



NCGA CONTINUES STREAK OF SUCCESS THROUGH END OF FISCAL YEAR

Sept. 30 marked the end of the 2002 fiscal year for NCGA, and the year ended on

a high note for the nation's corn grower organization, which has seen some of its most notable accomplishments over the past 12 months.

With FY-03 beginning,

Penn State: Pa.'s Precipitation Has Increased

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — At the end of this torrid, drought-ridden summer, it no doubt will surprise many Pennsylvanians to learn that the state receives more rain than it used to. But that's a fact, according to climate experts at Penn State.

"The amount of precipitation that we get here in Pennsylvania has gone up 10 percent in the past century, since 1895 to be exact," said state climatologist and Penn State instructor in meteorology Paul Knight. "It's a well-known fact among meteorologists — we are getting more rain than we used to. Most people don't realize it because the amount of water we use has increased greatly. So the increase in precipitation has barely kept up with the increase in water use."

And even though the current drought is part of a four-year span of below-average precipitation, there is nothing to suggest that Pennsylvania is turning into a mountainous expanse of arid landscape, according to Bryan Swistock, extension water resources specialist in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

"I don't think that anybody is prepared to say that

the current drought is really a long-term weather pattern that will end in Pennsylvania getting, say, 25 inches of rain a year, rather than the 40-some inches we get now.

"There is no reason to think that will happen," Swistock said. "We are just in a dry cycle. Even the models of global warming don't have a great deal of strength when they try to predict precipitation trends. The models for global warming say some areas will get wetter and others will get dryer. The ones I have seen don't suggest any significant changes for Pennsylvania."

There are examples of up-to-a-decade-long dry periods in recent history, Swistock points out, such as the parched 1960s and the "dust bowl" era in the 1930s.

Global warming does seem to be showing up in Pennsylvania, Knight points out, but the effects are subtle. Temperatures are averaging about a degree higher now than they were just generations ago. But he notes that scientists are not sure if there is some connection between increased precipitation and slightly higher temperatures overall.

NCGA CEO Rick Tolman took a look back at the previous 90 days and outlined some of the key accomplishments:

- NCGA organized 11 farm bill implementation meetings and released the farm bill calculator to further help growers understand the bill and determine how the farm bill affects their operations.

- NCGA closed the year by preparing for its upcoming move to a new facility in St. Louis County as an economic move to increase efficiency and return greater value to members and growers who invest checkoff dollars in the association.

- NCGA is also building equity in the area of research and development by continuing to develop commercial relationships with groups such as Cargill-Dow, Shell, the Department of Energy, and others.

- While the fourth quarter didn't see the completion of a national energy bill with a renewable fuels standard, the bill was passed to conference and NCGA growers not only continue to put pressure on their elected officials to get this issue finished, but to actively defend the bill both in their communities and on a national level.

- A continuing issue for NCGA and the nation's corn growers has been the national and international acceptance of biotechnology. Recent trips to Europe plus participation



in the World Corn Congress in Pau, France, have been a step in the right direction.

- NCGA also established a crop disaster task force to address the plight of corn growers affected by adverse weather conditions nationwide.

"We have been very successful this past year at building partnerships and coalitions and finding the common ground with groups for the benefit of the corn producers that we represent. This is an important principle — there is great strength in partnership and coalition," Tolman noted.

NCGA Tops Membership Record

NCGA continues to attract corn growers from all over the country as membership soared to 32,369 in August, an increase of 441 from July 2002 and a 1,165 member increase from July 2001. This record did not stand long as September was another record month with 32,379 members, a 10-member increase from August 2002.

While most associations are experiencing significant declines in membership, NCGA membership grew 1.52 percent for the fiscal year 2001-2002, said NCGA Membership Services Manager Byron Keelin. "Several states also had significant increases in membership this year too," he said.

"Ohio Corn Growers Association added 305 members to its roster a 15.8 percent increase, North Dakota added 206 members a 15.47 percent increase, Illinois added 191 members a 4.6 percent increase."

Other states include Missouri 169 members, Wisconsin 101 members, Minnesota added 215 members, Iowa added 81 members, Michigan added 28 members, and Tennessee added 13 members.

NCGA On the Move: On Schedule And Under Budget

Soon the St. Louis staff of NCGA will move into its new facility in west St. Louis County. According to Dr. Richard Glass, NCGA vice president of research and development, everything's moving according to plan.

"We (were at the building yesterday) and everything is progressing according to schedule," said Glass. "In fact, we're currently under budget for the project, which is always positive."

NCGA Director of Human Resources Judi Segalini said the construction has been fast-paced.

The new address is NCGA, 632 Cepi Drive, Chesterfield, MO 63005, (636) 733-9004, Fax: (636) 733-9005.

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