

Espy Promises Support For Ethanol

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy addressed more than 2,000 attendees at the National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) 35th annual Corn Classic in San Antonio.

The themes of team-building to keep agriculture strong and commitment to improved farm income were woven throughout his remarks. In addition to promoting President Bill Clinton's economic package, Espy's speech and earlier press conference included several agriculture-specific points.

Ethanol. "Ethanol is important to this administration and President Clinton will continue to support it. We are committed to keeping ethanol part of the equation," said Espy. Although he had no specific, substantive announcements, he noted within USDA he will continue the ethanol research program to lower ethanol costs through improved production technology.

At an earlier press conference, Espy said the administra-

tion is "trying to determine" whether ethanol as a biomass is exempt from the Clinton administration's proposed BTU tax.

• Methyl bromide. As a result of negotiations with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the manufacture and use of methyl bromide will not be reduced until the year 2000. The chemical, widely used in the marketing and transportation of grain and as a pre-plant fumigant, was listed as a Class I ozone depleter by the previous administration. That designation meant that its manufacture and use would end by 1994.

In addition, his compromise with EPA includes further scientific reviews of the chemical, which EPA has agreed could result in its delisting as a Class I ozone depleter. "We have been concerned at the lack of scientific evidence and the lack of a reasonable alternative," Espy said.

• Restructuring USDA. "I will put my Washington house in order and then go out into the field," said Espy. In both

locations, he is committed to co-locating offices and making "better use of time and money while making USDA a farmer-ready, user-friendly, service-delivery agency," he said. The streamlining will help him meet his targeted goal of a \$65 million budget cut in 1994.

• Test weights. USDA will suspend the double discount on low test weight corn for the 1993 growing season to give "all corn growers a level playing field at home." Following a cold and wet growing season in the northern Corn Belt, many farmers have been discounted twice — on test weight alone and under ASCS loan.

• Meat inspection. Following the fatal E. coli infection of meat at a fast-food chain in Washington state, Espy said the USDA had taken several short- and long-term initiatives to improve food safety through USDA's meat inspection service. These include better record-keeping and audit trails at meat-packing plants, volun-



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tary efforts by food service establishments to cook meat longer and the hiring of 160 new meat and poultry inspectors.

• NAFTA and GATT. "President Clinton will review NAFTA to try to make it as fair as possible, but he will sign it at the end of the process," Espy promised. GATT will not come in under the March 1993 fast-track deadline, Espy said he was told by U.S. negotiator Mickey Kantor. However, he said the administration is committed to a final package good for U.S. agriculture.

• Export credits to the former Soviet Union. Although Espy had no announcement, he is reviewing several options and will soon announce a "practical" solution that will restore confidence in the loans despite the region's repayment difficulties.

"We need to pursue and maintain this market," he said, noting that substantial cuts in feed grain imports would cause liquidation of livestock there. "Ongoing grain sales are the best downpayment on democracy there. We can't afford to lose that market."

Secretary Espy was joined at the Corn Classic General Session by House Agriculture Chairman Kika de la Garza. Espy participated in the ceremony to affiliate his home state of Mississippi as the 24th state to join NCGA. The session was sponsored by DowElanco.

Adjuvants Enhance

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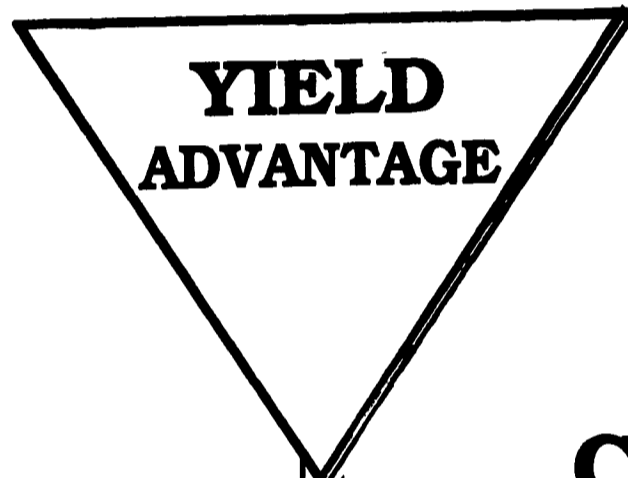
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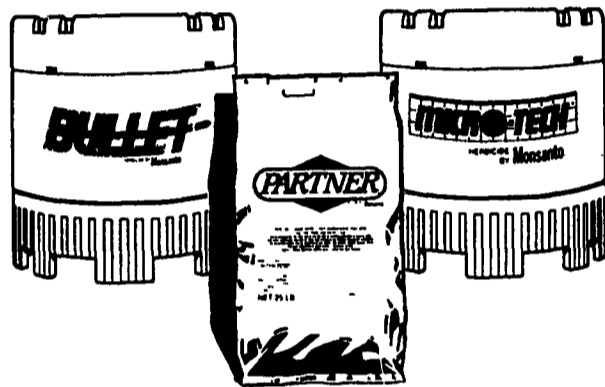


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