

Nebraska Legislature Update

The Legislature is almost 40 days into their COVID-influenced 90-day session, and hearings were completed March 10. Senators and their staff are running on fumes after so many days of all-day committee hearings for 684 bills and a dozen constitutional amendments. The all-day floor debate began on March 15.

Property tax relief and reform remain a top priority following last year's passage of LB1107. In this session, Senators Linehan (LR22CA), Briese (LR21CA)(LB2)(LB408), Friesen (LB454)(LB622), and Brewer (LR13CA) introduced legislation to further lower property taxes paid or restrict the growth in property valuations.

Several rural senators and the Governor are engaged in an honest-to-goodness attempt to extend high-speed data (100/25) to more rural Nebraskans. Senator Curt Friesen is chair of the Transportation & Telecommunications Committee. He is positioning significant legislation within his committee to help fund, distribute and expand high-speed networks to serve all rural Nebraska.

We work closely with the senators and their staff.

We have also become much better at collaborating with other agriculture associations to advance or defeat legislation that impacts your operations and those of other Nebraska ag producers. While we don't always agree, our unified voice on critical issues, like property tax relief and broadband, can carry significant weight in the Capitol.

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.... and much more!



“...it's my honor to serve as your new president for NeCGA.”



In early-February, Jobman testified on behalf of the NeCGA at the Nebraska State Capitol. His testimony related to LB 596, a bill that provides income tax credits for sales of higher blends of ethanol.

Happy spring everyone! I hope this update finds you all well underway preparing for spring field work and planting. I'd like to take this time to introduce myself and give you a quick update and outlook for 2021 from the Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NeCGA) perspective.

My name is Andy Jobman, and it's my honor to serve as your new president for NeCGA. I farm with my brother and my dad just north of Gothenburg. We raise food grade white and yellow corn for Frito-Lay, soybeans, alfalfa and cow-calf. I also run a small crop consulting and precision ag business. On our farm, we are certainly happy to see the mercury rising after the cold spell of late-February as we began our calving season and were often cruising into Frito-Lay delivering corn.

As anticipation builds for the 2021 season, there's also a lot happening within your corn membership organization on your behalf. In January, we had great attendance at our Annual Meeting with exceptional participation in our policy and resolutions session. Jim Wiesemeyer, Pro Farmer's agriculture policy analyst, joined us via Zoom to give insight into what the new year and new administration will mean for corn farmers. We also elected new executive officers for NeCGA, and I am excited to have a great team assembled around me to help serve all of you.

In February, I hope you were able to attend one, or more, of our February Forums that were held on Thursdays. Topics covered included international trade, biofuels, policy and carbon markets. The forums were recorded, and in case you missed any of those sessions please visit our website at www.nebraskacorn.org and click on the February Forums banner to view them again.

Also, in February, I testified at the Capitol on LB 596, a bill which would provide an income tax

credit for sales of ethanol blends of E15 and higher. Nebraska's "Golden Triangle," the triad of corn, ethanol and cattle utilizing DDGS, is the envy of the rest of the corn belt, and any efforts we can make to increase ethanol demand will strengthen that relationship, as well as rural economies across Nebraska.

Another issue we are watching very closely is the decree set out by Mexico to eliminate the human consumption of all GMO corn and importation of any crop protection products containing glyphosate. Should this come to pass, it would have serious consequences to American farmers as Mexico is one of our largest buyers of corn. Especially here in Nebraska as we are the No. 1 producer of white and yellow food grade corn in the nation. NeCGA, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the U.S. Grains Council are working hard to find an outcome that is science-based and in the best interest of our farmers, as well as our consumers.

Lastly, I want to thank you for being a member of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. This organization functions best when we have input from our members. We've been on quite the rollercoaster the last few months. We face uncertainty with ethanol and energy, carbon markets, trade, and of course the never-ending battle of unintended consequences by new and over-reaching regulation. However, NeCGA, NCGA and the talented staff we employ, have been rock solid in representing our interests. Please, at any time, reach out to me or any of the other officers, board members, or staff of NeCGA if you have questions. Have a safe and productive spring!

