



# Corn Grower Update

Winter Edition 2015

*"Your Eyes, Your Ears"*

## NeCGA Annual Meeting

The Nebraska Corn Growers Association held its annual meeting at the Holthus Convention Center in York on December 4, 2014. The meeting was attended by one of the largest contingencies of grower delegates in recent years.

Members elected new officers for the association during 2015 as follows:

- Larry Mussack of Decatur, President
- Dan Wesely of Morse Bluff, Vice President
- Chuck Emanuel of North Bend, Treasurer
- Andy Jobman of Gothenburg, Secretary

Joel Grams of Minden, who has served as NeCGA president for the past two years, will become chairman of the organization.

NeCGA also bestowed its annual Golden Ear Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to Nebraska's corn industry. This year's award was given to University of Nebraska Extension in appreciation for its 100 years of service to Nebraska agriculture. Dave Varner of UNL Extension accepted the award. "This year's selection for the Golden Ear Award was easy," said Grams. "UNL Extension is a great partner with Nebraska corn farmers in the areas of stewardship, research, education and water management."

The top two leaders of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) were on hand. Chip Bowling, a farmer from Maryland, serves as president of NCGA. Chris Novak became the new CEO of NCGA in October. Bowling and Novak shared updates on emerging issues, trends and challenges facing the corn industry including the EPA proposed rules on Waters of the U.S. and the Renewable Fuel Standard. They also discussed food labeling, federal regulation and trade issues related to GMO corn. It was great to have Chip make the trip from Maryland to share his thoughts on the corn industry.

The NeCGA meeting was held in partnership with the annual meeting of the Nebraska Soybean Association.



University of Nebraska- Lincoln Extension receiving the Golden Ear Award the Annual Meeting



President Joel Grams awards "Cornhusker" caps to NCGA president

# NeCGA Welcomes Morgan Wrich to Staff

The Nebraska Corn Growers Association is pleased to announce its newest team member, Morgan Wrich, who was hired as the Program Director on December 1.

In this role, Wrich will be working with the Nebraska Corn Grower members across the state to communicate corn grower activities and membership benefits to producers and strengthen ties with allied industry partners.

Wrich grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. She graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education and a minor in agriculture business. Upon graduation, she worked at the Platte County Extension office as a youth coordinator in Columbus, Nebraska. In the fall of 2014, Morgan joined the Nebraska Agribusiness Association team as the director of continuing education.



“I am very excited to be working with the Nebraska Corn Grower staff,” said Wrich. “I look forward to meeting and working with and on behalf of the Nebraska corn farmers across the state.”

## South Central Corn Growers Association Donates Grain Rescue Tubes to Local Emergency Responders

The ability for local emergency responders to react quickly and effectively to a grain engulfment incident was greatly improved this week when the South Central Corn Growers Association donated grain rescue tubes to several local volunteer fire departments. The tubes are a critical piece of equipment in saving the lives of farmers who find themselves entrapped in grain inside a grain bin. The South Central Corn Growers raised the money to purchase the tubes.

The grain bin rescue tubes were donated to the volunteer fire departments/emergency responders in the following towns: Bertrand, Cambridge, Orleans, Loomis and Funk.

“Grain bin safety is an important issue for our association and we provide a great deal of safety information and training to keep farmers safe when handling their grain,” said Joel High, president of the South Central Corn Growers. “But we also want to make sure that local emergency responders have what they need to act quickly when a grain engulfment accident occurs.”

The donation of the grain rescue tubes was announced at the association's annual meeting in Holdrege held on January 15 at the Taste of Texas BBQ restaurant. Alan Brugler of Brugler and Associates, an ag marketer and consultant, was the featured speaker.



# A Letter from President Mussack

Greetings,

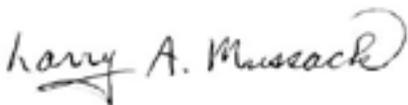
Let me introduce myself. I am Larry Mussack of Decatur, which is in the Northeast corner of Nebraska along the Missouri river. At the December 2014 annual meeting of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, I was elected president for the coming year. I raise mostly dry land with some irrigated corn and soybeans in Burt and Thurston counties.

The past year provided us with a number of challenges that show that making a living in agriculture is not for the faint of heart. While many had to deal with the challenges of hail storms, wind, and in some places too much water, corn yields in general were very good. Corn prices at my local processing plant were \$4.17 per bushel a year ago with a run up to \$5.00 in May and the current price sitting at \$4.00. Livestock prices have remained strong which is a good thing since those animals consume a large portion of the grain we raise. NeCGA has continued to deal with the challenging issues of taxes and water at the state level and it looks like that won't change for the coming year. On the national level we continue to defend the Renewable Fuel Standard and promote ethanol use as well as push back on EPA's proposed regulations for Waters of the U.S.

We have eighteen new state senators along with a new governor and two new members of congress to educate regarding issues important to corn growers. Many producers are currently sitting behind a desk putting numbers together for the 2014 farm program as well as preparing crop budgets for the coming year. Paperwork is not one of my favorite things to do but somehow it doesn't seem so bad when the temperature is near zero and the wind is howling outside.

