

Growers Elect New Leaders



SAINT. LOUIS, Mo. — The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the National Corn Development Foundation (NCDF) elected a new slate of corn growers from 11 states to lead their organizations through a historic transition process beginning this fall.

When complete, this transition will meld both organizations into one. It will create a new national corn farmer organization to help increase farmers' profitability and influence within the corn industry.

The new NCGA will also enhance corn farmer involvement and decision-making at the grassroots level.

"The vote to merge NCGA and NCDF is the catalyst for greater profitability for the corn industry," said Ryland Utlaut, the incoming NCGA president. Utlaut farms 3,500 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat in Grand Pass, Mo. in partnership with his brother. He has a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Missouri at Columbia and has been active for more than 15 years in both his state and national corn grower associations.

Utlaut previously served as NCGA's vice president and worked as part of the special study group committee that recommended joining the NCGA with the National Corn Development Foundation (NCDF) which collects checkoff funds from state corn boards for national corn research, educational programs and demand building efforts.

The new organization will retain the National Corn Growers Association's name, but will differ significantly in organized structure and operations.

The decision to change the NCGA follows recommendations from two special study groups comprised of corn growers. Both groups explored ways to improve the structure and resources needed to increase the value of the U.S.

corn crop to \$40 billion at the farm gate by 2002.

"This move affirms growers' willingness to look toward the future and take positive steps to achieve their goals," said newly-elected NCGA Chairman Wallile Hardie, a corn, soybeans and sugarbeet farmer from Fairmount, N.D. Hardie most recently held the position of president of the former NCGA and chaired one of two groups of farmers recommending that the NCGA/NCDF merge.

"Accomplishing our goals requires a fast-acting, flexible organization that can plan strategically and react to the many changes transforming agriculture," observed Hardie.

"Our new organization should be a system for leadership without politics," said Utlaut. As the newly elected president, Utlaut will help guide the former NCGA through the transition to the new organization.

"To reach a corn crop with a \$40 billion value by 2002, we must create an organization that appeals to more corn farmers while contributing to their bottom lines and providing meaningful ways to take action on issues that impact their businesses, and do it without taking up their valuable time!" Utlaut said.

NCGA

• Vice President Roger Pine, who farms 4,300 acres of corn and soybeans in Lawrence, Kan. A member of one of the farmer study groups recommending that national corn farmer organizations change, Pine also will serve on the Transition Team established to finalize the details needed to create the new National Corn Growers Association. Pine, an active member of his state and national organizations for 12 years, previously served as chairman of the NCGA Government Relations Committee where he helped guide the association through the recent legislative ethanol debate.

• Chairman, Government Relations Committee Jim Czub, a farmer heavily involved in developing new corn markets through the NCGA Market Development Committee, was elected chairman of the Government Relations Committee. Czub farms 1,900 acres of corn and soybeans in Schaghticoke, N.Y. He's farmed for 20 years and has spent the last eight years working actively for his state and national corn grower associations.

• Chairman, Market Development Committee Lynn Jensen, who farms 3,700 acres of corn and soybeans in Lake Preston, S.D. A farmer for 17 years, Jensen has been active in his state and national corn growers associations for more than seven years. Jensen was among the group of farmers who helped develop the proposals for creating the new national corn farmer organization.

• Chairman, Field Services Committee Richard Peterson, who has a farm partnership that includes 1,200 acres of corn and soybeans in Mountain Lake, Minn. Under the leadership of this veteran farmer the NCGA recently reached a new membership record of 29,999 corn farmers.

• Chairman, Research and Commercialization Committee Tim Hume, a Walsh, Colo., farmer, will lead this committee during the transition period. Hume also served on one of the study groups recommending the NCGA/NCDF merger. A six-year member of the former NCGA, this young farmer currently raises 2,500 acres of corn, wheat, sorghum and sunflowers. Hume was also appointed in August to a Transition Team created to work out the details of the merger of NCGA and NCDF.

• Chairman, Public Relations Committee Bob Fox, who also participated in the two groups recommending that the NCGA and NCDF join, will

chair the Public Relations Committee of the former NCGA during the transition period. Fox has farmed for 15 years and currently grows 400 acres of corn and soybeans and has a seed dealership business in Franklin, Minn.

• Secretary Vic Riddle will serve as NCGA secretary during the transition period. This Wapella, Ill., farmer has 600 acres of corn and soybeans and has farmed for 27 years. Riddle has been active in state and national corn organization work for more than eight years.

• Treasurer Bill Bradley, an Omaha, Ill., farmer with 1,425 acres of corn and soybeans, will serve a consecutive term as treasurer. Bradley's been farming for 21 years and also has a seed dealership. Bradley has been active in his state and national corn growers associations for more than eight years.

NCDF

• President Gene Fynboh, who farms 1,250 acres of corn and soybeans in Brandon, Minn. Fynboh, a veteran farmer for the past 32 years, has been an active member in his state and national corn growers association for more than 14 years. In addition to his presidential duties, Fynboh will also serve as chairman of the Transition Team.

• Chairman of the Board Lynn Laible, the former president of the NCDF, moves to chairman of the board. Laible has farmed for 31 years and has 750 acres of corn, soybeans, forage crops in Magnolia, Ill. Laible has actively participated in state and national corn growers association work for more than 10 years.

• Vice President Lee Schaffer, a 44-year veteran, raises 700 acres of corn and soybeans in Brighton, Iowa. Schaffer, who has been active in state and national corn organizations for more than 20 years, was also appointed to the Transition Team that will help create the new national corn farmer organization.

• Secretary Phil Cunningham farms more than 3,000 acres of corn and soybeans as well as runs a beef and swine operation in Prospect, Ohio. Cunningham has farmed for more than 40 years and has been involved in state and national corn organizations for more than 15 years.

• Treasurer Kevin Swanson, a fourth-generation farmer with a 2,500-acre corn, soybeans, and alfalfa operation located in Overton, Neb. An 18-year member of his state and national corn organizations, Swanson participated in the study groups that recommended formation of the new NCGA.

A Transition Team began work in early September to outline the processes and guidelines needed to create the new National Corn Growers Association. The team will also develop and recommend by-laws to govern the new association.

NCGA and NCDF boards of directors appointed the team in August and will vote on by-laws and recommendations from the team at the December board meeting. Upon adopting by-laws, the former organizations will combine and the new National Corn Growers Association will begin its work.

Corn Production Down Locally In 1997

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According to the September 15, 1997 report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the 1997 corn for grain harvest is forecast to be 9.27 billion bushels, which is almost identical to the 1996 harvest.

The national average corn yield is expected to be 125.2 bushels per acre, which is down 1.9 bushels per acre from the 1996 harvest. Producers are expected to harvest around 74 million acres of corn for grain in 1997, which is up 1.2 percent from 1996.

Unfortunately, the extreme weather conditions during the 1997 growing season will pre-

vent producers in the Northeast from matching the national average yields. Pennsylvania farmers are expected to average 85 bushels per acre, which is down 34 bushels per acre from the 1996 harvest. Maryland producers are expected to average 80 bushels per acre, which is down 59 bushels from 1996 yields.

The drought conditions will also be reflected in lower corn production in the region. Pennsylvania farmers are expected to produce about 95.2 million bushels of corn — about 32 million bushels less than last year. The Maryland crop is pegged at 36 million bushels — significantly down from the 64 million bushels harvested in that state last year.

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