

IOWA CORN

Roots

ICPB SPECIAL EDITION

 **IOWA CORN**[®]
PROMOTION BOARD

Creating Global Demand for Iowa Corn in All Forms

Iowa corn farmers have long realized that the best way to enhance on-farm profitability is to create new demand for corn. To see how markets work and to talk face-to-face with customers around the world, Iowa farmers through the Iowa Corn Promotion Board (ICPB) along with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and the U.S. Grains Council (USGC) have boots on the ground in major export markets. Their efforts have expanded exports of grain and value added products, such as ethanol, distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS), pork and beef.

ICPB investments in USGC and USMEF along with those of other agricultural trade organizations are matched by market development funds from the U.S. government through the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development cooperator program, both administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

2015 Recap

U.S. corn producers experienced record high yields in 2015, resulting in the third largest U.S. corn crop on record. Total U.S. corn production for 2015 were 13.65 billion bushels, a four percent decrease in production compared to the 2014 corn crop.

"With a strong U.S. dollar and a surplus of corn to move, we know we must work hard every day to meet face-to-face with customers and sell corn," said Mark Heckman President of the Iowa Corn

Promotion Board and a farmer from West Liberty. "Iowa farmers frequently host international teams and travel on missions meeting with customers and build relationships to learn more about customers' needs."

This year was not without challenges. Early in 2015, dockworkers at U.S. west coast ports caused a slowdown in normal port operations delaying the delivery of U.S. agricultural exports and impacting international buying decisions. Another challenge was the strong dollar which caused a weaker than typical demand.

U.S. Grains Council

ICPB partners with USGC to promote U.S. feed grains around the clock in more than 50 countries with 10 international locations. The U.S. is the top exporter of corn, with an estimated 38 percent of global corn exports during the 2015-2016 marketing year. Japan and Mexico, which are the top two global corn importers, were also the top two U.S. corn importers. Japan purchased 80 percent of its corn supply from the United States while Mexico bought almost all of its corn supply from the United States.

The overall 2015-2016 Corn Harvest Quality Report results were better than the average based on the previous four crop years in most attribute categories, with 94 percent of the samples that would grade U.S. No. 2 or better.

"The U.S. corn industry does still

have some competitive advantages as it is viewed as one of the most transparent and reliable systems in the world," Heckman said. Heckman has been serving on the Iowa Corn Export and Grain Trade Committee for the last 12 years in various roles. He says that USGC has been able to help foster relationships that have helped to provide a positive reputation with overseas buyers.

The Council has been working for two years to expand markets for U.S. ethanol exports worldwide. The United States exported more than 870 million gallons of ethanol during the 2014-2015 marketing year.

U.S. Meat Export Federation

The U.S. Meat Export Federation is the trade association responsible for developing international markets for the U.S. red meat industry. USMEF carries out market development activities in more than 80 countries. These activities fall into several primary areas:

- Marketing - Creating demand in international markets for U.S. meat through promotions, trade seminars, consumer education, advertising and public relations.

- Trade Servicing - Working to bring buyer and seller together and by conducting both market and product research.

- Market Access - Providing the U.S. government and industry with the market intelligence necessary to secure, maintain and develop fair and reasonable access to international markets.

U.S. pork exports posted a strong finish in 2015 as December volume was the largest since April and the third-largest of the year. Beef exports were below year-ago levels in December and posted the first full-year value decline since 2009.

"2015 was a challenging year for meat exports. The rising projected production increases for both the U.S. beef and pork industries in 2016 provide potential for USMEF to help win back market share in both emerging and established markets," Heckman said.

2015 Trade Teams:

More than 10 teams from over eight different countries visited Iowa this year. They were here learning about biotechnology, biotech regulation, swine production, ethanol, DDGS and overall corn production.

Trade Missions:

Iowa corn farmers went on several missions to meet face-to-face with international buyers. They are able to learn more about their customers' businesses and build strong relationships by showing them they value their business. These missions included topics such as crop progress reports, DDGs, meat trade missions, and communicating the results of the corn quality reports.



RESEARCH Q&A

The research that Iowa Corn Promotion Board invests in is beneficial in many ways. But often times, we are asked why we invest in research. Well, the answer is simple, we are actively investing in the future of this industry and the future of our farmer members. To break it down a bit we have provided a Q&A with the Iowa Corn research department.

1. What types of research does ICPB fund?

ICPB invests in research in two broad areas - finding new uses for corn and improved production efficiency.

2. What are some examples of research focused on production efficiency?

ICPB is investing in research to improve nitrogen use efficiency of the corn plant. The objective is to develop genetic traits which allow the corn plant to use less nitrogen to make a bushel of corn, or to make more bushels with the same amount of nitrogen. This will reduce input costs for producing the corn crop and can help reduce the nutrient load required to produce corn.

ICPB also invests in a large nationwide study to understand gene function, discovered through the corn genome-sequencing project. Researchers across North America are measuring the traits of hundreds of corn lines to identify genes that affect various corn traits or phenotypes.

3. Why is ICPB investing in new uses of corn?

Corn production continues to increase due to improved genetics and production methods. To continue to find new markets for this growing supply, ICPB is looking for opportunities to create biochemical and bioplastics from corn, instead of from fossil fuel sources. One of the more recent biochemicals that the research team is interested in is isosorbide, a safer and bio renewable alternative to be used in plastic packaging and containers. This is a win-win situation as it creates increased demand for our corn supply while doing so in a renewable way.

