An Update from the National Corn Growers Association

NCGA is focusing on creating solutions to help corn farmers and our customers recover from the financial impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

To better inform our efforts, NCGA commissioned an economic analysis to determine the impact of COVID-19 on corn growers. The analysis anticipates demand destruction will also have an impact on the 2020 corn crop and would represent the lowest income corn farmers have received since 2016.

NCGA played an active role in the development of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The wide-ranging legislation included funding to assist agriculture producers, including USDA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), along with a number of small business programs available to farmers.

CFAP is a necessary first step to help producers recover and includes approximately $2.3 billion in direct relief for corn growers. While CFAP is not intended to make a producer whole, NCGA continues to advocate for more direct assistance in future relief legislation to help mitigate the demand destruction due to the pandemic and help farmers continue to operate.

Additionally, NCGA is engaged with Congress and the ethanol industry to ensure assistance for ethanol producers is included in the next relief package.

NCGA has a dedicated web page, ncga.com/covid-19, where you will find up-to-date resources.

We hope that you and your family are doing well as we work through this challenging time and know that NCGA continues to work for you.
Just when we thought we’d seen it all, 2020 throws another curveball at us. Figuratively, of course, as Major League Baseball has not played in months. The COVID-19 pandemic may have changed the way we go about our daily business, but it has not stopped the Association from working on our behalf.

As soon as we returned from our annual Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission in early March, the world changed, and we had to adjust. Our staff did a great job balancing the new normal of working from home while keeping our issues top of mind. As you will read further in this newsletter, our Association and the National Corn Growers Association have been working tirelessly to make sure our concerns are relayed to the appropriate people and that important information is disseminated out to us. At the time of this writing, all staff have returned to their pre-COVID working arrangements.

On a positive note, we are excited to welcome back Morgan Leefers as our intern this year. Some of you may have met Morgan last year at the Annual Meeting or the Corn Grower Open. Morgan is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying Agriculture Economics and Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Communication. She will also graduate with a minor in Agribusiness. After graduation she plans to find employment within education and agriculture, hopefully staying in Nebraska. Although she also enjoys grain marketing and agricultural economics. If anyone has any jobs open starting in May 2021, she’s looking!

As always, if you have questions about what the Association is working on, please reach out to myself or any of the staff in the office. We are here working for you! Thank you for your membership, and best wishes for the rest of the 2020 growing season. Remember, always slow down and Take a Second for Safety.

Dan Nerud
President, Nebraska Corn Growers Association
Association Active in COVID Discussions

Since the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the corn industry in the middle part of March, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NeCGA) has been active on our member’s behalf.

As an early step in the discussions, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) formed a COVID Task Force, of which Nebraska is a part of. The goal of the task force is to collect information, streamline decision-making process to make recommendations and coordinate activities with the broader corn value chain. One of outcome of the task force is an economic impact analysis that continues to project a drastic drop in 2020 revenues. The latest edition of the analysis projects a $59 per acre revenue decline for the 2019 crop and an $89 per acre average drop for 2020.

NeCGA has utilized this in communications with our state and Federal representatives of the drastic impact on our industry.

The Association has also shared with NCGA and our delegation our priorities, as discussions on various packages were being debated in Washington DC. The priorities included support for our key demand sectors of ethanol and livestock.

Finally, NeCGA and various members will be active participants as a national corn recovery plan is discussed and finalized. This plan will focus on opportunities around market development efforts to increase demand. NeCGA will share this with members once finalized.

Winners of 2020 FLAGship Program Announced

Earlier this spring, NeCGA announced the winners of the 2020 Future Leaders in Agriculture Scholarship Program (FLAGship Program). The FLAGship Program is a scholarship program for high school seniors and college freshman in Nebraska who are continuing their education in-state. Three of the scholarships are set aside strictly for those students who are pursuing an agriculture related degree, while two are open to non-agriculture majors.

After reviewing the applications and much deliberation, the NeCGA Grower Services Committee chose five applicants to each receive a $2,000 scholarship. The awardees are listed below, along with their intended secondary school and degree program:

- **Mitchell Manning**, Fairmont (Agricultural Economics, UNL)
- **Payton Schiller**, Scribner (Animal Science and Plant Science, UNL)
- **Ryan Brown**, Gothenburg (Agronomy and Precision Agriculture, Southeast Community College)
- **Kara Kudera**, Clarkson (Nursing, Wayne State College)
- **Josie Vyhnailek**, Friend (Elementary Education and Special Education, UNL)

“I want to congratulate each student who was chosen to receive a scholarship. The applications this year were impressive and choosing only five was difficult. We hope that this scholarship is a bright spot in what is a difficult year for the students of our state. **We are excited to see how these young people advocate for agriculture in the future,”** said Carl Sousek, chairman of the grower services committee.

For more information about the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and the Future Leaders in Agriculture Scholarship Program, please visit https://necga.org/flagship-program/.
New Leaders Attend Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission

In March, new leaders from across the state took part in the Nebraska Corn Growers Association 32nd Annual Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission. From March 9-13, 12 corn producers, along with five grower leaders, got a firsthand experience of advocating in Washington, D.C. and the legislative process.

The leadership mission to Washington, D.C. is a great way for Nebraska corn farmers to engage with key individuals and help put a face on Nebraska agriculture. The participants had a full slate of meetings over three days. This included meeting with the Nebraska congressional delegation as well as important industry partners. The participants were able to discuss issues with a variety of people and organizations who have a great deal of influence over their farms at home in Nebraska.

“The Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission is a great opportunity for growers of all backgrounds and ages. It gives our membership a federal look at current issues facing corn farmers, allows them to network face to face with our congressional representation and discuss how issues are impacting their farms back in Nebraska. We try to highlight the importance of membership in the Association, and hopefully we can spark interest in some of the attendees to become more involved in leadership opportunities at the state and national level,” said Andy Jobman, vice president of NeCGA.

This leadership mission trip is made possible with support from our sponsors, the Nebraska Corn Board and Farm Credit Services of America. Growers interested in attending the next Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission in February of 2021 should contact the Association office.

“The Washington, D.C. Leadership Mission is a great opportunity for growers of all backgrounds and ages. It gives our membership a federal look at current issues facing corn farmers...”

2020 Corn Grower Open

The Nebraska Corn Growers Association is excited to be able to host the 2020 Corn Grower Open at Lochland Country Club in Hastings. This is the tournament’s first visit to the Hastings area. The tournament will tee off on Monday, August 17 at 10 a.m. with a shotgun start. The cost is $130 per golfer or $520 per team. Registration forms can be found at necga.org, by emailing mwrich@necga.org or by calling the office at (402) 438-6459. There is also a hard copy form included in this newsletter. Registration is due by Friday, July 31. The tournament will follow all county designated social distancing and other guidelines related to COVID-19. In the event that the tournament must be cancelled, all registration and sponsorship fees will be refunded to participants, minus any costs incurred by the Association. Business interested in sponsorship opportunities are encouraged to visit the website, necga.org, or email mwrich@necga.org. There are great opportunities available to network with members and friends of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. The Association is looking forward to another successful year on the course!
In early February, Brandon Hunnicutt was elected as chairman of Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture's board of directors. This is the first time a farmer has been at the helm of this national organization, which is designed to bring together a diverse group of grower organizations; agribusinesses; food, beverage, restaurant and retail companies; conservation groups; universities and public sector partners to focus on defining, measuring and advancing the sustainability of food, fiber and fuel production.

On his family farm near Giltner, the Hunnicutts raise corn, soybeans, seed corn, popcorn and sorghum. Along with his father, Daryl, and brother, