

Agway Leaders Meet With Federal Officials

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Lancaster Farming Staff
WASHINGTON, D.C. — A delegation of executives and elected leaders of Agway traveled to the nation's capitol recently for two days of meeting with new members of Congress.

According to Richard K. Arnold, Agway director of corporate communications, the contingent of leaders made the trip in order to brief members on agricultural issues and the cooperative's policies.

The group consisted of the executive board of Agway — President Charlie Saul, Agway Board of Directors Chairman Ralph Heffner, and others from the cooperative. Their efforts were especially directed at federal-level

representatives from the Northeast.

According to Saul, the group met and had lunch with Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Rich Rovinger; met with Senate majority leader George Mitchel, and Rep. Walsh from New York, a member of the House Agricultural Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Tim Holden from Pennsylvania, the only Northeast member of the House Agriculture Committee; and also met with 30 other representatives.

"We got around pretty well, all of us here," said Saul during a telephone interview.

"Some of the key issues we talked about were food safety, water quality, the proposed BTU tax on energy products ... wet-

lands, the DeLaney Amendment, pesticides, and the fact that the farm programs were being challenged to the tune of about \$3 billion less spending," he said.

He said that Agway opposes the proposed BTU tax. He said that early estimates were that the BTU tax would raise the cost of using burnable fuel about \$600 million to farmers.

"Fortunately, the House Ways and Means Committee reduced that somewhat, down to \$440 million, by exempting on-farm (fuel) and diesel from the supplemental part of that tax, but that's still leaving a lot of challenge and cost to agriculture out there," he said.

Saul said the Agway group told the representatives that the cooperative sought voluntary compliance instead of regulated compliance, the use of "Integrated Crop Management," its use, education, and research and technical

assistance.

"We supported certified crop advisors, we talk about risk-benefit analysis and regulation rather than extremes of any degree, and we talked about a reasonable definition of wetlands," he said.

Heffner said that on the Delaney Cause, "It looks like we're going to get progress made on that. The real question is timing, whether it'll be done quite as quickly as we in agriculture would like to see it done, so we don't have this jockeying with regards to some of the minor uses pesticides in the Section 18 approvals that we've had.

"It looks pretty good. We got a lot of support there, but the challenge is when the leadership is going to move the bill that we are

interested in," Heffner said.

"Also on the subject of minor use pesticides, there seems to be ... good reception that this is an issue that needs some objective attention applied to it," he said.

Saul said, "The point we were trying to make is that agriculture has been a good thing for this country, both in its exporting of products and feeding its people ... but the trends in legislation, which continue to seem to be negative to production agriculture, are starting to show up in the performance of the industry, and starting to show up in its ability to be competitive and we were just seeking their support in a more positive approach to legislation affecting agriculture."

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Key To Farming

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"so I'll know where it is when I need it." The neighbor was really impressed that Lynn would have that kind of neighborly attitude."

Some things you must live with if you have urban neighbors. With development comes changes in the underground water systems. The Royers think because springs were disturbed in the development, their cellar now is sometimes flooded. And machinery on the roads is always a problem. Motorists don't like slow moving wagons and farm equipment. Sometimes grass clippings and worse get thrown in the alfalfa field. Corn fields sometimes become a cover crop for marijuana.

But the Royers know they have accomplished their neighborly mission when these neighbors ask them about things they hear about the farm from the news media. A neighbor recently asked Rhelda if it was true that with BST you gave the cow a daily injection. And she asked if the Royers were going to use BST. Rhelda assured her that their cows did well enough without giving them a shot.

Another neighbor was concerned about the welfare of the cows and calves, and Rhelda was able to assure the neighbor that their animals were well cared for and got all the exercise they needed. "It pleases me when the neighbors think enough of us to ask us questions about the farm," Rhelda said. "The news media doesn't always get things straight. And we are glad we can answer their questions."

Whenever a new neighbor moves in, the Royers try to make them welcome and tell them they are the farmers in the lane. "If they realize you are not frustrated but you mean business, they don't give you much trouble," Rhelda said. "Sending the police to their front door before you talk to them doesn't work.

"We have a lot of pals among the neighbors at the end of our lane. Each year I try to send the nicest Christmas card I can find and thank them for helping us to keep our farm beautiful. Many of these neighbors idolize this farm. If you take pride in your own property, it rubs off on them," Rhelda said.

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