



# Growers Urge Fast Action On Farm Bill

PHOENIX, Ariz. — The leader of the organization representing the nation's corn growers urged the U.S. House of Representatives to pass new multiyear farm legislation.

Bill Northey, president of the 28,500-member National Corn Growers Association, (NCGA), told reporters attending the Commodity Classic convention the farm bill process "has dragged on long enough."

"Policies of the past do nothing for today's farmers except drive us from the farm program and jeopardize the progress we've made to conserve soil and protect water," Northey said.

The NCGA leader said most farmers favor the contract payment mechanism contained in the farm bill approved by the U.S. Senate recently. But Northey said the House can improve the Senate bill.

"We think the House can

make the bill even better," Northey told reporters. "The contract payment . . . allows flexibility, certainty and simplicity. But we urge House members to eliminate the cap on loan rates to allow those rates to reflect recent market prices."

The Iowa corn grower echoed the same position in a letter to President Clinton recently. He asked the President and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to work with Congress in order to adopt a policy which allows corn loan rates to fluctuate. He said such a policy provides a more effective farm income safety net in years when corn prices drop.

Northey also discouraged the President from limiting planting flexibility. While campaigning in Iowa two weeks ago, President Clinton expressed a need to require farmers to plant a crop as a

condition for farm program eligibility. Northey said such a requirement leads to ". . . additional, burdensome paperwork while accomplishing no legitimate agricultural policy."

"If a planting requirement is included . . . Congress will undoubtedly begin asking for exemptions with the first crop loss," Northey said, noting many lawmakers approved a so-called "0/92" program in the past. That program allowed farmers to receive price support payments on up to 92 percent of their program crop acreage if they could not plant or harvest a crop due to harsh

weather.

"If this farm bill requires farmers to produce a crop when economics dictate otherwise, it will sanction a cheap grain policy," the farm leader said.

The chairman of the NCGA board of directors, Nebraska farmer Rod Gangwish, and the organization's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Chris Wehrman, plan to travel to Washing-

ton from the convention in order to urge quick action in the House on a new farm bill. The NCGA held its policy-making annual meeting in Phoenix along with the American Soybean Association (ASA).

More than 3,600 farmers and industry leaders registered to attend the first-ever joint-convention of the two major U.S. commodity organizations.



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