



NCGA Pleased By Introduction Of Bill To Reform Crop Disaster Aid

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NCGA announced Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO), a member of the House Agriculture Committee, has introduced the Companion Disaster Assistance Program Act of 2002 (CDAP), legislation that incorporates many of the principles and recommendations for crop insurance reform advocated by the NCGA.

CDAP, if adopted, would provide more equitable aid for crop insurance participants who have been hurt by substantial losses from severe drought and floods. Graves introduced the bill, H.R. 5589, recently.

"NCGA applauds Rep. Graves for stepping forward and introducing legislation that provides disaster aid to row crop producers without undermining the progress of the federal crop insurance program," said NCGA Disaster Task Force Chair Ron Litterer, a corn grower from Greene, Iowa. "Rep. Graves' bill, H.R. 5589, will help deliver assistance to more producers and, hopefully, encourage greater participation in the federal crop insurance program."

Despite significant improvements made to the federal crop insurance program and farm safety net, economic losses caused by severe drought conditions and floods over the last two years have prompted calls for emergency assistance to help producers rebuild their operations. While the supplemental market assistance provided to row crop producers by the Congress in recent

years has proven extremely helpful, depressed commodity prices and an overall weak economy have deteriorated the financial resources of many producers who have operated within the slimmest of margins.

Rep. Graves' legislation would complement the crop insurance program by covering a portion of the uninsurable deductible rather than duplicating the insurance coverage under traditional disaster assistance. Further, NCGA believes CDAP provides an effective means for payments to be delivered sooner because most growers that collect indemnity payments would be eligible to collect the CDAP payments.

ASTA Grain Handlers Database Updated For 2002 Harvest

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In time for the annual harvest season, the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) has updated its database of grain handlers accepting biotech corn approved in the United States but not yet approved for import into the European Union (EU).

Effective immediately, growers can access the updated database on ASTA's Website at <http://www.amseed.org>.

"The ASTA database continues to provide valuable service and support for both grain handlers and farmers," said Dick Crowder, ASTA executive vice president. "It's another important tool we can use to meet our customers' needs."

About 3,000 grain handling facility operators nationwide responded in this year's survey that they would accept grain that is not yet approved by the EU. For the 2002 harvest season, close to 1,800 grain handlers have posted their locations and, in some cases, delivery stipulations. This marks the fourth straight year ASTA has created the Web-based database.

Visitors to the database will find information capturing the details of grain handling and delivery policies of many facilities and locations. The data comes from grain handlers throughout the U.S.

Dr. R.L. Mikkelsen Joins PPI Staff As Western Region Director

NORCROSS, Ga. — Dr. Robert L. Mikkelsen has joined the staff of the Potash and Phosphate Institute (PPI) as western region director. He is based in Davis, Calif., with responsibility for PPI agronomic research and education programs in the states of Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

"We are understandably very happy to have Rob as part of the organization. He is a highly respected scientist and educator who also has tremendous knowledge of agriculture in California and the western region," said Dr. David W. Dibb, PPI president. Mikkelsen assumes responsibility for the region following the recent retirement of Dr. Al Ludwick, who had served as western director since 1980.

Mikkelsen was previously associate professor of soil sci-

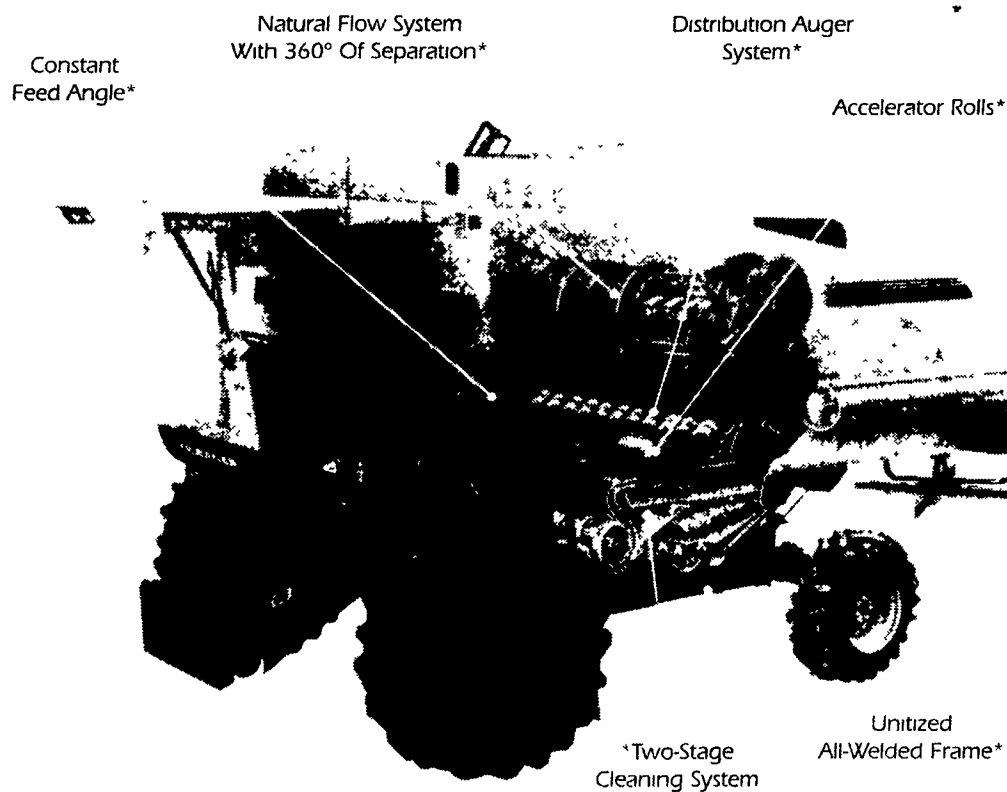
ence at North Carolina State University (NCSU) in Raleigh. A native of California, Mikkelsen earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy/soils at Brigham Young University in 1981, then received his doctorate in soil science at University of California, Riverside, in 1985. He was a postdoctoral research scientist and assistant research soil scientist there, before joining the National Fertilizer Development Center at Muscle Shoals, Ala., in 1987 as soil chemist/project leader. In 1991, Mikkelsen became assistant professor of soil science at NCSU, and was promoted to associate professor in 1997.

At NCSU, Mikkelsen was honored as Outstanding Graduate Instructor of the Year in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He has served as chairman of Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) Di-

vision S-4 (Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition) and on the editorial boards of Soil Science Society of America Journal, Fertilizer Research, Nutrient Cycling in Agroecosystems, Agronomy Journal, and Journal of Environmental Quality.

Widely known for his research and expertise in nutrient management, Mikkelsen has authored or co-authored numerous research publications and book chapters in recent years. In addition to basic agronomic and fertilizer technology, his research has included nutrient interactions with the environment, animal waste management, and nutrient budgets. He is a licensed soil scientist and is listed in the North Carolina Registry of Certified Professionals in Soils.

Mikkelsen is involved in several professional societies, including the American Society of Agronomy.



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