

Global Demand, Environment Issues Capture Grower Attention



SAN ANTONIO, Texas — U.S. corn growers will have to be increasingly assertive if they want to capture more world markets for their commodity.

That's the message Dennis Avery, director of global food issues for the Hudson Institute, delivered to farmers at the National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) 35th annual Corn Classic.

"The world will rapidly triple its demand for farming resources. And virtually all of the demand increase will come in Asia," said Avery.

He noted China already has one of the largest economies in the world, and that per capita income in China has doubled since 1980.

"Asia will want more protein. But corn growers are not in a position to play," said

Avery. "We're still trying to maximize return from Washington, D.C., but we will not get access to Asia with federal farm subsidies."

"Farmers have to demand that the government take them out of their straight-jacket," said Avery. "We need free trade. We need to get import barriers out of the way."

He urges farmers to press for a new round of negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to much more forcefully require other countries — particularly Japan and the European Community — to substantially reduce trade barriers. Avery's appearance at Corn Classic was sponsored by Cargill.

Also at Corn Classic, growers checked agriculture's pulse with the public. "Farm

Futures" magazine presented results of a recent Gallup poll defining how farmers perceive the public's views on agriculture's commitment to environmental stewardship.

The poll revealed that while most farmers think they are viewed as responsible stewards by their urban neighbors, 43 believe consumers are more concerned about environmental issues associated with agriculture than they were five years ago.

"The majority of farmers believe consumers are more concerned because they are more aware of environmental issues, not because the problems are getting worse," says Max Larsen, executive vice president with Gallup. "Four of five farmers believe current safeguards are sufficient to protect people and the environ-

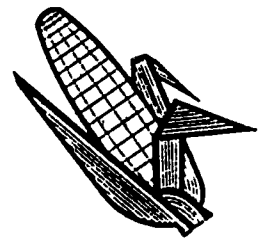
ment, but almost as many think the public doesn't understand those safeguards."

In sharp contrast to those findings, Lawrence Kaagan of Kaagan Research Associates, noted during the session that on-going surveys by his firm show the public actually views farmers quite favorably. Kaagan Research asked consumers to rank 10 diverse industries in terms of commitment to protecting the environment. Agriculture ranked NO. 1. Others, ranked in descending order, were forestry, electric utilities, fast food, pharmaceuticals, steel, auto, metal and mining,

waste disposal, chemical, and oil and gas.

Of those surveyed, 44 percent ranked agriculture as "excellent or good;" only 14 percent rated it "poor." In contrast, 10 percent rated oil and gas as "excellent or good;" 57 percent rated it "poor." "Monitoring the Pulse of Agriculture" was jointly sponsored by Farm Futures and Sandoz Corp Protection Corp.

NCGA is a national commodity organization with more than 27,700 members in 47 states and 24 affiliated state organizations.



U.S. To Celebrate 50 Billionth Export

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Fifty billion bushels — enough corn to fill nearly 175,000 miles of rail cars that would circle the earth seven times. During 1993, the United States will pass the 50-billion-bushel mark for corn exports. The U.S. Feed Grains Council and Pioneer Hi-Bred International plan to coordinate a series of high-profile activities to recognize and commemorate this significant event.

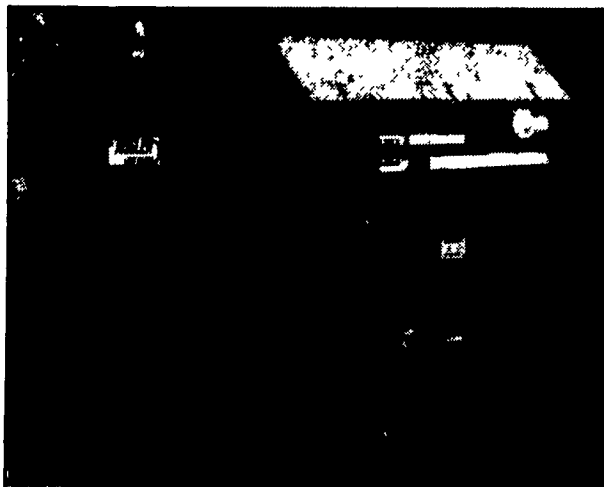
USDA has records that date back to the Civil War tracking corn exports. The United States hit the billion-bushel mark of total corn exports in 1888; 5 billion in 1953; 10 billion in 1967; 25 billion in 1978 and the 50-billionth bushel will be exported in 1993.

"This is a very significant event," said Kenneth Hobbie, president of the U.S. Feed Grains Council. "Sometimes we forget the sheer enormity of our grain export business, how successful we have been and what impact it has had not only on our agricultural and rural economics, but also on the economy of the United States as a whole. This is a clear example of a great American success story."

Included in the events planned by Pioneer and the Council will be a gala celebration later this spring in New Orleans to commemorate the 50-billionth bushel. The event will be held at Continental Grain Company's Westwego grain export facility, where representatives from all sectors of the corn production and export business will be invited to participate in a ceremonial placing of the "50-Billionth Bushel" of corn on an export bound vessel.

"Fifty billion bushels is an almost incomprehensible amount of corn," said Charles Ottem, farmer from North Dakota and the 1993 chairman of the U.S. Feed Grains Council. "It is an event that we need to take pride in not only as farmers, but also the entire agribusiness sector from seed to export. Think of the worldwide impact and the industries that have been spawned and supported around the world based on U.S. corn as an exported raw material."

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