For Corn and Country,



Andy Jobman
President,
Nebraska Corn Growers Association

Nebraska Corn Growers Association 2021 Annual Meeting

Members of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NeCGA) gathered at the Holthus Convention Center on Thursday, Jan. 21, for the Annual Meeting. During the Annual Meeting, the association took care of important business. Delegates from across the state worked their way through the NeCGA resolutions document and discussed policy relevant to corn farmers across the state. Major topics discussed include broadband access, property tax relief and reform, and the future of renewable fuels. The delegates also had the opportunity to vote two new at large members to the NeCGA board of directors. Those elected were Ethan Zoerb, of Litchfield, and Dan Wesely, of Morse Bluff, who will serve three-year terms.

The association also awarded the coveted Golden Ear Award. This year's award recipient was Lynn Chrisp. Chrisp is a farmer from the Hastings area and has served in his local association, at the state level and at a national level. He was president of NeCGA in 2018. It was an honor to present the Golden Ear Award to one of the champions of the corn industry. The Nebraska Corn Growers Association greatly appreciates all of the work Lynn has done for the association and Nebraska's corn farmers over the years.

Following the Annual Meeting, a regular board meeting was held and officers were elected. Andy Jobman, of Gothenburg, was elected as president. Other officers elected include Chris Grams, of Upland, vice president and Dave Merrell, of St. Edward, secretary. Reelected to treasurer was Michael Dibbern, of Cairo. Dan Nerud, of Dorchester, moved to chairman. The board is thankful to Dan Nerud for his service as president of the association.



Nebraska Corn Growers Association 2021 officer team. From left to right, Michael Dibbern, treasurer; Chris Grams, vice president; Andy Jobman, president; Dan Nerud, chairman.; Dave Merrell, secretary.

Order Your Personalized Growing Nebraska Plate Today!

Several years ago, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association went through the process of creating specialty license plates. At the time, organizational license plates could not be personalized. That has recently changed. As of Jan. 1, 2021, all organizational license plates can have a custom message with up to five characters. The cost of the Growing Nebraska plate is \$70. Plates can be purchased online at <https://dmv.nebraska.gov/dvr/corn-plate>.



Making Cents of Carbon Markets

Written by John Linder
NCGA President & Ohio Farmer

There's a pivotal point in every great movie that changes its course. In Jerry Maguire, it's the scene when Jerry (Tom Cruise) was frantically trying to retain Rod Tidwell (Cuba Gooding Jr.) as a client. After a tense phone conversation, Rod pressed Jerry to make a commitment to him in exchange for his business. And he put it in a pretty direct and very memorable way. Rod told Jerry he had to, "...show me the money!"

Carbon markets are a hot topic of conversation these days with a new administration that's committed to combating climate change and a variety of new private sector services that offer farmers access to this opportunity. Yet the idea of paying farmers for practices that trap carbon in the soil of their fields is not new. Neither is the appeal to those farmers that can apply those practices that

position them for these types of payments.

We just haven't been able to reconcile the abundant supply of credits that are possible on a given cornfield with enough demand from buyers to get the carbon market to take off. Based on what we're all seeing in the

broader agricultural marketplace, that economic problem could be on the verge of changing.

President Biden has proposed creating a **carbon bank through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation** that would buy and sell carbon from farmers.



Meanwhile in the private sector, companies like **Bayer, Nutrien,** and **Indigo** are offering platforms of their own to farmers.

The competition of this burgeoning market is encouraging. But the fundamental question remains: will any of these offerings adequately compensate farmers for the value they're creating through their good works in their soils? Beyond that, there are a variety of technical challenges to overcome to ensure the system works effectively for all its stakeholders. How do we get past these barriers?

Farmers are nothing if not problem solvers and involving them in the conversations that involve their soil is a smart way to deal with some of these challenges. To ensure the voice of the farmer is properly represented



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in the debate that's taking shape in Washington, we joined the **Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance**. We're optimistic about where that partnership takes us.

It's been tough sledding in agriculture up until recently, and we know the good times we're feeling right now won't last. That's why we welcome anything that could create new revenue streams for farmers to offset some of the inherent risk that comes with this line of work. And we stand ready to work with any group that's ready to apply some good old fashion farmer ingenuity to answer some of the open questions that will bring this opportunity fully to bear.

