



Corn Grower Leader Named To U.S.- EU Biotechnology Panel

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Past President Ryland Utlaut is one of the 10 U.S. representatives recently named to the U.S.-European Union Consultative Forum on Biotechnology.

During President Clinton's trip to Europe late last month, the U.S. and the EU agreed to establish the Consultative Forum to review and assess the issues associated with biotechnology.

The panel includes 20 eminent individuals from outside government who represent a broad cross section of U.S. and European perspectives and interests.

Members will meet twice — once in the U.S. and once in Europe — prior to the December 2000 U.S.-EU summit. At that summit, the forum will present a consensus report assessing biotechnology's benefits and risks, focusing on factors such as economic development, food security, food safety, health, and the environment.

Utlaut farms 3,500 acres of corn, soybeans, and wheat in a family partnership near Grand Pass, Mo. He has been active for about 20 years in both the Missouri and National Corn Growers Associations. He serves as a member of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), which consults with the U.S. Trade Representative and the USDA on agricultural trade issues.

Utlaut has represented NCGA at various international meetings, including the World Trade Organization ministerials in Geneva and Seattle. During the Seattle meeting, he had the opportunity to become acquainted with Portuguese Association of Maize Producers President Luis Vasconcelos e Souza, his European counterpart, on the Consultative Forum.

"Given the importance of biotechnology to the nation's corn growers and all of agriculture, I welcome the opportunity to serve on the Consultative Forum," Utlaut said. "I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this panel to address the many issues surrounding biotechnology, and I'm hopeful that our dialogue will foster broader awareness and acceptance of biotechnology's many benefits."

Other U.S. members of the Consultative Forum, according to the U.S. State Department are:

- Dr. Norman Borlaug, distinguished professor of international agriculture at Texas A&M University and winner of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work on the "Green Revolution."

- Dr. Gordon Conway, president of the Rockefeller Founda-

tion and world-renowned agricultural ecologist.

- Dr. Rebecca J. Goldberg, senior scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund.

- Dr. Cutberto Garza, M.D., vice provost at Cornell University and chair of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academies Institute of Medicine.

- Dr. Jennie Hunter-Cevera, president of the University of Maryland's Biotechnology Institute.

- Terry Medley, J.D., director of regulatory and external affairs for DuPont.

- Dr. Christopher Roland Somerville, director of the Carnegie Institute's Department of Plant Biology at Stanford University.

- Carol Tucker Foreman, director of the Food Policy Institute of the Consumer Federation of America.

- Dr. Le Roy B. Walters, director of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University.

EU members, as identified by the U.S. State Department, are:

- Dr. Derek Burke, former professor of microbiology at Warwick University and retired chair of the U.K. Advisory Committee on Novel Foods.

- Susan Davies, principal policy adviser of the Consumers' Association.

- Noelle Lenoir, chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technology, European Union.

- Dan Leskien, adviser to Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit and permanent biotechnology adviser to Friends of the Earth.

- Dr. Mans Lonnroth, managing director of MISTRA, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, and former state secretary at the Swedish Ministry of the Environment.

- Dr. Ruud Lubbers, professor for globalization and sustainable development at the Catholic University Brabant (Tilburg University) and former prime minister of the Netherlands.

- Dr. Pedro Puigdomenech Rosell, research professor at the department of molecular genetics, Instituto de Biologia Molecular de Barcelona.

- Dr. Leonardo Santi, president of the Advances Biotechnology Center, Genoa, and chairman of the National Committee for Biosafety and Biotechnology Presidency of Cabinet of Ministers, Rome.

- Luis Vasconcelos e Souza, president of the Portuguese Association of Maize Producers and vice president of the European Association of Maize Producers.

- Dr. Eduard Veltkamp, senior vice president, Business Research Foods, Unilever Research Laboratory Vlaardingen.

Nationwide Market Basket Survey Shows Foods Well Within Established Safety Limits

WILMINGTON, Del. — None of the food samples taken from groceries across the U.S. contain pesticide residues above government limits for a broad class of insecticides, according to a major new year-long survey.

For the past year, DuPont Crop Protection and Aventis Crop Science have joined forces to provide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with information from the Carbamate Market Basket Survey. The data have been submitted this month to the EPA, which has said publicly that it will use the information in evaluating dietary risk for the Carbamate class of insecticides.

The survey, which was designed to detect and accurately measure Carbamate insecticide residues in fresh fruits and vegetables purchased by consumers, was conducted over a year-long period and is considered the most comprehensive of its kind. Collection of food samples from grocery stores throughout the contiguous U.S. was completed in January 2000. The survey addresses the EPA's need for residue data in individual foods that are eaten as a single-unit single serving, such as apples and

peaches, or a multiple-unit single serving, such as grapes.

