

Cattle Producers Look Forward To New Administration, Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Cattle producers look forward to working with a Bush Administration and the new Congress to solve issues important to the future of family farms and ranches across the country, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said recently after presidential election results were confirmed.

"President-Elect Bush and Vice President-Elect Dick Cheney share many views with American beef producers such as elimination of the death tax, local control of environmental policies and making sure that trade laws are fair, protect U.S. producers and continue to open new overseas markets for U.S. beef," said NCBA President George Hall.

"However, the narrow majorities in the House and 50-50 split in the Senate, combined with an entirely new administration, makes it imperative that cattle producers mobilize like never before to keep our industry moving forward," Hall said. "We need every able body. We need to be united. We need to speak with one voice. We need to ensure the agenda set by lawmakers includes our priorities."

"NCBA is proud of the strong, bipartisan relationships we have developed over the years in both the House and Senate," said Hall. "We look forward to continuing those relationships in the next Congress to make gains in issues important to family farms and ranches."

Hall added that the continued power and impact of suburbia is only expected to grow, with

fewer congressmen focused on rural issues. The 2000 Census will be released next spring, and there is a potential for fewer rural seats due to suburbanization.

"As agriculture numbers become smaller, so does our voice," Hall said. "But by banding together, using sound scientific reasons and educating elected leaders on the importance of our industry to this great country and around the world, we can be effective."

As the new administration works to fill its cabinet positions, NCBA will urge that consideration be given to individuals who understand the complexities of the cattle business.

NCBA is prepared to move ahead with such issues as death tax repeal and other tax relief measures, opening new overseas markets to U.S. beef producers, maintaining a free market system and a free flow of market information so that cattle producers can use their ingenuity to continue to develop beef products that meet consumer demands, continued efforts to develop innovations to solve food safety issues, and developing common sense environmental policies to maintain open spaces across the country.

"We already are working to deliver positive results for cattle producers during the next session of congress," Hall said. "But to be successful, it's critical for cattle producers to stay active and make their voices heard at the local, state and national levels."

New Members Named To USDA's Forestry Advisory Council

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has announced the selection of four members to the USDA National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council. There is one new member and three are reappointed.

Their term begins Jan. 1, 2001 until Dec. 31, 2003.

The new member appointed to the 15-member council is Elizabeth Kinch, with the Derby Community Foundation, Derby, Kan.

Three members have been reappointed to serve a second term. They are: John Ball, associate professor of forestry, South Dakota State University, Brookings, S.D.; Dan DeWald, natural resources manager, City of Bellevue Parks and Community Services, Bellevue, Wash., and Deborah Gangloff, executive director, American Forests, Tracy's Landing, Md. Ms. Gangloff will continue to serve as the chairwoman of the council.

The experience these four members bring to the council will enhance USDA's efforts to pro-

tect and increase urban tree cover and heighten the importance of urban and community forestry initiatives throughout the nation," said Glickman.

The council advises the secretary concerning the care and management of trees, forests, and related natural resources in urban and community settings. The council also works with federal and state agencies and other partners to share information, technical assistance, and award competitive cost-share grants that advance the science and practice of urban forestry.

Corn Growers Denounce USDA's Inaction On Upper Mississippi River

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Recently, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) publicly chastised USDA for its inactivity on the issue of improving the transportation infrastructure on the upper Mississippi River.

Addressing the USDA's Agricultural Transportation Summit in St. Louis, Tim Burrack, a corn grower from Arlington, Iowa, and a member of the NCGA Production and Stewardship Action Team, rebuked the USDA for its failure to fulfill commitments made two years ago.

"In 1998, USDA held a summit similar to this one to determine the transportation needs of American agriculture," noted Burrack. "One key point from that meeting was that American farmers saw the dire need for improving locks on the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Two years ago it seemed the USDA got the message, touting various Memorandums of Understanding with the Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It now appears only the Corps has honored those documents."