Back to Jerry Maguire for a moment. Agriculture finds itself at a similarly pivotal moment in time between the opportunity of carbon markets and its economic realities at the farmgate.

Rod got his money in the end. So did Jerry. But the journey to get there was paved with a lot of communication, cooperation and trust among both parties.

In agriculture, that model will always get you where you want to go.



\$1.71 Billion

Investment in international exports increases the value of U.S. grain exports by **\$1.71 billion**. NeCGA is a member of the U.S Grains Council



U.S. GRAINS COUNCIL

Paying Farmers for Healthy Soil Outcomes

The Nature Conservancy and Partners Launch Nebraska Soil Carbon Project

Nebraska farmers lead the way in feeding the nation and protecting our natural resources. Across Nebraska croplands, farmers implement reduced tillage on 50% of acres and cover crops on 4%. For others, uncertainty around the ‘bang for the buck’ – the cost, risk, and the labor versus the benefit – creates barriers to soil health practice adoption. There’s why The Nature Conservancy, Nebraska Corn Growers Association and other partners started looking for ways to support Nebraska farmers with financial assistance and practical science as they continue expanding soil health practices.

In April 2020, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced that their new soil health project was selected for significant funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

RCPP, a federal program, was created in the 2014 Farm Bill to focus on watershed-level resource concerns, and to support more members of the agricultural community as they experiment with new conservation practices. RCPPs bring together partners and additional funding to maximize on-the-ground impact.



Three Practices, Five Years, 100,000 Acres

In the project, TNC - supported by project partners, including the Upper Big Blue and Central Platte Natural Resources Districts and Nebraska NRCS - will collaborate with farmers in central Nebraska to adopt cover crops, reduced tillage and diversified crop rotations on an estimated 100,000 acres over five years.

The \$4.4 million award from NRCS is being matched by three companies in the agricultural supply chain: Cargill, McDonald's and Target. This effort will provide farmers in central Nebraska with technical and financial assistance as they adopt soil health practices on new acres. The partnership also plans to report on the economic tradeoffs of new practice adoption, including the near-term costs and long-term benefits.

Soil health practices have been shown to bring significant sustainability benefits to farmers, such as lowering input costs, improving yield resilience to droughts and floods, and reducing soil loss. This project will team up with farmers to unlock these benefits by supporting the up-front costs.



Conservation Buy-In

There are significant natural resources benefits expected from this project. It's estimated that during the five-year span of this project, farmers will help store 150,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, prevent 375,000 tons of erosion, and deliver significant water quality benefits. Ecosystem Services Market Consortium (ESMC) will be quantifying those carbon and water outcomes.

"Big companies are looking to improve their environmental footprints in measurable and trackable ways, and farmers can improve the environment in measurable and trackable ways when they adopt soil health practices. The Ecosystem Services Market Consortium connects the two and creates a way to compensate farmers for their contribution to natural resources management," says Debbie Reed, director of ESMC. "We are excited to ground truth our methods with central Nebraska farmers through this project."

"Soil health management continues to expand in popularity across Nebraska," says Aaron Hird, NE NRCS' Soil health specialist. "Efforts like this project exemplify how interested partners can come together and turn that excitement into support for on the ground conservation work."

"Nebraska farmers have the know-how needed to continue building healthy cropland soils, which benefits us all," says Hannah Birgé, director of agriculture for The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska. "But farmers aren't compensated well for taking on the risk of a new practice. This project is meant to change that."

The program is expected to begin enrolling farmers sometime in late-spring or early-summer 2021.

"We've known for a long time that Nebraska farmers take seriously their role as natural resource stewards. Watching players from industry rally around that fact through this project has been incredibly rewarding."



