Policy Update

State Policy:

The 105th Legislature, First Session, opened January 4 and is scheduled to close June 2. This is the long session (90-days) in which state senators and the Governor establish the state budget for the next two years.

This year, senators introduced 667 bills. We reviewed every bill, and then your legislative committee determined the bills that would most affect our members. They then decided whether NeCGA would support, oppose or monitor each bill. The committee identified 35 bills to follow closely. We strongly supported 22 of those bills that would reduce the property tax burden on agricultural and horticultural land, while maintaining appropriate funding levels for K-12 education.

This time of year the Legislature is in full contact mode on taxes and spending. Senators know very well that NeCGA has long supported balancing the tax burden between property, state sales, and state income taxes.

Lawmakers are debating three high-profile tax bills this session. LB 640 and LB 461 are intended to reduce taxes. In our opinion, and the opinion of other Nebraska agriculture organizations, both bills fall far short of the expectations of all Nebraska property tax payers. LB 640 caps the amount of property taxes available for school funding, but simply transfers money from one fund to another, and does not reduce the property tax burden.

The next few weeks will determine if significant property tax relief is possible, and if the state budget will be further cut because of our faltering economy.

A Note from Our Intern, Laura Lundeen

When I first walked into the Nebraska Corn Growers Association office in May of 2016, I entered with high hopes and anticipation to get started. Exiting my internship, I leave with a full heart and excitement to use the skills I have gained to better the agricultural industry. Although my feet are heavy to leave NeCGA as an intern, I am excited to find my part of the agricultural industry.

Throughout my internship, I have been able to gain knowledge in agriculture from a political and educational perspective. Although many of the projects I have helped be a part of will stay here at the office, this mindset will never leave me. I hope to give back to Nebraska’s corn industry by extending these findings to others, consumers and producers alike. This fall, I have an opportunity to educate high school students in agriculture at the Waverly High School agricultural education program through my student teaching experience. I am excited to take on this experience and live out my Agricultural Education Undergraduate Major in full swing. Although I am not exactly sure where my next fit in an agricultural related career will take me after my graduation in December of this year, I know that I will stay rooted in the industry and hope to become active in my soon to be local corn grower association, Hamilton County. As I will be marrying a farmer from Aurora, NE following graduation, we hope to tell the story of agriculture through our experiences as well as give back to NeCGA and the NE farmer. Thanks to NeCGA and NCGA’s hard work on influencing policy that benefits agriculture here in Nebraska and globally, we can do our best to be active in that process, helping out our state, neighbors, families, and ourselves.

Overall, I cannot thank NeCGA enough for the experiences they have provided me and for their investment in me as an individual. I have truly had the opportunity to work with the best people. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my internship experience, from working on projects with me to simply saying hi, you have made it fantastic. I really mean it when I say, “Thanks a bushel!”
Greetings,

As I sit here drinking a hot cup of coffee in mid-March, I look out the window and the ground is covered in snow. Just a few days ago I was applying NH3 while thinking of all the jobs that need to be done before the planter rolls in the spring.

Since taking on the role of President three and a half months ago, I have been very busy. I have represented the association at meetings and met a lot of energetic people; all of whom are working very hard to do what they can to make things better in the ag sector. At NeCGA we have many people, from the staff in the office to the board of directors, who are doing a great job working on all aspects of the corn industry on your behalf; from monitoring legislation, to promoting ethanol, educating the public on what we as farmers do, and telling our story. At the National Corn Growers Association level, my action team (Corn Productivity & Quality) has been very aggressive to try and find new uses for corn. We hope to see positive results in new uses coming about by 2020 that will consume 75,000,000 bushels of corn.

Other activities that I have been involved in include traveling to Washington D.C. on our annual DC Leadership Mission. We took a group of 16 young, future leaders around our nation’s capital to get a feel of the current political climate. They learned how strong of a voice we have as ag leaders and the respect there is for what we do.

Locally we have been working on property tax legislation. Producers are concerned about the economic condition and are looking for ways to reduce cost. With lower commodity prices heading into planting season, producers are facing a lot of uncertainty. NeCGA is part of a new group called the Ag Leaders Working Group. The Ag Leaders includes several Nebraska commodity groups (Soybean Association, Cattlemen, Pork Producers, State Dairy, Farm Bureau) and their producer leaders who are working together to find property tax relief. Together we submitted a proposal to the Governor for his consideration to give property tax relief that is revenue neutral and helps all land owners.

Finally, I would like to say that if you are not a member of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, become one. Just having numbers in membership gives us strength when we talk to our senators and congressman. If you are a member, thank you for your support and thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a voice for Nebraska Corn. Please be safe as we begin another planting season, and enjoy the life we live.

Take care,

Dan Wesely
President, Morse Bluff
“Great leaders don't set out to be a leader; they set out to make a difference. It's never about the role, but always about the goal.”

The Nebraska Corn Growers Association's D.C. Leadership Mission attendees recently landed their boots back in Nebraska. After five days of building relationships with our industry partners, visiting with our state representatives, and advocating for the Nebraska farmer, the 16 producers and four leaders left with confidence and passion under their belts. During the week, the participants were split into four groups. Each group was accompanied by a NeCGA board member. Serving as leaders were President, Dan Wesley of Morse Bluff, Secretary Andy Jobman of Gothenburg, past President Joel Grams of Minden, and past President Carl Sousek of Prague. These leaders provided valuable information and past experience to each group of producers.

