within the U.S.'s WTO obligations.

Understanding that questions have been raised about the restrictions placed during the 2002 Farm Bill regarding the ability of producers to grow fruits and vegetables, NAWG fully supports allowing producers to grow fruits and vegetables on contract acres without decreasing program eligibility.

NAWG opposes a lower payment limit than currently set in law under the 2002 Farm Bill, and supports the three entity rule.

DRAFT Answers to USDA Questions on Farm Policy

1. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

U.S. wheat producers want to be able to compete on a level playing field in the global marketplace. However, producers in many other nations have much lower production costs due to lower labor rates, less environmental regulations, and other factors, putting American producers at a disadvantage.

Therefore, NAWG members support the full preservation of domestic support within the commodity title at no less than the amount authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, but recognize the importance of all countries moving toward less trade-distorting policies.

U.S. wheat producers also need access to new markets. Currently, the U.S. exports nearly half of the wheat crop

annually, and export programs such as the Market Assistance Program and Foreign Market Development Program also play an important role in the industry's ability to enter new markets. NAWG supports the continuation and expansion of these market access programs, and the development of new and creative export programs, such as tax credits (without the reduction of income support mechanisms) that provide a way for producers compete worldwide.

2. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

NAWG members strongly believe that in order for America to continue producing the safest and most abundant food supply in the world, new generations need to be encouraged to enter farming. NAWG therefore supports financing programs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

However, NAWG members also believe that if farming were profitable, young farmers would enter the field without needing extra encouragement. Therefore U.S. wheat producers believe that there needs to be a focus on making farming profitable, rather than encouraging the next generation to enter an unprofitable business.

3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

NAWG believes that farmers who are successful should be able to grow and expand their businesses as they like, without the fear of losing the safety net that they have relied on during times of drought and other hard times.

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Musgrave Participates in Wheat Tour

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House Agriculture Committee that is responsible for federal farm programs and other legislation affecting wheat production and exports.

During the third annual wheat tour for the congresswoman, CAWG officials discussed the need for disaster assistance for the 2005 winter wheat crop and continued reform of federal crop insurance to provide protection to producers for crop losses that result from long-term disastrous weather conditions and the opportunity to purchase higher levels of coverage. The Colorado winter wheat crop is currently estimated at only 64.8 million bushels and the fifth below average crop in six years.

CAWG requested Musgrave's support for additional funding of \$20 million for the Hard White Wheat Incentive Program. Colorado was the second largest hard white wheat producing state in 2004, with production of 3.4 million bushels. CAWG and CWAC also requested Musgrave to continue support of funding for the Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and food aid.

CAWG thanked her for her co-sponsorship of legislation that would provide for consistent and reliable rail transportation that is fairly priced and for her vote in favor of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) that removes all duties on U.S. wheat and ensures that the U.S. wheat industry has the opportunity to maintain leadership in this growing market.

CAWG and CWAC praised Congresswoman Musgrave for her

leadership and strong support for federal funding of wheat related research at Colorado State University (CSU), increased funding for the Central Great Plains Research Station at Akron and for a new research initiative entitled: Viable Dryland Cropping Systems for the West Central Great Plains.

"I am very supportive of agriculture and the annual wheat tour is a wonderful opportunity for me to meet face-to-face with Colorado wheat producers," Congresswoman Musgrave said. "I support reform of federal crop insurance to provide a viable and affordable revenue support program. I also strongly support federal funding for wheat related research at CSU and the Central Great Plains Research Station at Akron."

Our discussions with Congresswoman Musgrave were very positive and constructive, said CAWG President Randy Wilks of Burlington and CWAC President Cary Wickstrom of Orchard. "Congresswoman Musgrave is a strong advocate for us in Congress. We appreciate the strong working relationship we have with her on issues affecting Colorado wheat producers."

Congresswoman Musgrave toured the Randy Wilks farm near Burlington and had lunch with Kit Carson and Cheyenne county area wheat producers at the Ryan Weaver farm headquarters and toured the Homestead Farms north of Genoa with wheat producer Steve Beedy and had dinner with Lincoln and Elbert county wheat producers.

Congresswoman Musgrave toured the Randy Wilks Farm southwest of Burlington to learn about the problems facing Colorado wheat producers.



Congresswoman Musgrave and her husband, Steve Musgrave tour Dorman Brothers in Burlington with host Mike Dorman.



Congresswoman Musgrave visits with local producers at Homestead Farms northwest of Genoa.



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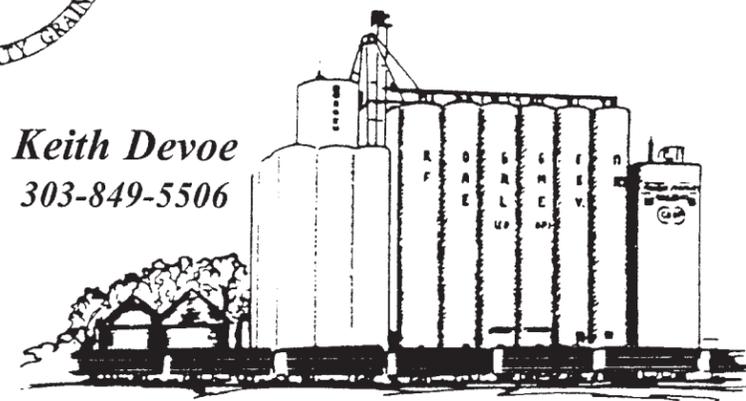
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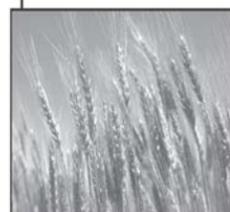
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