

Corn Growers Complete Year

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Corn growers can be proud. A year of hard work by National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and its more than 28,600 members paid off in a bumper crop of accomplishments during 1993.

Three of the most important victories — ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ethanol's inclusion in the Clean Air Act's Reformulated Gasoline Program (RFG), and the successfully concluded Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) — came in the final seven weeks, only after a solid year of hard work.

"In each of these cases, corn growers pushed for market access and fairness in trade," said Pete Wenstrand, an Essex, Iowa, corn grower and NCGA president. "Our members made phone calls, wrote letters, and were persistent in voicing their views on key issues. This enthusiasm and commitment paid off."

For corn growers, ratification of NAFTA signifies an end to Mexico's highly restrictive system of quotas, tariffs, and import licensing. U.S. corn exports are projected to increase to 6 million tons (240 million bushels). NCGA led more than 170 agricultural groups in a pro-NAFTA coalition that pushed for NAFTA's ratification.

Corn growers also gained significant ground for ethanol. Grower letters and telephone calls were instrumental in getting the attention of the Clinton Administration to include ethanol in reformulated gasoline. A proposed side rule will require 30 percent of the oxygenates used in reformulated gasoline be derived from renewable resources. NCGA is still evaluating the proposed rule. New demand created for ethanol will provide jobs for America,

improve energy security and contribute to rural economic development.

The successfully concluded Uruguay Round of GATT also marks new opportunities for corn. New language on cereal substitutes will protect the duty-free status of corn gluten feed shipments to the European Community. U.S. farmers will continue to ship corn to Spain and Portugal. And more market access for meats and other value-added products is also good news.

Corn growers gained significant ground in other areas. NCGA unveiled Corn Vision 2020, a landmark strategic planning research project. It also moved new technologies forward to advance commer-

cial opportunities for biodegradable plastics and supported development of new value-added domestic markets.

Also, NCGA continued its commitment to research. The Corn Research Evaluation Committee supported three major projects. In cooperation with Kansas State University, NCGA continues to compile the world's only Corn Utilization Research Database. Corn growers also helped the New Uses Council establish its world headquarters in St. Louis.

In government, NCGA was instrumental in winning congressional approval of agricultural appropriations which increased funding for USDA's Alternative Agriculture

Research and Commercialization program and for USDA's Water Quality Incentives Program. NCGA also minimized the impact of new energy taxes on farmers and defeated proposed increases in barge fuel taxes.

Corn growers built strong coalitions. During 1993, NCGA set a record of 93 corporate partners. As an information source, NCGA expanded its reach to farm audience through transmissions on DTN, an electronic news service, and coverage in Corn Farmer magazine.

NCGA reached urban, non-farm audiences with proactive media campaigns in Los Angeles and Washington, DC.

Perhaps most significant, NCGA completed its "Corn — A National Renewable Resource" curriculum kit. More than 300,000 fourth grade students will receive and share this curriculum kit, which will introduce tomorrow's consumers to the environmental and social benefits of corn.

Also during 1993, NCGA continued to reach corn growers with programs they want, such as the National Corn Yield Contest and the 35th annual Corn Classic. NCGA increased its membership for the 13th consecutive year to 28,685. It added Mississippi as the 24th NCGA state affiliate. Michigan became the 19th state with a corn checkoff program.

Test Weight A Big Concern In 1993 Corn

AMES, Iowa — Harvest reports confirm expectations that test weight generally will be low in 1993 corn from the western Corn Belt areas that received heavy summer rains.

Charles Hurburgh, Iowa State University agricultural and biosystems engineer, said extreme wetness, crop disease, corn borers, and spotty early frost combined to create widespread incomplete maturity and low test weight conditions.

"For many farmers and grain handlers, this is the first experience with test weight problems, a rare situation in the majority of the Corn Belt," Hurburgh said.

Test weight generally is a measure of corn bulk density, the weight that will fit in a bushel volume. It also is an overall indicator of quality and storability, but many studies have shown that test weight alone is not a precise indicator of feeding value in corn.

"The critical consideration is how the test weight became low, because nearly any stress

condition before or after harvest will reduce test weight. Generally, dry corn with test weight down to 50 pounds/bushel will not have drastically different feeding properties than heavier corn of the same composition," Hurburgh said. "The well-founded belief that heavy (56 pounds+/bushel) corn feeds better is based on the general relationship of test weight and protein in fully-mature, non-stressed corn."

Corn with test weight of 50 pounds/bushel and lower may contain hard-to-digest free sugars, less oil, and less or incompletely-developed protein. Extra fat and protein concentrates may be needed to restore animal performance.

Light corn is extremely hard to use in processing operations, either wet or dry milling. Most processors will not accept corn with test weight below 50 pounds/bushel.

"Light corn is notoriously hard-to-store and is prone to breakage. As a planning estimate, figure the storage life of

light corn to be half of normal corn, at the same moisture content," Hurburgh said.

The light 1993 crop corn is not increasing in test weight at the normal 1:4 rate (1 pound increase per 4 points of moisture removed). This is attributable to immaturity and early death from several causes. Elevator and lab data agree that with heated air drying, very little test weight increase can be expected, and with natural air perhaps 1 to 2 pounds/bushel will be gained.

"Elevator operators are

being forced to measure and discount for test weight in wet corn. In 1993, a discount for low test weight in wet corn is not the extra discount for moisture it would have been in a normal year. Processor discounts for low test weight are increasing rapidly, so handlers are trying to cover on inbound grain what will be paid on the outbound," he said. "The widespread (across the western Corn Belt) nature of the low test weight problem virtually eliminates blending as a means of buffering its economic impact."



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