

Renewables Industry Vision Predicts New Uses For Corn, Soybeans

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The raw materials used to manufacture bumpers on cars, carpet fibers, and plastic packaging material will soon originate from corn and soybeans produced by America's farmers.

The markets for these products and others have led growth industries such as chemical, biotech, and wet-mill processors to closely study tapping the tremendous unused potential of renewable corn and soybean crops as future production and energy resources. An industry-led, long-range strategic vision was announced by members of a unique public/private coalition to launch a Research and Development (R&D) partnership to begin making this vision a reality.

"The federal government supports this strategic vision which unites industry to potentially invest millions of dollars in research and development of new products and processes which use renewable plant and crop-based resources," said Colorado corn grower Tim Hume, a member of the National Corn Growers Association's (NCGA) Corn Board.

"The resulting research and development investments by government and private industry partners involved will stimulate new initiatives and generate more use and greater demand for renewable crops like corn and soybeans which is welcome news for this country's corn and soybean growers," said Hume.

"The use of agricultural products — a renewable resource to make consumer goods and to fuel major industrial activities — will cut costs, require less energy, and reduce waste," said Secretary of Energy Federico Pena.

The NCGA initiated and led the efforts involved to develop the Plant/Crop-Based Renewable Resources 2020 Plan with a broad-based coalition of U.S. agricultural, forestry, and chemical industry members. Known as the "2020 plan," it serves as a strategic vision to developing greater industry usage of renewable plants and crops, trees, and agricultural wastes for chemicals, materials, and other products.

Major industry publications support this view. In a recent edition of Chemical and Engineering News, the editors offered their forecast of what will happen in the chemical industry. They expect that plants rather than fossil resources will become the primary feedstock for oils and plastics.

This vision recognizes that sustaining U.S. economic growth depends on having a secure supply of raw materials and that additional renewable resources for industrial production and energy needs must be accelerated. It also takes into account the growing trend toward partnerships between government and private industry to funding national R&D initiatives.

R&D results should in turn create new business ventures, more jobs, and develop environmentally-friendly renewable energy and chemical sources to fuel domestic core manufacturing capabilities.

"This is a significant effort toward developing a unique and exciting relationship between federal agencies and the private sector," noted Energy Secretary Pena.

"This new agreement is critically important to American agriculture," said Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture's research program has a proud history of developing new technologies that have added significant value to commodities and created economic returns benefiting all Americans."

"We believe that developing plant and crop-based renewable resources provides a viable alternative to the current dependence on non-renewable diminishing fossil fuels. Developing these home-grown resources can contribute to our economic growth and national security," said Doug Faulkner, agriculture team leader in the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Industrial Technologies.

The strategy behind this planning has three phases. The first phase developed the 2020 Vision derived from industry goals. The second phase will draw a technology roadmap of industry priorities and milestones, which leads to the final phase of implementing re-

search and development of new technologies created by industry partnerships. The plan envisions developing crop-based renewables infrastructure required to supplement industrial use of petrochemicals. Vision goals include attaining fully integrated manufacturing capacity to win 10 percent of the basic chemical building blocks from renewable bioproducts by 2020, and a 50 percent market share by 2050.

Contributors to crafting the 2020 plan include industrial and commodity associations, major corporations, state agencies, and environmental groups. Industry members will lead the process to prioritize technology needs, develop strategies, which utilize new technologies, commit resources, direct R&D partnerships, and then use the results. The DOE's Office of Industrial Technology will facilitate the partnership process by coordinating industry participation, commit federal resources, provide access to national labs, and disseminate program results.

"This bold visionary plan reveals the potential of devel-

oping plant and crop renewables as additional sources of materials which can be used as industrial building blocks. It gives those involved direction to develop specific technical goals related to this plan. The next step is to integrate public and private industry's renewable crop and plant research efforts to meet our future needs," said NCGA's Director of Research and Business Develop-

ment Dr. Todd Werpy.

The 2020 plan was unveiled during the General Session at this year's Commodity Classic, the combined convention and trade show hosted by NCGA and the American Soybean Association (ASA). Nearly 4,000 growers, government, and industry representatives attended this year's event. To obtain a copy of the 2020 Vision, call toll-free, (800) 363-3732.

Here Are Facts About Hardie

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Wallie Hardie serves as chairman of the board of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), a producer-based commodity organization with 30,000 members headquartered in St. Louis. Its mission is to enhance corn profitability and usage to improve the quality of life in a changing world.

Hardie farms 2,300 acres near Fairmount, N.D. where he grows corn, soybeans, and sugar beets.

Hardie is a founding member of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association. Prior to becoming NCGA chairman, Hardie served as NCGA president, vice president, chairman

of its Government Relations Committee, and chairman of its Research and Commercialization Committee. Hardie also served as co-chairman of "Global Positioning Corn: New Thinking for a New Age," the organization's long-range strategic planning process.

Hardie has bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural economics from North Dakota State University. Prior to farming full time, Hardie worked as a research specialist for the University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station in St. Paul, Minn. He also worked as a farm management specialist for the Cooperative Extension Service at North Dakota State University.



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