

Kansas Corn Continues to Push for Farm Bill Passage

The sun may have set on the Farm Bill on Monday but Kansas corn growers continue to push for passage of a comprehensive five-year bill. The 2008 Farm Bill expired last year on September 30 and the current extension of the '08 Farm Bill expired yesterday.

"It is frustrating to our farmers that the Farm Bill has expired once again but the Kansas Corn Growers Association will continue to work with other Kansas ag organizations and our National Corn Growers Association to let our elected officials know that Congress must pass a comprehensive five-year farm bill," KCGA Communications Director Sue Schulte said. "While crop insurance remains our top priority, the farm bill is also crucial for export market development, ag research and more."

One of most significant impacts of the expiration will be suspension of funding for the Foreign Market Development Program and the Market Access Program, the two most important programs that promote U.S. farm exports, including support for the U.S. Grains Council's operations. In addition, USDA will not be able to process new enrollments in the Conservation Reserve Program or and the Wetlands Reserve Program.

The Kansas Corn Growers Association is urging grower members to contact their respective House members and Senators to emphasize the need for the House-Senate Farm Bill Conference to work without further delay. Terry Vinduska, Kansas Corn Commissioner from Marion is a former chairman of the U.S. Grains Council. Vinduska said that in addition to putting important safety net programs like crop insurance at risk, failure to pass a farm bill also leaves market development programs in limbo.

"As a dryland corn farmer in central Kansas, our operation needs the safety net that a fair and equitable federal crop insurance program provides," Vinduska said. "In addition, Kansas corn farmers need a new farm bill that adequately funds the Foreign Market Development Program and the Market Access Program to help maintain the U.S. advantage in corn exports around the world. Corn exports have a huge impact on the price of Kansas corn. These programs are crucial to the profitability of our farm."

Despite assurances from House Leadership that conferees would be appointed soon after passage of the Nutrition bill, negotiations between the House and Senate encountered more delays when House Leadership announced another vote was required on a rule to approve the merging of the agriculture-only farm bill and the nutrition bill.

The Kansas Corn Growers Association and National Corn Growers Association continue to urge Congress to move forward with conference committee negotiations and passage of a comprehensive five-year farm bill.