Attendees:
- Nick and Linsey Sousek, Wahoo
- Dylan Rowe, Lexington
- Mark Lundeen, Axtell
- Jordan and Kelli Emanuel, North Bend
- Jason and Karah Perdue, York
- Tyler Plejdrup, Cairo
- Matt and Jill Helmke, Pickrell
- Seth Gebers, York
- Gavin Kenney, Kearney
- Mitch Oswald, Aurora
- Brandon Herrick, Franklin
- Susie Sousek, Prague

“The trip was a really eye opening experience,” said Brandon Herrick of Franklin. “Meeting with different national organizations throughout the trip helped put into perspective that many of these associations and corporations affect not only Nebraska agriculture, but the industry all across the world.”

The D.C. Leadership Mission provided the leaders in training the opportunity to meet with many industry leaders, including Darci Vetter, Former Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the U.S. Trade Representative. During her time with the group, Darci shared how she thought the American agriculture trade economy is looking, as well as issues that could arise. Participants also went through a grassroots training session with Holly Pitt-Young of Pitt Young Strategies. She helped the attendees prepare to meet with our representatives during hill visits.

“Meeting with Senator Deb Fischer was one of my favorite parts of the trip,” said Jill Helmke of Pickrell. “It’s amazing to learn how much she is working for the Nebraska farmer and the impact she is making in Washington D.C.” During hill visits, each group had a chance to meet with at least one elected official. This was a highlight for many of the attendees. Each group walked away with gratitude for the opportunity to meet with our state representatives.

Other industry partners that shared their time with the group were Animal Ag Alliance, Corn Refiners Association, Renewable Fuels Association, US Grains Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Pork Producer's Council, American Farm Bureau, BIO, Crop Life America, Field to Market, Waterways Council Inc., and Union Pacific.

Each organization gave updates on issues they were working on relevant to the agricultural industry and how they were responding to the new Trump administration's plans for trade. The organizations not only provided information and advice to bring home, but were also interested in how things were going on the attendee’s farms. NeCGA's goal is to provide a great experience for our new leaders. Participating in the D.C. Leadership Mission is a great first step for those who want to familiarize themselves with the industry and be more involved in the association.

“Going back home, I want to be involved with our local corn growers association. I want to not only be educated on the issues our industry faces, but also educate others and share how what happens in D.C. really does affect home,” said Dylan Rowe of Lexington. “I want to be there to help advocate for our industry.”
**Summer Recruitment Blitz**

The 90 Days of Summer Recruitment Blitz is almost here! From June 1st through August 31, members are encouraged to recruit their friends, family, and neighbors to become members of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association.

**Contest details:**

**Two ways to win!**

- The overall top recruiter will win a 26 qt. Ozark Trail Cooler and a Nebraska Corn Growers Summer Prize Pack.

- Each member who recruits at least one person will be entered into a drawing. Each additional recruit is worth an additional entry. The winner of the drawing will win a 26 qt. Ozark Trail Cooler and a Nebraska Corn Growers Summer Prize Pack.

**Memberships MUST be turned in by August 31st**

_recruter points for the overall top recruiter will be calculated using NCGA's point system._

_Current or Lapsed* Members_

* Lapsed less than 24 months
  - 1 point for each 1-year membership
  - 3 points for each 3-year membership

_New* Members_

* Lapsed greater than 24 months
  - 3 points for each 1-year membership

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**NeCGA Annual Meeting**

The Nebraska Corn Growers Association held its annual meeting at Nebraska Innovation Campus in Lincoln on December 1, 2016. The meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Nebraska Soybean Association. Following the business portion of the meeting, the two associations joined together to hear from Jenny Hopkinson, Agricultural Reporter for POLITICO, as well as Willow Holoubek, formerly the Executive Director of A-FAN.

Delegates present at the meeting elected Dan Wesely as the new President of the board. Past president Larry Mussack moved in to his new role as chairman of the board. NeCGA thanked Larry for his service over the past two years. Individual recruiter awards were presented to the top 5 recruiters from 2016. The overall top recruiter was Ryan Bonham, from the Kearney-Franklin local.

NeCGA also gave out the annual Golden Ear Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to Nebraska's corn industry. This year's award was given to Scott Merritt, former Executive Director of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. Scott has focused his entire career on bettering the agricultural industry. The association was proud to honor Scott Merritt as the 2016 Golden Ear Award recipient.
The Nebraska Corn Growers Association offers a variety of sponsorship opportunities to find the best fit for all. We greatly appreciate your support for this event, and hope you can join us as a sponsor on the course to network with a number of Nebraska's finest corn producers, allied members, and friends of the industry!

- Platinum Sponsor – $3,000 (Front 9 & Back 9 available)
- Meal Sponsorship — $1000 each (Lunch & Supper available)
- Hole-Sponsorship — $500 each (16 available)
- Hospitality Sponsorship — $250 each (4 available)
- Pin Prize Sponsorship — (9 available)

Hole-sponsors are entitled to one free entry for golfing and can invite others for the regular price of $125. Meal sponsors are entitled to two free entries for golfing and can invite others for the regular price of $125.

For more information about the sponsorships listed above, please refer to our website at necga.org, or contact the office at (402) 438-6459.
Calendar of Events

May
• 21 Ethanol Night at the Races - Lexington
• 29 Memorial Day - NeCGA Office Closed

June
• 2 Ethanol Night at the Races - Beatrice
• 8 Ethanol Night at the Races - U.S. 30
• 9 Ethanol Night at the Races - Boone Co.

July
• 4 Independence Day - NeCGA Office Closed
• 7 Ethanol Night at the Races - I-80 Speedway
• 17-21 Corn Congress, D.C.
• 24 Corn Grower Open/Board Meeting

August
• 19 Frog Fest
• 24 Nebraska State Fair Begins

September
• 4 Labor Day - NeCGA Office
• 12-14 Husker Harvest Days

News from the Nebraska Corn Growers Association
“Your Eyes, Your Ears”

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