Along with challenges, comes opportunities. We are at the beginning of a new crop year which is always exciting to me because of the "what if's" and the endless possibilities that go along with them. Spring will arrive sooner than we realize and we will be back to doing what we like to do and what we are good at, and that is growing corn. The NeCGA board of directors and staff will continue to work hard at representing corn growers and the issues that are important to them.

Thank you for allowing me to be your president!



*Larry A. Mussack*



# Cromnibus Bill provisions affecting Growers

President Obama signed H.R. 83, colloquially known as the “Cromnibus,” a bill to keep most of the federal government operating through September 30, 2015, just prior to the end of the year. The bill included several policy riders of interest of our members.

- **EPA Interpretive Rule:** The bill includes language that requires the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers withdraw the interpretive rule associated with the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule. The interpretive rule was intended to clarify normal farming activities exempt from Clean Water Act permitting; however, it presented a very narrow interpretation of “normal farming”, listing only 56 NRCS approved conservation practices. NCGA called for the withdrawal of the interpretive rule in comments submitted to the EPA and Corps earlier this year.
- **Conservation:** The bill includes language that reduces the total number of new acres that can be rolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) by 2.3 million, which is one-quarter of the total acreage authorized for CSP in the 2014 farm bill. The bill also reduces the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) from \$1.6B to \$1.347B.

EPA is expected to release the final rule on WOTUS in Spring 2015.

- **Transportation:** The bill included \$1.6395B in funding to the Army Corps of Engineers Construction account, which includes money for the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) projects and \$2.9085B for Operations and Maintenance, including at least \$42M for inland navigation. The bill also funded the Olmsted project with an 85% to 15% cost share between the IWTF and general treasury. Previously that split was 50-50, which would have expended nearly half of the IWTF dollars.
- **MAP/FMD:** Both the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development Program (FMD) will receive full authorized funding of \$200M and \$34.5M, respectively, for FY15.
- **Energy programs:** The 2015 budget cuts the President’s budget request by 16 percent for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, but appropriates 20 percent more than the president requested on research and development of fossil fuels.



# Holiday Recruitment Blitz Winners

This year, NeCGA hosted their first Holiday Recruitment Blitz. For the top two recruiters with the most points, Dupont Pioneer sponsored the Holiday Recruitment Blitz by offering the winners with the following:

- 2 club seats to a Big Ten Husker Men's basketball game
- VIP dinner with DuPont Pioneer
- Free night stay at a Lincoln hotel of their choice

Winners were determined based on the following point system:

***Renewal of Current Members or Recently Lapsed Members:***

- (1) point for each one-year membership
- (3) points for each three-year membership

***Recruitment of New Members:***

- (3) points for each one-year membership
- (9) points for each three-year membership



*Congratulations to Steve Ebke and Paul Cernik for their successful recruitment efforts!*

## Update from the Rotunda-Mick Mines

And so it begins,

The 1st Session of the 104th Legislature convened January 7. Significant again this year is how term limits affect state government leadership. New and inexperienced faces include Governor Pete Ricketts, Attorney General Doug Peterson, State Auditor Charley Janssen and one-third of the legislative body.

Not only are 18 senators first timers, so too is the speaker and 10 of the 14 standing committee chairs. The speaker controls the session agenda, while committee chairs conduct public hearings on every bill introduced and facilitate committee discussion on which bills die or advance to debate by the entire body.

An often-overlooked consequence of term limits is turnover in legislative staff. Staffers serve at the pleasure of their senator, and each senator is authorized an administrative aide and a legislative assistant. Most committee chairs are also authorized a committee legal counsel and a clerk. Experienced staff greatly elevates the effectiveness of a senator, as they already understand process, procedure and have developed relationships within the Capitol.

Senators typically introduce 500-800 bills a year and this long (90-day) legislative session will be no exception. Bills that annually receive meaningful debate include social issues, adjusting taxes, welfare, medicaid and programs within code agencies of the state. This year will be no different, particularly adjustments to income and property taxes, medicaid expansion, child and family welfare and incarceration standards.

While many bills pass this year, the only bill the Legislature is constitutional bound to pass is the budget. The 2015/16 2016/17 biennial budget will exceed \$8 billion.

Fair warning. Weekly, we email a legislative update that critiques the Legislature's previous week's work. We like to believe our updates are informative, well written and factual. However, many have called them, let's say, colorful, if not willfully thoughtless. We will let you be the judge.

We also track and update you weekly regarding each legislative bill that could affect the way you do business. We take that responsibility very serious. We look forward to your thoughts and want to thank you for the opportunity to represent you before the Nebraska Legislature.



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Board of Directors Meeting and Legislative Reception- January 27, 2015
- Washington D.C. Leadership Trip- February 9-13, 2015
- Commodity Classic- February 26-28, 2015
- Custer County Bus Tour- February 3, 2015
- On Farm Research- Mead- February 17, 2015
- National Ethanol Conference- February 18-20, 2015
- Southeast Nebraska Farm Show- February 25, 2015
- Saunders County Annual Meeting- March 3, 2015

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