

NCGA begins search for new corn markets

ST. LOUIS, MO — The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) has announced a unique program aimed at unlocking new markets for America's corn growers.

Co-sponsored with Funk Seeds International, this Corn Utilization Project provides researchers as

well as industry and government leaders a chance to exchange information in the search for new uses for the nation's growing corn supplies.

"Corn growers harvested a record 8.7 billion bushels this past season," says Dain Friend, an

Illinois grain producer and president of the NCGA. "With existing stocks, available supplies reached 10 billion bushels but utilization is predicted to be only 7 billion. New markets could help relieve much of the surplus which is currently depressing corn

prices. This project can assist in identifying those opportunities."

Don McGillivray, president of Funk Seeds, one of the nation's leading seed companies, also believes this project can potentially improve the corn grower's situation.

"This first-of-its-kind national effort will help in the search for new, stable, long-term markets," says McGillivray. "We feel that new corn uses will provide the most promising long-term solution to the oversupply dilemma corn growers face."

"Our company and the NCGA have worked together for years to identify programs which will be beneficial to corn growers," says McGillivray. "We're taking an aggressive approach to finding solutions to the corn surplus because we believe a company can be only as strong as its industry."

The selection of candidates for the "blue ribbon" committee which will guide the new program will begin soon. The NCGA board of directors will announce the selections at its regularly scheduled March meeting

In September a National Corn Utilization Conference will bring together corporate and university researchers, educators and government and industry leaders to share information about current uses, research and the most realistic utilization opportunities.

Friend believes in the program because "a wealth of new market opportunities exist within the United States."

"For example, corn syrup already has captured 50 percent of the nation's 30-billion-pound-a-year sweetener market," he explains. "A newly developed process for economically producing granular, high-fructose corn sweetener could give corn growers the lion's share of the remaining market." The corn sweetener market currently uses over 500 million bushels of corn.

"The future is brighter for corn growers because of projects like this," Friend says. "Many unexplored markets are waiting on our own doorstep. But, it is up to us to find them. This National Corn Utilization Project should be a major contributor to this effort."

State adds \$2 million to bay cleanup effort

HARRISBURG — The State Conservation Commission has allocated an additional \$2 million for a cost sharing program to improve nutrient management practices on farmland in the lower Susquehanna River Basin as part of the Commonwealth's \$4 million program this year to help clean up the Chesapeake Bay, Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Grubb said recently.

Grubb, who serves as an ex-officio member of the commission, made the announcement during a tour of the Pennsylvania Farm Show by members of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council. The council includes cabinet-level officials from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia and is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the regional Chesapeake Bay program. Grubb and Environmental Resources Secretary Nicholas DeBenedictis are Pennsylvania's representatives on the council.

Under the cost sharing program, farmers may receive 80 percent of the cost of implementing an approved nutrient management program up to \$30,000. Approved practices include reduced tillage systems, animal waste handling and storage facilities, contour farming and stream protection measures.

The program is administered by the Department of Environmental Resources in conjunction with the State Conservation and county conservation districts.

The cost sharing program was initiated in 1985 with \$1 million from the state's initial \$2 million Chesapeake Bay program. "With this additional allocation, more than \$3 million has now been committed for financial assistance for nutrient management practices in Dauphin, Adams, York, Lebanon, Lancaster and Chester counties," Grubb said.

"The environmental decline of the Chesapeake Bay has been partly attributed to erosion and nutrient runoff from agricultural lands in the Susquehanna River Basin," Grubb said. "Through this program, we improve erosion and runoff control and, at the same time, reduce fertilizer costs for Pennsylvania's farmers."

"As with most conservation programs, the farmers in the lower Susquehanna River Basin have been extremely supportive of the Chesapeake Bay nutrient management program," Grubb said. "During the initial sign-up period, more than 150 farmers expressed interest in the program. By April, we expect to have approximately 90 management plans developed or underway and approximately 50 signed contracts."

Funds are allocated to the county conservation districts based on the number of acres of agricultural land in watersheds classified as "high priority" under the Chesapeake Bay program. Following is the list of counties that will receive funds for the cost sharing program:

Adams County	\$212,890
York County	443,290
Lebanon County	180,000
Dauphin County	180,000
Chester County	193,530
Lancaster County	790,290

Landowners interested in the development of a nutrient management program should contact their county conservation district office. Following sign up, technicians will assess each landowner's request, while the conservation district sets assistance priorities.

After approval of an application, a program technician will work with each landowner to develop a nutrient management program. A final agreement, signed by the landowner and the conservation

district, sets conditions for implementing the nutrient management program, including financial assistance and work schedule.

The balance of Pennsylvania's \$4 million 1985-86 Chesapeake Bay program addresses watershed assessments, water quality monitoring, technical assistance, educational programs and materials and nutrient management demonstration projects

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