

USDA Figures Validate NCGA Warning On Competitive Edge

Gary Bradley
National Corn
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The most recent figures released by USDA — which

paint a gloomy picture for grain and soybean exports — validates a recent prediction made by a National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) transpor-

tation task force on foreign competition and the competitive edge held by the U.S. in the world corn export market.

In figures released recently, USDA lowered corn exports by 125 million bushels to 1.625 billion bushels — 400 million less bushels than last fall. Even at these levels, it is important to remember that the U.S. still accounts for almost 70 percent of the world trade in corn and will continue to be the dominant player in the world market.

According to John Green, NCGA's director of production and education, export demand for now seems to have gone to the competition — Argentina and, to some degree, China.

"Argentina had a good crop last year and is projected to

have a record crop this coming year," Green said. "This is adding to world stocks."

Compounding the Argentina numbers, he noted, is the fact that approximately six of every 10 bushels raised in Argentina must be exported since that country has little domestic feed or processing demand.

"The Argentines know the value of the export market and that's why they are concentrating on being more efficient exporters and investing in their infrastructure," said Green. "Two weeks ago Argentina was reported to be ready to sell into U.S. markets in California and the Southeast."

He added that the NCGA task force saw this as a potential threat as far back as last March when it asked USDA to study

how Argentina's river improvements would impact U.S. business.

A formal USDA study is under way. On the plus side for corn growers, USDA's projections recently increased food, seed, and industrial use by 20 million bushels.

"Our own domestic demand led by feed use and processing has bid corn away from export markets into domestic use," Green noted. The U.S. still holds a competitive advantage in one world market for corn — meat exports. "We still have, and will continue to have, a decided advantage in producing large quantities of high quality, competitively priced pork, beef, and chicken," Green said.



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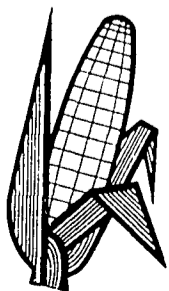
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Pending EPA
Registration:

Select 2E (Valent), a post-grass herbicide that contains clethodim, is labeled for use on soybeans. Valent awaits registration from EPA for use of Select on alfalfa. Select provides good control of annual and certain perennial grass species and should be a good addition to alfalfa.

Raptor 1E (Cyanamid) is a post-emergence broadleaf and grass herbicide that is labeled for use on soybeans. It is similar to Pursuit but more active on lambsquarters and ragweed. Cyanamid has applied for EPA registration for Raptor (imazamox) use in alfalfa and expects approval within two years.

Harvest Aids Labeled:
Roundup Ultra 4S (Monsanto) is labeled for use as a harvest aid in alfalfa, corn, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat. Follow appropriate application rate and timing restrictions for the respective crop.

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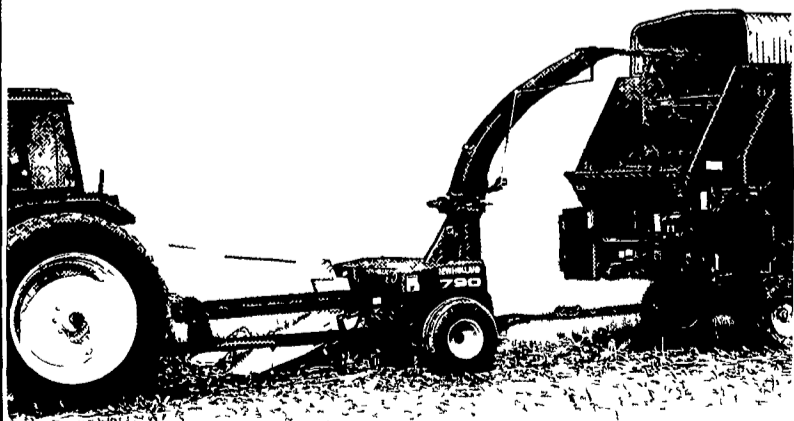
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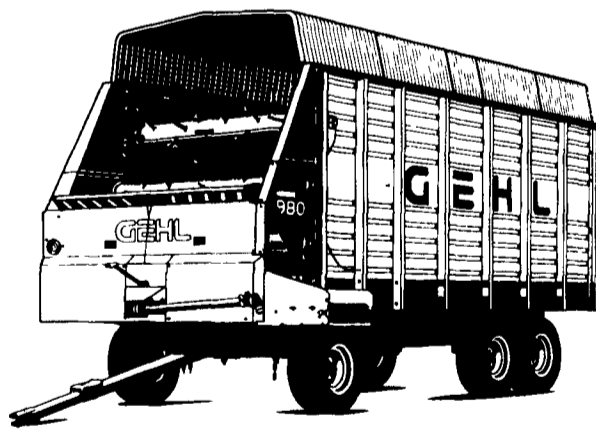
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