



Federal Affairs Update

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Key Leadership for 114th

- House Agriculture Committee
Chair: Mike Conaway, TX
Ranking Member: Collin Peterson, MN
- Senate Agriculture Committee
Chair: Pat Roberts, KS
Ranking Member: Debbie Stabenow, MI
- House Agriculture Appropriations
Chair: Robert Aderholt (R-AL)
Ranking Member: Sam Farr, CA
- Senate Agriculture Appropriation
Chair: Jerry Moran, KS
Ranking Member Jeff Merkley OR



Key Agriculture issues

- Waters of the US
- SNAP
- Renewable Fuels Standard
- **Biotech Policy and Food Labeling**
- **Pollinators/Neonics**
- Endangered Species Act
- Climate Change
- International – Cuba
 - Trade Promotion Authority



- Innovation
 - Patent Legislation and Trade Secrets Legislation
 - International Treaty
 - USDA Research Budget
- Environment
 - Pollinator Issues – Seed Treatment and Forage
 - Cover Crops
 - Federal seed procurement
- Science Based Policies
 - Biotech – Labeling, Regulation, Export
 - Seed Treatment
 - Food Safety

Patent Legislation

- Goal is to curb abusive litigation by “patent trolls” that do not manufacture products or supply services based on the patents in question
- Concern is unintended consequences for legitimate patent holders



House and Senate Bills

- House Bill
 - Passed by a wide margin
 - Would increase procedural requirements for patent holders to protect their patents:
 - New disclosure requirements for patent holders who file an infringement suit
- Senate Bill
 - Not passed
 - Would require the FTC to take action against “bad-faith demand letters”
 - What is bad faith?



TRADE SECRETS PROTECTION ACT OF 2014

- H.R 5233 in last Congress
- Recognizes value of trade secrets
- “An owner of a trade secret may bring a civil action if the person is aggrieved by a misappropriation of a trade secret that is related to a product or service used in, or intended for use in, interstate or foreign”

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources

- Growing Support
- Senate Foreign Relations Committee
 - We want hearing in early 2015

American Seed Research Foundation
American Seed Trade Association
American Society of Plant Biologists
Association of
Public and Land Grant Universities
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Crop Science Society of America

National Association of Plant Breeders
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Commercial Plant
Breeders
National Farmers Union



USDA Research Budget

- Germplasm Enhancement of Maize Project (GEM)
 - Budget increase for 2015
 - GEM lobbying March 25-26
- National Plant Germplasm System
 - Recreation of National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC)
- New Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research



White House Pollinator Initiative

- **Release date is mid-Feb or later**
- Increase forage and plantings on federal lands, transportation corridors
- Affordable seed mixes for pollinators
- Effects of Pesticides on pollinators

Cover Crops, Environmental and Conservation Seed

- Harmonize Policies
- Predictable Procurement Process



Biotech Labeling

- Support the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act
 - Active in Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food
- Key components
 - No state labeling allowed
 - USDA process requires documentation of FDA review
 - Voluntary non-GMO labeling



Pollinator Bills in Last Congress

- Neonic Ban
 - Protecting American Pollinators Act
- Varroa Mite
 - Speed the review of pesticides for varroa mite and other pests of managed pollinators.



Monarch

- Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety and Xerces petition to list as an endangered species.
- Fish and Wildlife Services announce review
Timeline
 - 90 day preliminary comment period – early March
 - Review will take 12 month and then public comment begins
- Senate to take up ESA reform

Storm the Hill – June 17&18

- Everyone is welcome
 - Large and small companies
 - State and regional associations
- Meetings
 - House and Senate Offices
- Prep via webinar and pre-meeting
- Topics to cover
 - New messages developed with Global Prairie
 - Priorities for your company

Outreach to Key Members of Congress

- GOAL: Make contact with key members before June.
 - Local or DC office
 - Pick an issue of importance to your company
 - Invite member to visit your operation
- ASTA can help
 - Virginia Houston will give you contact information
 - Talking points