

## ASA Supports Biotechnology Report From House Subcommittee On Basic Research

SAINT LOUIS, Mo. — The American Soybean Association (ASA) announced support for a report prepared by the Subcommittee on Basic Research of the U.S. House of Representatives' Agriculture Committee, that found immense benefits and scientifically sound regulation of agricultural biotechnology.

The report is titled "Seeds of Opportunity: An Assessment of the Benefits, Safety, and Oversight of Plant Genomics and Agricultural Biotechnology."

"ASA welcomes this new report that reconfirms, and reassures consumers, that agricultural biotechnology is soundly tested and regulated," said ASA President Marc Curtis, a soybean producer from Leland, Miss. "This report adds to a wide range of reports and studies that have looked in-depth at biotechnology and found it to be safe for consumers and the environment, and of great potential benefit."

The House Subcommittee report says years of research and experience demonstrate that plant varieties produced using biotechnology, and the foods derived from them, are just as safe as similar varieties produced using classical plant breeding. The report says the promise of agricultural biotechnology is immense, and advances in this technology will result in crops with a wide range of desirable traits that will directly benefit farmers, consumers, and the environment and increase global food production and quality.

The report found that the current generation of pest-resistant and herbicide-tolerant agricultural plants produced using biotechnology has reduced chemical inputs and improved yields for American farmers. The report says future adoption of new varieties will continue this trend and will solve intractable pest problems, help protect the environment, and lower costs to consumers.

According to the report, widespread use of pest-resistant crop varieties developed using agri-

cultural biotechnology is unlikely to accelerate the emergence of pesticide-resistant insect strains and may actually be more effective in preventing their emergence when compared to spray applications of similar pesticides.

The report found that the concept of "substantial equivalence" in the regulation of foods developed using agricultural biotechnology is scientifically sound and provides a useful historical baseline for judging safety. And the report says there is no scientific justification for labeling foods based on the method by which they are produced. Labeling of agricultural biotechnology products would confuse, not inform, consumers and send a misleading message on safety.

"ASA is pleased that in addition to its findings, the report makes recommendations that re-enforce sound science as the basis for oversight and policies affecting biotechnology products, labeling and marketing," said Curtis.

The House Subcommittee report recommends that Federal regulatory oversight of agriculture biotechnology should be risk-based and guided by the characteristics of the plant, its intended use, and the environment into which it is to be introduced, not by the method used to produce it.

The report says the FDA should maintain its current science-based policy on labeling of foods created using biotechnology as described in its 1992 Statement of Policy. There is no scientific justification for special labeling of food products developed using agricultural biotechnology, as a class.

The report recommends the Administration should work to ensure that markets for products of agricultural biotechnology are not restricted by scientifically unsound measures. The United States should not accept any international agree-

ments that violate scientific principles and limit trade in, or mandate labeling of, a plant or food product based on the method used to develop it.

And, the House Subcommittee report says the Administration, industry, and scientific community have a responsibility to educate the public and improve the availability of information on the long record of safe use of agricultural biotechnology products and research activities.

The report points out that almost without exception, the crop plants in use today have been genetically modified. The development of new plant varieties through selective breeding has been improving agriculture and food production for thousands of years. The report says the development of the science of genetics in the 20th century was a tremendously important factor in the plant breeding programs that have produced the remarkable diversity of fruits, vegetables, and grains that we enjoy today and that provide food security for the poor nations of the world.

The report emphasizes that biotechnology has had an uninterrupted record of safe use, and it will be a key element in the fight against malnutrition worldwide. In addition, the merging of medical and agricultural biotechnology has opened up new ways to develop plant varieties with characteristics to enhance health.

"ASA commends the House Agriculture Committee and Subcommittee Chairman Nick Smith for their efforts to objectively examine issues surrounding agricultural biotechnology," said Curtis. "We all benefit from the continued responsible management of biotechnology, because our future is one where every consumer has the potential to benefit, many times over, from the variety of great accomplishments that will come from the biotech industry."

## Center Announces Bull Sale Report

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Meat Animal Evaluation Center has announced the results of its 27th Annual Performance Tested Bull Sale March 31. The sale was part of the 11th annual Beef Expo.

State Agriculture Secretary Sam E. Hayes Jr. brought greetings from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and reaffirmed Pennsylvania's support of agriculture. Hayes also discussed the status of the new Meat Animal Evaluation Center and his commitment to this project.