4. Recently, ICPB received a publication of a patent application. The patent is for a production method using corn in the industrial manufacturing of the raw material monoethylene glycol or MEG. What will this research mean for farmers?

MEG is currently produced using fossil sources of raw material. The ICPB method produces it from corn starch. MEG is a huge worldwide commodity chemical used in a number of products, like plastic beverage bottles. MEG is also one of the largest organic chemicals made at a market volume of over 40 billion pound per year. Making MEG from corn could create a significant new market for the ever-increasing size of our corn harvest. Consumers will see no difference in the textiles and bottles they have come to know, except the fact that part of the chemicals used in these products are now renewable.

5. Why is research an important component of ICPB?

The mission of ICPB is to improve corn grower profitability, so that they are able to continue to feed and fuel the world sustainably and affordably. Research plays a key role in fulfilling this mission by: Finding new uses for corn which increases demand for growers' grain and to find improved methods of producing corn more efficiently and sustainably, resulting in lower cost of production.

If you have further questions about research or ICPB, please contact Iowa Corn at 515-225-9242 or corninfo@iowacorn.org.

Stewardship Education

We have seen many great innovators during our time. Each inventive man or woman blessed us with groundbreaking and modern ways of navigating the world. One of agriculture's greatest innovators, Dr. Norman Borlaug, is attributed to having saved billions of lives through his research and developing high yielding and disease-resistant varieties of wheat. The key to keeping up with the world is

finding new ways to navigate its ever-changing ways. Borlaug was an innovator that did not shy away from sharing and as Jolene Riessen, an Iowa corn farmer from northwest Iowa put it: "Innovators are always willing to share."

The agriculture industry may be facing a different set of challenges than those seen in Dr. Borlaug's days but there are still no greater innovators than farmers. Riessen

recently sat on a panel with Iowa Corn Growers Association (ICGA) chair Jerry Mohr and Iowa corn farmer Steve Berger. These three pioneers in the realm of soil health and stewardship answered questions and shared their expertise on cover crops, preserving the land for future generations and technology's role in conservation. The panel, free and open to the public, was moderated by Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey. One of the goals of the Iowa Corn Promotion Board (ICPB) is to educate our corn farmers and consumers alike in new ways that the industry is progressing. Therefore, the panel was also broadcasted live for those that were not able to make the trip to Ames and can be watched anytime by visiting iowacorn.org/water.

We realize that not every farming operation is the same but there

are numerous ways to incorporate new, innovative approaches to promote stewardship. As we look to continue the conversation on soil health and water quality, we are excited to launch our new Iowa Corn Stewardship Advocates program. This program gives you an opportunity to stay up-to-date with hot topics, news events and upcoming stewardship activities that are most relevant to your operation. If you wish to begin or continue your journey as an innovator in stewardship, please sign up for our program at iowacorn.org/water.

Iowa Corn will continue to encourage members to be innovative, like Dr. Borlaug and many others. Education is central to the goals of ICPB and we hope that you will join us on the journey to healthier soil, improved water quality and continued stewardship.



Farmer Panel Discussion

ICPB Director Elections

It is again time for director elections. Iowa Corn is supported by the backbone of the grassroots level and we look to engaged farmers to elect whom they believe will best serve as a director on the Iowa Corn Promotion Board (ICPB). ICPB is a board of 12 peer-elected farmers and four ex officio members who direct funds collected through the one-cent per bushel Iowa corn checkoff program. ICPB represents thousands of Iowa farmers to create an economic climate in which the Iowa corn industry will be successful through research, market development and education.

This year, elections for ICPB will be held in USDA crop reporting districts 2, 5, and 7. ICPB will elect officers at the March board meeting, so an additional district seat will be open and announced at

that time. As a reminder, the Iowa Corn District Committees are in charge of the nominating process for new board members.

Growers interested in being nominated for an ICPB director position should contact the appropriate Iowa Corn District Committee. For contact information in your district, please contact Iowa Corn at 515-225-9242 or visit iowacorn.org/countyboards. The deadline for District Nominating Committees to submit their candidates for ICPB elections is April 11.

A press release will be issued in April with the current nominees, procedures for nomination by petition, and absentee ballot instructions. Additional candidates

may request a petition for nomination beginning April 1. Those seeking a petition for nomination must obtain the signatures of 25 other growers from his or her USDA crop reporting district, and submit the petition to the Iowa Corn office by 4:30 p.m. on April 15. Elections will take place on **July 19**, while the deadline to request an absentee ballot falls on June 27.

To request a petition or learn more about the election process, please contact Iowa Corn:

5505 NW 88th Street
Johnston, Iowa 50131-2948
515-225-9242
corninfo@iowacorn.org

ICPB Director Election Deadlines:

- **April 1** - Additional candidates may request a petition for nomination. Anyone seeking a petition for nomination must obtain the signatures of 25 other growers from his or her crop reporting district.
- **April 11** - Deadline for District Nominating Committees to submit their candidates.
- **April 15** - All petitions for nominations are due to the Iowa Corn office by 4:30 p.m.
- **June 27** - Deadline for requesting absentee ballots.
- **July 19** - ICPB Director Elections will take place at your local county extension office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: