

The road for farm policy

A Texan's perspective

For those involved in agriculture, it's easy to see the importance of establishing a 5-year farm bill. Agriculturalists, and those agriculturally-minded, understand the risks involved in production agriculture and the need to support America's farmers so they can continue to grow the quality food and fiber our country needs – while keeping those products at a price the average consumer can afford.

Yet, getting a 5-year bill to the President's desk is proving to be a tough feat. The complete farm bill has passed out of the Senate, and is now waiting to proceed into conference committee with the House-passed bill. However, since the House has only passed the agriculture-focused titles of the bill we're left waiting on a House consensus on the Nutrition Title of the bill.

Nutrition: The Hurdle Not Yet Cleared

According to U.S. Representative K. Michael Conaway (R-Texas), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, it's not the agriculture portion of the bill that's caused the hang up in Congress.

"It was all about nutrition," the Congressman said of the farm bill debates in the



House. "The farm bill itself – the non-nutrition portions of the farm bill – was relatively uncontroversial... So it's always going to be the Nutrition Title that was going to be the real "sticky wick," as they say, to getting it to the President's desk. And that's what's played out."

Rep. Conaway said he and others such as Eric Cantor (R-Va.) are working toward a positive Nutrition Title reform, which would continue to help Americans in need while also cutting unnecessary expenses.

"We're working toward a Nutrition Title that would put more emphasis on good public policy than necessarily the dollars that would not get spent on food stamps or the reduced spending in that regard," Rep. Conaway said.

continued on p. 3

From the Texas Corn Producers Board
and the Corn Producers Association of Texas
September 2013

the kernel

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CORNER Comments

David Gibson.....	2
Scott Averhoff.....	2
Farm Policy.....	3
The Voice: Association News	
President: Jimmy Wedel	4
Intern goes to DC	5
Local Working Groups	6
Odds & Ends	7
Upcoming Events	7

CORNER Comments



David Gibson
TCPB Executive Director
CPAT Exec. Vice President

2013 has been quite the interesting year for corn producers across Texas. We saw a large acreage planted in Texas and across the country and have seen prices move lower more than \$1.30 per

bushel since mid-March. I expect to see volatility remain in the market all the way through harvest.

TCPB and CPAT have many challenges to work on in the upcoming months. The fact that as of this date a farm bill has not been passed or extended with the current law ending September 30. This is the same position we were in last year at this time, and it took all the way to the end of the year to get an extension after the threat of milk prices doubling or tripling was made very public and got the attention of many lawmakers. Our lawmakers from Texas along with some of our neighboring states have worked for 3 years to get a farm bill completed and have met with much frustration.

The U.S. Senate passed a

farm bill both in 2012 and 2013, both of which would have left many Texas producers in a situation where there would not have been adequate provisions for maintaining our family farms. The U.S. House of Representatives passed in committee a farm bill, but the leadership of the House kept it from the floor last year. Now in 2013, the committee again passed a bill with the House voting it down and followed up by passing the agricultural portion of the bill without a nutrition title. The House committee-passed bill is far better for Texas producers, as we have had both the Senate and House bills analyzed by the Food and Policy Center at Texas A&M University.

Hopefully, after the August recess ends and lawmakers
continued on p. 4

Though statewide we saw much more moisture this year than the two years prior, significantly more is still needed to pull Texas out of its now three year drought. As farmers, we know how important water is to a successful crop – whether as moisture from precipitation or ground and surface water for irrigation.

Texas Corn Producers Board recognizes the importance this natural resource holds for farmers and the state’s agricultural industry as a whole. TCPB has and will continue to fund research efforts to en-

able farmers to efficiently use this valuable resource, while conserving it for generations to come. Continued efforts to develop high performing drought-tolerant corn varieties also remain a key research priority for the board.

Additionally, the checkoff board sees the strong need in educating the state’s sprawling urban and suburban populations on the importance of irrigated agriculture to the economy. With educational efforts such as Water Grows Jobs, TCPB works to educate
continued on p. 5



Scott Averhoff
TCPB Chairman
Waxahachie, Texas

Farm policy, continued

Conaway said that the title the House attempted to pass in June would be the basis for the start. From there, he explained they would add other “good policy areas” that are “just common sense and make good policy for the program.” Such areas include work requirements for able-bodied people that would be similar to what is already under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a program that is not a part of the farm bill.