"Our purpose was to ensure that realistic residue values from the actual foods we eat were used in the implementation of the U.S. Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)-mandated risk assessments," said Chuck Baer, DuPont Crop Protection. "Bottom line is that our data accurately reflects the potential dietary and cumulative exposure risks to consumers from use of these products. The results are very positive for the American consumer of all ages."

"These findings are important because we targeted foods eaten by children in particular, as this is one of the important elements of the U.S. Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)," said Jennifer Phillips, a risk assessment scientist for Aventis and a task force team member.

The results are extremely positive. They show:

- The vast majority — 90 percent — of all samples analyzed have no residues or residue levels below one part per billion.

- Of the 10 percent or so of samples with detectable residues, all were well below government safety limits for various foods.

- When looking at the data collected, the residues are very low, ranging from five to more than over 35,000 times less than the EPA-established tolerance (allowable limit).

- From a cumulative risk standpoint, less than 0.4 percent of the samples had residues of more than one Carbamate insecticide.

As registrants of carbamate-containing insecticides, both DuPont and Aventis believe this work will ensure that sound science is used in the FQPA assessment. The analysis is considered one of the most detailed of its kind, including hundreds of samples for each of the eight different crops: apples, tomatoes, lettuce, grapes, peaches, broccoli, oranges, and bananas.

To ensure validity of the resultant data, the Carbamate Market Basket Survey Task Force used an EPA-approved statistical sampling design for collecting the commodities as well as employing the USDA-PDP protocol for preparation procedures — that is washing, peeling, coring — for all the fruits and vegetables prior to the analysis.

The final test results were submitted to the EPA in May.

Important Ag Measures Pass Both Houses

GLENMONT, N.Y. — New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm advocacy organization, is pleased with legislation that supports the Department of Agriculture and Market's Agricultural Environmental Management program and the indemnification of county soil and water conservation district employees, who provide technical advice and assistance at the request of state agencies.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann and Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair William Magee have been instrumental in their support for these efforts. Both bills await Gov. George E. Pataki's approval.

"The passage of these two bills in both the Senate and the Assembly is significant for the agricultural industry and water quality for the entire state," said John W. Lincoln, president of New York Farm Bureau. "Soil and water conservation employees deserve this much needed liability protection, as they help farmers and state agencies to improve and preserve our water quality."

The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) legislation will use a voluntary, case-by-case approach to water quality improvement, with an emphasis on local farmer involvement. AEM will bring technical expertise together with financial assistance to ensure that we maintain our state's water supply.

Programs that are similar in concept to AEM have already been successfully implemented in areas such as the New York City Watershed, the Lake Champlain Watershed, and the Skaneateles Watershed. These programs place New York State as a leader in incorporating this type of program for the betterment of agriculture and water quality.

"This bill was a priority for all districts in the state," said Anita

Cartin, executive vice president of the New York Association of Soil Districts. "This is historic legislation that acknowledges the role of Soil and Water Con-

servation Districts as the local delivery system of State agencies. We appreciate New York Farm Bureau's role and support on this issue."

Pork Database To Allow For Comparative Analysis Of Production

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Pork producers now have a way to compare their production practices with comparable operations using the new checkoff-funded National Pork Database.

The database, which went live on June 1, contains information submitted based on pork production and financial standards. The checkoff-funded standards were derived by producer-led committees to identify common terms and formulas that are uniform and could be used by all producers.

The Pork Production and Financial Standards were completed last year and tested with pilot classes of producers, according to Jenny Felt, special programs manager for the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC). The National Pork Database is composed of producers' records based on the standards.

The value of the standards to producers is they provide uniformity and will permit the collection of data for historical tracking and comparative analysis. Over time, benchmarks will be developed from the data collected from producers.

"Both production and financial benchmarks will allow producers and their consultants to better understand the impact of production practices, new technology, debt, equity and capital on their operations," Felt said. "As producers learn more about their operations, they will be able to ask more of the right questions to get the information needed to guide their decisions."

"It is up to all pork industry stakeholders to seize this opportunity and adopt standard terminology and financial accounting practices so that we can communicate the information and use our knowledge to explore ways of achieving and maintaining our competitive advantages in a rapidly changing world," according to John Kellogg, a producer from Yorkville, Ill., and National Pork Board president.

The National Pork Database and Pork Production and Financial Standards were announced during World Pork Expo, June 8-10, in Indianapolis, Ind.

For more information on the database and standards, contact Jenny Felt, special programs manager, at (515) 223-2771.

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