

ASA Efforts Ensure Fair Treatment of Oilseed Base

ASA recently took action to address a problem with the calculation of eligible oilseed acreage as provided in the 2002 Farm Bill.

The steps taken by ASA resulted in prompt attention by Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to fixing the oilseed base acres glitch for producers who elect to maintain their contract acreage. Following concerns raised by ASA, its state affiliates and other oilseed organizations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in early October announced a revision in how it will establish bases that determine payments under the new Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program contained in the 2002 Act.

"ASA detailed its concerns about this provision in a letter to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, followed by a letter to Secretary Veneman that continued to press for a revision," said ASA President

Dwain Ford, a soybean producer from Kinmundy, Illinois. "We thank Secretary Veneman and Senators and Congressmen from soybean states for their strong support in working to resolve this issue for soybean farmers."

If not revised, the provision would have penalized producers who used planting flexibility under the 1996 FAIR Act to introduce annual rotations of oilseeds and program crops on individual farms. Without a correction, these producers would have lost one-half of the additional oilseed base, and corresponding direct and counter-cyclical payments, to which they should be entitled.

"This is an example of how ASA is working to ensure that ASA members and all U.S. soybean producers are treated fairly in the 2002 Farm Bill and under other government programs," Ford said.

Record U.S. Soybean Exports for Third Year

ASA announces another record year for U.S. soybean exports. On August 31, the end of 2001/02 Marketing Year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that accumulated U.S. soybean exports reached 29.9 million metric tons (mmt), the equivalent of more than 1.1 billion bushels (bu), up 86.6 million bushels from last year, an increase of 8.5 percent. This is the third year in a row that soybean exports have exceeded export levels in the previous year.

"About 40 percent of the total 2001 U.S. soybean crop was exported as whole soybeans," said ASA President Dwain Ford, a soybean producer from Kinmundy, Illinois. "Soybeans greatly contribute to the U.S. balance of trade because soybean and soy product exports are the highest value U.S. agricultural commodity export with an annual value of nearly \$7 billion."

ASA's activities to promote U.S. soybean exports are credited with influencing customer preferences for soy product usage in animal feed, cooking oil, and soyfoods. Through its network of 10 overseas offices, ASA manages the world's only international soy market development program that is responsible for promoting U.S. soy

exports to more than 80 countries.

In spite of the controversy surrounding biotech-enhanced products in some European countries, U.S. soybean exports to the European Union (EU), the largest combined market for U.S. soybean exports, exceeded 7.7 million metric tons/285 million bushels. That's 34 million bushels more than last year, an increase of 13.5 percent more U.S. soybeans exported to the EU.

In fact, during Marketing Year 2001/02, U.S. soybean exports increased in nearly all major market areas except China, where new import regulations brought about a decline in exports of 42 mil. bu. or 20 percent.

Fortunately, exports to the Western Hemisphere more than made up for the loss in China. Exports to these customers, (which includes Mexico, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Barbados, Ecuador, Venezuela, Trinidad, and for the first time in 40 years sales to Cuba), totaled more than 217 mil. bu., up 55.7 mil. bu., an increase of 34.4 percent. Exports were up 6 percent to Japan and Korea, and up 7 percent to Taiwan, all longstanding customers for U.S. soybeans.

Sports Figure To Give Keynote Address At 2003 Commodity Classic

The premier agricultural event for U.S. soybean and corn producers is just around the corner. The Commodity Classic convention and trade show will be February 27-March 1, 2003 in Charlotte, N.C.

In addition to a full schedule of education and information sessions, and a trade show with nearly 700 booths, Commodity Classic also includes meetings that set policy and direction for the American Soybean Association.

"U.S. soybean and corn growers of all sizes should attend the Commodity Classic because it gives them the opportunity for input regarding policy and direction in their industry," said ASA President Dwain Ford. "Also, Commodity

Classic is a premiere event that includes seminars on such topics as new technologies, management practices and profitability. There will also be an exceptional trade show that showcases everything from agriculture products to services to equipment."

The keynote speaker for the General Session at Commodity Classic will be Joe Gibbs. From the football field to the racetrack, Gibbs, a former football coach and owner of auto racing teams, knows how to inspire, lead and build a winning team. As head coach of the Washington Redskins, Gibbs led the team to four Super Bowls and three world championships in 12 years. After "retiring," Gibbs went on to

Joe Gibbs, owner of auto racing teams and a former pro football coach, will speak about leadership and teambuilding at the 2003 Commodity Classic.



head some of the top teams on the NASCAR and NHRA circuits.

In his keynote address, Gibbs will emphasize perseverance, teamwork and excellence as the elements that contribute to success.

Commodity Classic is the annual conference and trade show of the American Soybean Association and National Corn Growers Association. More information about the 2003 Commodity Classic is available at www.commodityclassic.com.

ASA Launches "Farmers United" Campaign

The American Soybean Association eagerly kicks off its fiscal year 2003 "Farmers United" Membership Campaign.

For more than 80 years, ASA, a non-profit grassroots organization, has been the only voice speaking exclusively on behalf of soybean producers in Washington, D.C. Membership provides clout and credibility to the organization. Members equal votes to legislators. It benefits all U.S. soybean growers to unite in voice on issues vital to the soybean business.

Biodiesel is the most crucial issue for soybean growers right now. Soybean-based biodiesel will move large surpluses of soybean oil off the market, bringing higher prices for

soybeans and more money into growers' pockets. Farmer members at ASA are advancing legislation to dramatically expand this market.

Another key issue this year for ASA is transportation. More than 75 percent of U.S. soybean exports move on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River systems. However, the lock and dam system is antiquated and deteriorating at an alarming rate. U.S. competitors are making investments in their waterway transportation systems, while the United States continues to study the situation. ASA supports the expansion of locks and dams in these systems, NOW.

This past year, ASA focused on trade. With the support of more than 25,000 members, ASA worked

hard to get Trade Promotion Authority signed into law. This critical negotiating tool will make U.S. soybean exports more competitive. However, lower tariffs are still needed on soybean and soybean products in many countries. ASA memberships will help tear down these trade barriers.

Now is the time for all U.S. soybean producers to unite! Join the American Soybean Association to ensure success for your soybean operation. Contact the ASA Membership Department at 800-688-7692 or email membership@soy.org. Or join online, with MasterCard or VISA, at www.SoyGrowers.com.