



Friday, March 5, 2010

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Summary of Legislative Activity of Interest to Iowa Corn Growers

DOJ and USDA Workshops in Ankeny on March 12 (Federal)

If you are interested in attending the Department of Justice (DOJ) and USDA hearing regarding agricultural competition, please click on the link below. The March 12 workshop is the first in a series of nation-wide workshops, and is going to be held at the Des Moines Area Community College's FFA Enrichment Center on March 12th from 9:00 am until 5:15 pm. There will be a public comment opportunity from 4:15 pm until 5:15 pm. If you wish to attend, you are required to register online, in advance, at the following link:http://www.justice.gov/atr/public/press_releases/2010/255559.htm

Commodity Classic (State-Federal)

This week in Anaheim, California, thousands of the country's corn, soybean, wheat and sorghum producers are attending the premier trade show and convention called the 2010 Commodity Classic. At the Classic, Iowa corn growers' voting delegates meet with other delegates from across the nation to debate and discuss this year's policy positions for the National Corn Growers Association. With one delegate session complete and one yet to take place on Saturday, the following Iowa policy initiatives were adopted into the NCGA policy book so far:

"We oppose using international indirect land use change in calculation of the carbon footprint for renewable fuels so that renewable fuels are on an equal footing with petroleum and other industries."

"If carbon or cap and trade legislation or regulations are proposed, NCGA should review the scientific merit and economic impacts of such proposals. NCGA should be opposed to a climate change bill if it does not support long-term corn grower opportunity for profitability."

"Support legislation that prevents EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions."

"We support removing restrictions on the use of corn-based ethanol for consideration as an advanced biofuel."

“Oppose the arbitrary, non-scientific based review of crop protection products by EPA or any other government agency.”

“NCGA should work to inform policymakers and regulators as to how our food system works to ensure a safe food supply. Any laws regarding food safety enhance food safety and be implemented in a way that is practical for all farmers and the entire food industry.”

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture (Federal)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack addressed the general session of the 2010 Commodity Classic on Friday morning. Secretary Vilsack spoke regarding the administration’s strong desire to continue to utilize biotechnology, and also spoke in support of biofuels, international trade opportunities, and rural development in America.

Vehicle Weights - Update (State) SF 2315 and HF 2419

Thank you for all your help in response to our call to action request on last week’s On The Hill! Thanks to a great team effort by Iowa Corn membership, the “vehicle weights” bill (SF 2315 and HF 2419) survived the second legislative funnel this week. ICGA and our coalition partners on this bill received a special exception to the funnel deadline for this bill. When a companion bill passes committees on both the House and Senate and the leaders of both chambers assign that bill to the unfinished business calendar or declare it to be a leadership bill, that bill is given a special exception to the funnel deadline. As a reminder, this bill would establish a weight schedule for six and seven axle vehicles for carrying grain or fertilizer, similar to the schedule for livestock and construction vehicles. In general, the bill would allow for up to eighty six thousand pounds in weight if axles were added, to reduce impacts on Iowa roads and improve hauling efficiency.

Tenant Crops (State) HF 2380

On Wednesday, March 3rd Governor Culver signed into law HF 2380, a bill that would allow a farm tenant to have the right to harvest or graze the above-ground portions of a crop until the termination of the tenancy on March 1, unless the lease between the two parties says otherwise. This bill was requested by Iowa Cattlemen to provide needed clarification to avoid conflict, and possible costly litigation. Iowa Corn supported this bill and the Cattlemen’s efforts as this language will not limit the options on individual lease agreements desired by tenants and landlords.

Flood Plain Management (State) SF 2316

The “flood plain management” bill, (SF 2316) did not survive the second funnel of the Iowa legislature. This bill would have allowed the DNR to lead creation of an open-ended “model floodplain ordinance” that could be utilized statewide, setting parameters for land use in 500 year floodplain areas. This bill would have required state

government to study hydrological tiling and work on programs to integrate wetlands into watersheds and to prioritize such efforts. In addition, the original draft of the flood plain management bill would have allowed the DNR and local governments to prohibit constructing buildings or infrastructure in a 500 year flood plain. Regarding climate change, this bill's original version would have required the DNR and IDALS to work on conservation practices for a changing climate. The original version of the bill would have restricted rebuilding of levees and encouraged the state to find ways for farmers to retain water on their fields instead of utilizing drainage tile. Iowa corn opposed this bill because of the potential negative effects on many of our growers and our need for drainage tile and levees for successful crop production.

Iowa Corn On the Hill is distributed each week to members of the Iowa Corn Growers Association who have provided e-mail addresses. If you have questions about this newsletter, please contact Mindy Larsen Poldberg at 515-225-9242 or mpoldberg@iowacorn.org.