“We’re just looking at good policy,” Rep. Conaway said. “And those are policies that I believe improve the food stamp program, especially in an era that we’re still borrowing 40 cents of every dollar that we spend at the federal level.”

The Congressman noted the differences in the Nutrition Title of what’s being proposed to go to the House floor and what’s already been passed in the Senate.

“The Senate version reduces spending by \$4 billion over the ten years,” Rep. Conaway said. “We think our amended title will reduce spending by something in the order of \$40 billion. So [there’s] a pretty big gulf there to be negotiated between the two houses, but we can’t get there until the House does its work.”

Agriculture: Should be Reconcilable

Looking past the Nutrition Title, Rep. Conaway says the differences in the Senate and

the House agricultural portions of the bill can be negotiated, and they have been with the top four on the Super Committee version of the bill.

“I think that the differences – there are good differences – but I think that they’re reconcilable,” the Congressman said.

He continued on saying the back channel conversations in August with committee staff from both houses has clarified the differences in the agricultural portion of the bill.

“That’s the first step is making sure we know what the difference is, and then what the possible alternatives or compromises that we’ll get,” Rep. Conaway said. “But I think that will come together pretty quickly.”

He went on to say he anticipated the bill coming out of conference to look a little more like the House bill, largely due to Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.) serving as chairman of the conference committee.

Continued Movement Essential

When asked about the rumblings of a potential extension of the bill, Rep. Conaway reiterated the importance of getting a 5-year bill passed now.

“I’d rather get a 5-year bill done now as opposed to an extension and have to do that whole June/July fight we had of just getting something out of the House,” he said. “And I don’t know that it would be better for production agricul-

ture to do it again next year versus, you know, 5 years from now.”

Rep. Conaway encouraged farmers to communicate with their Congressional representative about the importance of getting a 5-year bill done. He also emphasized the importance of supporting their respective trade associations and ensuring they’re in the fight on behalf of their industry. Rep. Conaway also discussed the difficult situation it puts Congress in when national organizations and state or regional organizations have differing positions.

“Production agriculture needs to rally behind and get this thing done,” he said. “and if we remain counteractive in the various production pieces that makes a 5-year deal tougher to get to. So we’re hopeful as a part of this process, you know, moving forward from here that the internal differences can get worked out and we can move with this thing forward with just working on the differences between the Senate and the House bill.”

Moving past differences and focusing on this crucial piece of security for the industry is imperative.

“It’s good for production agriculture, clearly, it’s good for the bankers, it’s good for the implement dealers, but it’s also good for America,” Rep. Conaway concluded about the bill. “It means a more stable food and fiber supply and stable prices and that’s important.”

THE VOICE: Association News

A note from the President...

I wish I could predict the timing of the markets as accurately as I have been able to predict the progress (or lack thereof) of Congress passing a farm bill. It is not my intent to say, "I told you so," but I have accurately predicted that Congress will not pass a new farm bill in each of my previous newsletters.

As a farmer, I am generally an optimist, but in the case of Washington politics, I am more of a "realist." It is unfortunate, but the political climate in Washington does not bode well for passage of a 5-year farm bill.

Of course, the Senate and House did pass their versions, but the House bill without the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), has no real chance of being "conferenced" with the Senate bill. The concept of separating the nutrition title from the farm bill would be very unwise politically, particularly regarding passage of future farm bills. So, as before, I will predict that we will not have a long-term farm bill by the time

I pen my next commentary. I would suspect that Congress will kick the can down the road, again, and at the 12th hour, will pass another 1- or 2-year extension. Hopefully I will be wrong.

Harvest season is virtually complete across the southern and central parts of the state, and silage harvest on the High Plains is in full swing, with grain harvest soon beginning. Most parts of the state are still in a severe drought, but some timely rains and cooler temperatures have allowed many producers across the state to harvest a somewhat "average" crop.

An economic analysis conducted by Texas Tech University and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension found crop production supported more than 103,000 jobs and generated more than \$12.2 billion in economic activity in 2010 in the Texas High Plains region alone. Water availability is one of the largest contributing factors in that economic activity - water not only grows our crops, but it grows our economy.



Jimmy Wedel
CPAT President
Muleshoe, Texas

Farmers have been using water wisely for years, but we have to continue to educate decision makers to make sure that they understand and take into account the impact on jobs and the people who hold those jobs and their families.

Although the Texas legislature is not in session, CPAT will continue its efforts to educate them about the ways that we are using water efficiently and wisely, so that good policy decisions are made. 🌽

Gibson, continued from p. 2

go back to D.C. they will pass the nutrition part of the bill to allow a conference committee to put together the final "FARM BILL." Then both houses will hopefully pass the bill and hopefully the President will sign it. Some people I talk to are very optimistic about this happening, but

with the divide I have seen even in our Texas congressional delegation, it is hard for me to share that optimism.

Our producers in Central Texas all the way down to the Rio Grande Valley have pretty well wrapped up harvest. We have heard reports of yields that were well above aver-

age down to very poor yields below average. The general feeling is that as a state we will wind up with average to above yields across the more than 2 million acres that were planted this year; however, this is no consolation to those areas that made poor to no yield at all. 🌽

Visit to The Hill opens eyes for intern

In one week, Shelbie Reid had familiarized herself with the innerworkings of D.C. as well as issues pertaining to the controversial Farm Bill. This was one opportunity the young Texas Tech University student did not expect when she began her internship.

After interning for the Texas Corn Producers for 8 months, Reid was presented the opportunity to travel to D.C. in July with the organization's staff and five board members.

"It is not everyday a 20-year-old college student receives the opportunity to travel to D.C. and can help influence policy makers in the midst of a controversial time in government," Reid said.

Prior to July, Reid had never been to the nation's capitol. During her 5-day stay, Reid joined Corn Producers Association of Texas representatives as they met with government officials to discuss views on the progress of the Farm Bill.

David Gibson, the CPAT executive vice president, said during their time in D.C. they thanked supporters of the Farm Bill and spoke with those not in favor of the bill

about their concerns.

"We wanted to know what kind of changes need to be made to get individuals opposed to the Farm Bill on board," Gibson said.

Gibson said Shelbie was able to see government policy in action, an experience not many college students are able to have.

"It was cool to see the fast-paced lives government representative have," Reid said. "Each day there were new issues in each official's office, and to see how our government handle these situations on a daily basis was an experience in itself."

Reid said her time on The Hill sparked an interest to participate in Texas Tech's congressional internship program.

TCP is a regular sponsor of Texas Tech's congressional internship program. This program helps organize and sponsor congressional in-



ternships in Austin and D.C. for students in the agricultural college.

Gibson said he sees the value in taking interns to D.C. as well as sponsoring students through Texas Tech's congressional internship program.

"My main objective taking interns to D.C. is to provide a broad educational base to supplement their education both in our offices and in the classroom," Gibson said. "Shelbie benefited greatly from this trip, and would benefit even more from added experience through an internship on the hill." ●

Averhoff, continued from p. 2

key influencers in the state on the significance of agricultural use of water. It's important that those not as familiar with agricultural practices understand the vast conservation advances that have

been made. Today, a bushel of corn is grown using half as much water as 30 years ago.

A focus on these educational efforts, as well as continued research, is imperative to the sustainability of the Texas

corn industry. TCPB is working to ensure all Texans understand that ***NO ONE*** has a greater stake in conserving water than those who depend on it for their livelihood. ●

Statewide Local Work Groups Present Conservation Planning Meetings

By Quenna Terry, USDA- NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, Lubbock

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are currently hosting conservation planning meetings through local work groups, which began in August and continue through September.

The purpose of the meetings is to gather information from farmers, ranchers, local agencies, organizations, local agricultural leaders, businesses, and anyone from the public with an interest in conservation issues and natural resource concerns.

The meetings will focus on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the new resource concerns identified in the recently passed Food, Energy and

let your voice **be heard**

Using locally led recommendations to help solve resource conservation problems



Conservation Act. Input is needed to help determine local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and program planning in 2014.

Access the Texas NRCS website, www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov, to find out when local work group meetings are scheduled in your county. For more information, contact the local USDA-NRCS office in your county, listed under USDA in the Yellow Pages.

Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations and/or alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, Large print, audiotape, etc.) associated with this meeting should contact the local NRCS office in their county.



Have you followed us on Twitter? @TexasCorn
We tweet on the latest corn and agricultural industry news daily!
Plus, you'll get a few delicious corn-y recipes (and maybe a joke or two), too!