**~Boone McAfee
Director of Research
Nebraska Corn Board**

FEBRUARY FORUM SERIES

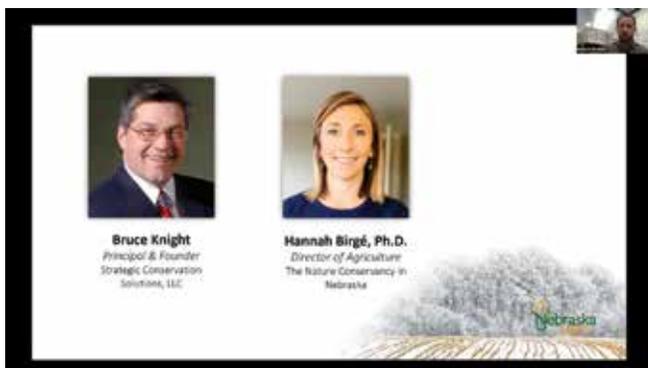


Missed a session? Each February Forum webinar was recorded and is archived at NebraskaCorn.org.

February Forums

Throughout the month of February, Nebraska Corn invited farmers and agribusiness professionals to attend its first virtual forum series. Through the four sessions held each Thursday of the month, different topics were addressed including international trade, biofuels, ag policy and carbon markets. The series was designed to update participants with the latest news and progress on key issues important to the corn industry.

“We’re still living in times where it’s difficult to get together in-person,” said Kelly Brunkhorst, executive director of Nebraska Corn. “Even though the winter meeting schedule was completely uprooted this year, we know farmers still want to get together to discuss the important questions, even if it means getting together virtually. Our February Forum series allowed us an opportunity to bring our farmers together for informational updates.”





A Letter from the NCB Chairman | **DAVID BRUNTZ**

Fellow corn growers:
We've officially passed the one-year anniversary since we first started hearing of COVID-19 to the full-fledged global pandemic that is very much now our reality. Fortunately, I don't think I'm the only one who is seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. Positive cases continue to decline and the vaccine supply is growing. Fingers crossed we'll be able to get back to normal very soon.

In this month's joint newsletter, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss leadership within our corn industry. Toward the end of February, we celebrated National FFA Week. The Nebraska Corn Board (NCB) and the Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NeCGA) have long supported youth leadership organizations, such as FFA, 4-H and FCCLA (along with others), because we see these youth as the key to agriculture's future. Whether these individuals eventually serve the industry through production, the supply chain, policy or global trade, it's essential for these youth to have a solid foundation and support system in place to get involved.

Our leadership development initiatives don't stop with youth. We continue to invest in the next generation of our industry. Each year, your corn checkoff supports at least seven internship opportunities locally, nationally and internationally with key cooperators, such as the U.S. Grains Council (USGC), the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). If you know of any Nebraska college students looking for internships related to international trade, ag policy, market development, communications or outreach, send them our way!

Each year, NCB invites college students and new industry leaders to be a part of our D.C. Leadership Program. Through this program, up

to ten young leaders travel with a delegation of Nebraska corn farmers to Washington, D.C., to take part in NCGA's annual Corn Congress policy meetings. While there, the group participates in Hill visits with our Congressional leaders from Nebraska and other non-corn states.

Additionally, NCB is a proud supporter of the Nebraska LEAD program. If you haven't had the opportunity to take part in this program, I encourage you to do so. It has a long tradition of leadership development and many fine farmers and agribusiness professionals have participated in this opportunity.

Why do I bring this up? Because Nebraska Corn needs your voice! As corn farmers, we all care about the future of our industry. There are many ways to be involved as we all have different strengths and abilities. It's always refreshing to introduce some new blood into our organizations to provide new perspectives and insights into our industry. I encourage you to visit NebraskaCorn.org to see how you could get more involved. Perhaps you have a neighbor or a family member who could also join in our cause.

In this edition of the joint newsletter, you will find information on three open districts with NCB. If you, or someone you know, is from one of these districts, take the time to consider a possible service role. There's no time like the present to get involved!

I hope you all have favorable weather this planting season!

David Bruntz

Chairman, Nebraska Corn Board



"As corn farmers, we all care about the future of our industry. There are many ways to be involved as we all have different strengths and abilities."

Nebraska ComonGround Hosts First CookSmart Event

In an effort to continue to bridge the gap between consumers and producers, Nebraska's CommonGround volunteers offered their first CookSmart event in collaboration with Nebraska Extension. The first in a series of several educational opportunities was held Feb. 11 in Grand Island. CookSmart is designed as a hybrid event, meaning participants have the choice to participate in-person or virtually.

During the Feb. 11 event, volunteers Joan Ruskamp, from Dodge, and Karol Swan, from Columbus, showed participants how to prepare an easy family-friendly meal. Throughout the demonstration, the volunteers addressed common consumer questions, such as GMOs, hormones and antibiotics in livestock, and animal care. Cami Wells, a registered dietician with Nebraska Extension, served as the moderator and provided nutrition advice throughout the cooking session.

"The global COVID-19 pandemic has really limited our ability to engage with consumers throughout the last year," said Swan. "This first CookSmart event allowed us to slowly begin in-person events again, while still connecting with people through virtual video technologies. Food truly brings people together, and our audiences in-person and online had great questions throughout the session."

CommonGround began in Nov. 2010, as a national effort to help consumers better understand where their food comes from and how its produced. Nebraska was a pilot state of the program during that time and began with three volunteers. Volunteers are comprised of farm women who are passionate about agriculture and helping consumers make their food purchasing decisions based on facts, not fear. Today, Nebraska has over 40 women involved in the program. To learn more about CommonGround or future CookSmart events, visit CommonGroundNebraska.com or [Facebook.com/CommonGroundNebraska](https://www.facebook.com/CommonGroundNebraska).



Karol Swan, Kami Wells and Joan Ruskamp prepared beef wontons, a family-friendly stir fry and fruit jarcuteris during the event.



The first CookSmart event took place at Raising Nebraska, an immersive agricultural literacy facility on the Nebraska State Fairgrounds in Grand Island.

Nebraska Corn Board Wants YOU!

Farmers residing in three key regions of Nebraska have an opportunity to help shape the state's corn industry through market development, promotion, education and research by petitioning to serve on the Nebraska Corn Board. Terms for Districts 6, 7 and 8 will expire June 30, 2021. The districts include the following counties in Nebraska:



District 6 – Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Hitchcock, Red Willow, Furnas and Harlan

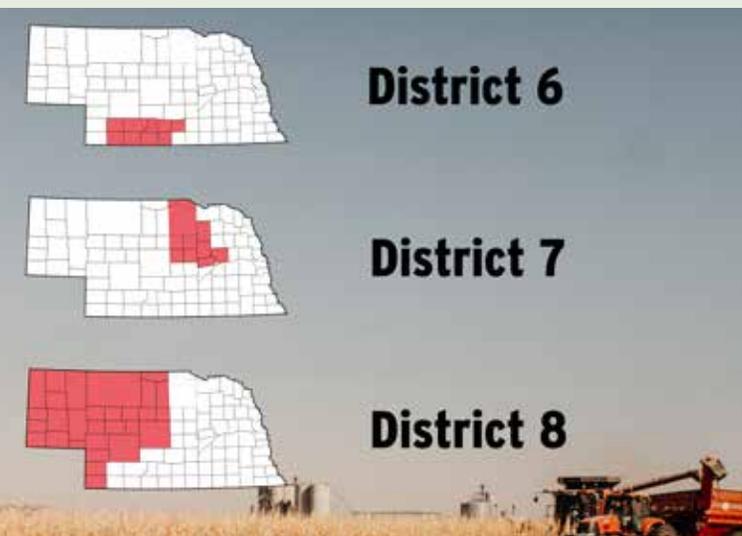
District 7 – Boyd, Holt, Antelope, Garfield, Wheeler, Boone, Platte, Valley, Greeley and Nance

District 8 – Sioux, Dawes, Box Butte, Sheridan, Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball, Morrill, Cheyenne, Garden, Deuel, Cherry, Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Custer, Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Chase and Dundy

Interested applicants must be citizens of Nebraska and live in an open district, 21 years or older, actively engaged in growing corn in the state for at least five years and derive a substantial portion of their income from growing corn.

Have what it takes?

Request a petition by visiting nebraskacorn.gov/position-request or by calling **800-632-6761**. A candidacy petition must carry the signatures of at least 50 corn producers from the open district.





Nebraska Corn Growers Association
4435 "O" St., Ste. 210
Lincoln, NE 68510



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