Dr. Terry Etherton, head, Department of Dairy and Animal Science, brought greetings from Penn State to the huge crowd and pledged support for animal agriculture. Paul Slayton, the new executive director of the Pennsylvania Beef Council, asked the crowd to sign a petition supporting the construction of a new Meat Animal Evaluation Center, to be presented to the governor.

The PCA award for the top-indexing bull of all breeds was presented to Marlin Paul of Mahantongo Angus Farm. They bred the Angus bull that received this award and the highest price of the day. This bull sold for \$3,550 to Charles W. Homan of Spring Mill. This record setting performance bull was a son of a previous top-performing bull the Pauls bought through Pennsylvania's 1997 Performance Tested Bull sale.

The second-highest selling bull of the day was an Angus bred by Paul and Bette Slayton, which sold to Gregory Farr, Millville, for \$3,000.

The 32 Angus bulls sold for an average of \$1,777, with only three of the Angus returning less than \$1,400.

The 24 Simmentals catalogued was the largest number of Simmental bulls ever offered through Pennsylvania's Per-

formance Tested Bull sales. Twenty-one Simmental bulls sold for \$25,626, to average \$1,220. The top-selling Simmental was also the top-indexing, and was consigned by John Myers, Dallastown. This black ET bull was purchased by Charles Homan, Spring Mills, for \$2,600. The second and third highest indexing Simmentals sold for \$1,550 each, which was the next highest price paid for Simmental bulls. The second highest indexing Simmental was bred by Jack Herr of Fredericksburg and sold to Ken Hebel, Grantville, Pa. The next highest indexing Simmental was a maternal brother to the top-indexing Simmental, consigned by Phil Druck and purchased by Wilfred Markley of Dallastown.

The top-indexing Hereford bull was consigned by Sally Abrams, Livingston Manor, N.Y., and purchased by Robert Granter of Troy for \$1,200. The top-selling Hereford consigned by Ralph Strouse, Wheel Estate Acres, was purchased for \$1,600 by Thomas Mullinix for the USDA. The second highest selling Hereford was bred by Frank Phoenix, McVeytown, and sold to Ed Perkins, Beech Lake, for \$1,500. The seven Hereford bulls averaged \$1,182.

The top-indexing Charolais, consigned by Bratton Charolais Farms of McVeytown, bought \$1,200 from Samuel McKeenan of Mount Union.

The top-indexing and top-selling Limousin bull consigned by Kevin Murphy, Saltsburg, sold to Gerald Culler, McConnellsburg, for \$1,200.

The 62 bulls averaged \$1,503, making it a very successful sale overall.

For more information about Pennsylvania's Performance Testing Programs, contact Glenn Eberly, director, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Meat Animal Evaluation Center, 651 Fox Hollow Road, State College, PA 16803, (814) 238-2527 or (814) 865-5857 message and/or fax.

## AGJA Sets Eastern Regional Show

WESTMINSTER, Colo. — The American Gelbvieh Junior Association is conducting its AGJA Eastern Regional Show at T. Ed Garrison Arena in Clemson, S.C., June 10-11.

Entries are \$20 per head if received by Mary 21. Mail entries to Jim Blackwell, 12860 McColman Rd., Gibson, NC 28343. Entries are also accepted show day and the fee is \$40 per head.

Cattle may begin arrival at 4 p.m. on Friday, June 9. All cattle must be in place by 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 10. Registration begins at 10 a.m. The morning is filled with the poster contest, sales talk contest, and the Gelbvieh Quiz Bowl. A sponsored lunch will be served at noon.

The showmanship contest is set for the afternoon. A sponsored dinner caps the day's activities.

On Sunday, June 11, the day kicks off with a sponsored breakfast. The cattle show begins with heifers, followed by cow-calf pairs and ending with bred and owned bulls.

For more information on the AGJA Eastern Regional Show, contact Jim Blackwell at (910) 268-4111.



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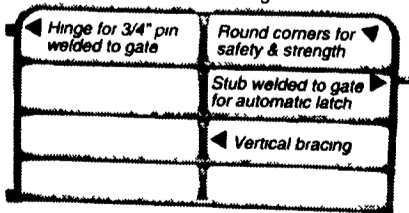
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