

# NCGA Sends Crop Disaster Aid Proposal To The Hill



**CORN TALK NEWS**

PENNSYLVANIA CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) has sent a letter to leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees outlining NCGA's disaster assistance proposal and commenting on agriculture disaster assistance legislation awaiting action in the House and Senate.

The letter, signed by NCGA President Tim Hume, was sent to Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture; Sen. Richard Lugar, (R-Indiana), ranking minority member, Senate Committee on Agriculture; Rep. Larry Combest, (R-Texas), chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; and, Rep. Charlie Stenholm, (D-Texas), ranking minority member, House Committee on Agriculture.

In the letter, Hume said, "As you know all too well, severe drought conditions and floods have taken a serious toll on farmers and ranchers during the past two years. Despite significant improvements made to the federal crop insurance program and farm safety net programs, economic losses caused by these natural disasters will require additional assistance to allow producers the opportunity to rebuild their operations.

"The supplemental market assistance provided to row crop producers by the Congress in recent years has been

extremely helpful," said Hume. "However, five years of depressed commodity prices and an overall weak economy have deteriorated the financial resources of many producers who have operated within the slimmest of margins."

The letter went on to say NCGA recognizes the federal crop insurance program as the primary risk management tool for producers and urged continued efforts to build upon the sizable increase in producer participation and purchases of higher levels of coverage that have resulted from the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000.

"Given the importance of crop insurance to U.S. production agriculture, NCGA urges changes that allow for a more common sense approach as rules are updated and innovative risk management products are introduced to increase coverage for actual losses."

Hume said NCGA is also urging Congress move forward quickly and adopt disaster assistance legislation ensuring timely, adequate aid to those who have suffered significant crop losses.

"NCGA believes that reforms of the Crop Disaster Program (CDP) are needed to recognize individual producer's investments in crop insurance policies and to avoid duplication of federal benefits," he said. "Without changes,

the CDP will continue to provide assistance on crops that were insurable with subsidized insurance contracts and target disproportionate levels of disaster payments to low yields that could have been covered by federal crop insurance.

"The fact is growers can still experience a 35 percent crop loss, be impacted by substantial financial losses and see little, if any, payments from their crop insurance policy or the Crop Disaster Program."

NCGA has proposed an alternative approach to crop disaster assistance; one that would complement the federal crop insurance program rather than duplicate the insurance coverage under the current Crop Disaster Program. According to the letter, "NCGA's Companion Disaster Assistance Program (CDAP) would provide more equitable payments to a predetermined percentage of the insurance deductible loss that is not insured. Rather than targeting payments for low yields that could be covered with crop insurance, CDAP would provide greater assistance to crop insurance participants impacted by crop losses as high as 60 per-

cent. Moreover, CDAP would ensure that a producer's disaster payments and indemnity payments do not exceed a crop's expected value."

The letter concluded by saying, "Recognizing the limited time remaining before adjournment, NCGA stands ready to work with you and your colleagues to expedite consideration and passage of a more effective and equitable crop disaster assistance program. We appreciate the ex-

ceptional work of this Congress on behalf of U.S. agriculture and want to again offer our support for legislation to assist producers who will suffer significant financial losses as a result of severe weather conditions."

For more information on the letter and to read it in its entirety, visit [www.ncga.com](http://www.ncga.com).



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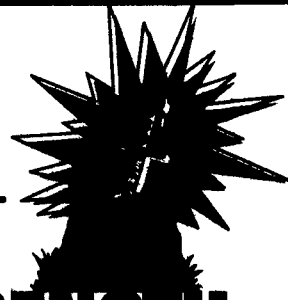
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