Soybean Farmers Praise Senate Action On Nationwide Checkoff

ST. LOUIS, MO. — The American Soybean Association (ASA) recently praised Senate leaders on passage of legislation creating a Soybean Promotion and Research Checkoff. The Agriculture Programs Act of 1989 creates a nationwide soybean checkoff to fund promotion and research to increase soybean profits.

The Senate action follows on the heels of action October 26 by the House Agriculture Committee approving a similar bill (HR2209).

ASA President Marlyn Jorgensen urged "quick action this year" to move the measure to final approval in the House and Senate.

He praised the bill's sponsor Senator Wyche Fowler, Jr. (D-GA) as well as Senators David H. Pryor (D-AR), Christopher S. (Kit) Bond (R-MO) and Thad Cochran (R-MS) for their efforts to "create a good bill that will work in the best interests of farmers."

"This legislation is going to help U.S. soybean farmers be more competitive and increase profit opportunities by allowing more emphasis on market promotion and research," said Jorgensen. "It meets the needs of farmers by creating a program that will be fair, farmer controlled and beneficial to all soybean farmers."

He said the Senate's approval "shows Congress is ready to listen and help U.S. soybean farmers promote their own product."

"We face serious competitive threats in the U.S. and around the world," said Jorgensen. "But we also have some great opportunities to build new markets by developing new products and promoting soybeans in places like the Soviet Union. This legislation will provide the funding necessary to take advantage of these research and marketing opportunities."

The nationwide Soybean Promotion and Research Checkoff is similar to other successful selfhelp programs such as those in the beef and dairy industries.

According to Jorgensen, the checkoff would fund research to help U.S. farmers be more competitive by reducing production costs. It would also fund research on new uses for soybeans and soybean products such as soybean oil based ink for the printing industry. Finally it would provide promotion, consumer education and advertising in the U.S. and overseas to protect current markets and find new markets to expand demand.

"We support establishment of a checkoff that is fair and is run by farmers," said Jorgensen. The legislation adopted by the Senate meets our basic objectives:

- fair to all soybean farmers
- run by soybean farmers who serve on boards of directors.
- cap administrative costs at no more than 5%.
- keep 50% in state to pinpoint and solve state problems.
- subject to farmer votes to continue or to change the rate.
- checkoff funds may not be used to influence government action or policy.





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