For several years, the NCGA and other leading agricultural groups have pressed for improvements to locks and dams on the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers in order to maintain the U.S. competitive edge in the global grain trade. Major competitors of U.S. farmers — Argentina, Brazil, and China — continue to invest hundreds of millions of dollars into their transportation systems and dramatically reduce their costs for moving grain for export.

The NCGA has actively endorsed the Corps' completion of the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study. That study will outline the economic and environmental benefits of doubling the size of seven locks from 600 feet to 1,200 feet and lengthening guide walls on five other locks. The 15-year project would cost \$1.2 billion. A lock and dam users' trust fund would pay \$600 million with the U.S. Treasury paying the other half.

"NCGA is particularly interested in this study because the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers are the primary artery for

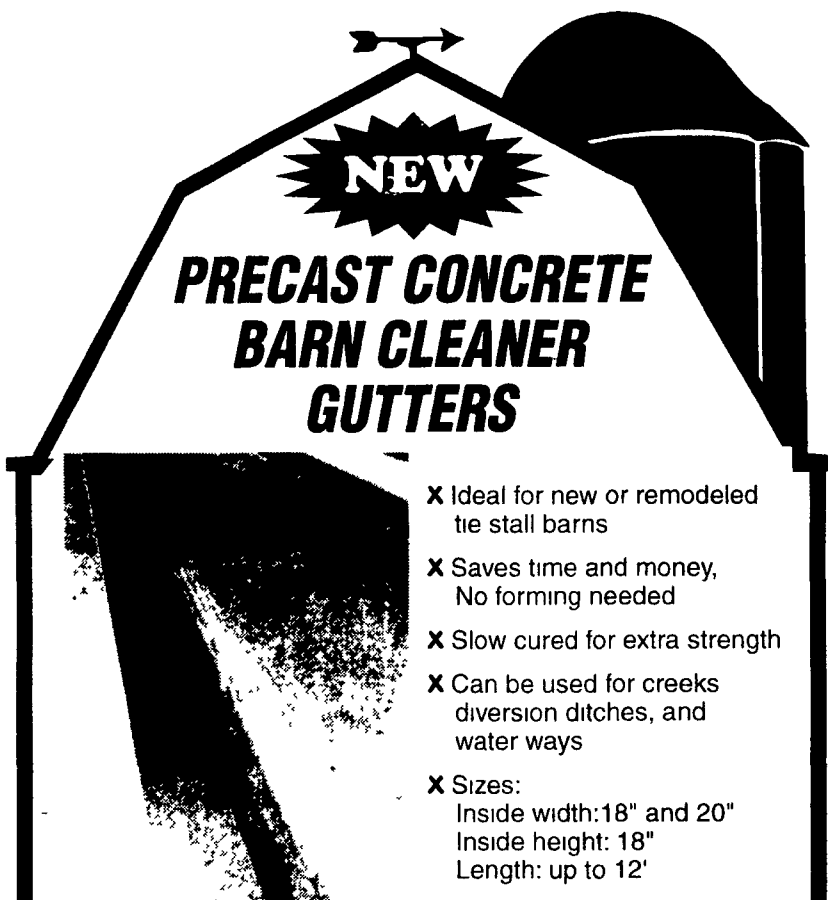
U.S. corn and bean exports," Burrack said. "Every year, more than one billion bushels of corn move toward export markets on these waterways."

Since the summit more than two years ago, Burrack said, the Corps and agricultural groups have repeatedly asked USDA to provide information and expertise to the study — requests that have fallen on deaf ears.

"Much of the current debate surrounding economics of the upper Mississippi study could be put to rest if USDA would only commit the resources necessary to find the correct answer," said Burrack. "Instead, we see a USDA that just wants to hold an occasional meeting and perpetuate the myth that it is representing American agriculture."


Burrack pointed out that since the 1998 summit, foreign markets have continued to expand while "the Corps has met the study deadline with 'delays' and USDA has continued to duck its responsibilities as the governmental representative of U.S. agricultural interests."

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