ODDS *AND* ENDS



Win a trip with the CPAT recruiter contest

The Corn Producers Association of Texas is hosting a recruitment contest to “spur” up membership

The CPAT member who recruits the most new members or renewals of past members will win a Commodity Classic Get-a-way in San Antonio. This exclusive package includes Commodity Clas-

sic registration for two, \$400 travel voucher, 3-night hotel stay on the Riverwalk.

Hurry - the contest ends Nov. 30, 2013!

Participants just need to inform CPAT staff of who they’ve recruited so their recruits can be verified.

The lucky winner must recruit at least 10 grower mem-

bers, 3 corporate memberships (at any level), OR 20 youth members to qualify.

Remember, a 1-year CPAT membership is only \$60 and includes a FREE bag of corn seed of the farmer’s choice!

Additional membership information is available online at www.TexasCorn.org.

Second Corn Cob Classic golf tournament a “Hit”

The second annual Corn Cob Classic rallied support for agricultural political action in D.C. Aug. 17 at the Dalhart Country Club.

Angie Martin, the event coordinator for the tournament, said the Corn Cob Classic was a great success.

“The weather, location, and people combined to make the second Corn Cob Classic even better than the first,” Martin said.

This 18-hole golf tournament benefited the Texas CornPAC, a political action committee of the Corn Producers Association of Texas. This program helps to ensure the formation of strong relationships with policy makers and aids in influencing and educating these individuals on both the state and national levels.

“Our CPAT directors are

dedicated to corn farmers in Texas and the issues they face,” Martin said.

Robert Gordon is a member of CPAT and also serves on the board of directors. In addition to helping coordinate the tournament, Gordon also competed with friends on the course.

agriculture and are affected first hand.”

Recent topics addressed by CPAT include the farm bill, water regulations, and crop insurance policies of Texas corn farmers.

Gordon said he is thankful for the sponsors in the Dalhart and surrounding communities.

“The need for an agricultural presence in government continues to grow,” Gordon said. “As long as there is a demand in Washington, the Corn Cob Classic’s turnout will continue to grow as well.”

If you were not able to attend this years Corn Cob Classic, donations are accepted at any time. Texas CornPAC donations must be paid for with a personal check, and mailed to 4205 North Interstate 27, Lubbock, TX 79403.



“It is easy to get others involved in this cause,” Gordon said. “Guys are eager to give back when they see the need for political support in

Directors

Scott Averhoff, *Ellis Co.*

Jay Beckhusen, *Milam Co.*

David Ford, *Hartley Co.*

Robert Gordon, *Dallam Co.*

Mark Howard, *Parmer Co.*

Larry Mason, *Dallam Co.*

Gary Obenhaus, *Wharton Co.*

Joe Reed, *Swisher Co.*

Charles Ring, *San Patricio Co.*

Wesley Spurlock, *Sherman Co.*

Max Swinburn, *Castro Co.*

Bart Thoreson, *Hansford Co.*

Wesley Valerius, *Cameron Co.*

Dee Vaughan, *Moore Co.*

Jimmy Wedel, *Bailey Co.*

Bruce Wetzel, *Grayson Co.*

Steve Yoder, *Dallam Co.*

Staff

David Gibson

Executive Director

Stephanie Pruitt

Communications Director

Angie Martin

Industry Relations

Kaci Bearden

Business & Finance Coord.

Jaclyn Roberts

Communications Intern

Shelbie Reid

Administrative Intern

Thanks to our Corporate Members



Become a corporate member TODAY!

Learn more at
www.TexasCorn.org

Upcoming Events

October 2, 2013

S. TX Commodity Symposium
Robstown, Texas

October 8, 2013

Ag Awareness Day
Texas State Fair

October 2-3, 2013

Texas AgXchange Show
Robstown, Texas

October 23-24, 2013

S. Texas Farm Show
Victoria, Texas



www.TexasCorn.org
[Facebook.com/TexasCorn](https://www.facebook.com/TexasCorn)
[Flickr.com/TexasCorn](https://www.flickr.com/photos/TexasCorn)
[Twitter.com/TexasCorn](https://twitter.com/TexasCorn)
[YouTube.com/TexasCorn](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

4205 N. Interstate 27
Lubbock, Texas 79403
806.763.CORN (2676) phone
800.647.CORN (2676) toll free
806.762.2674 fax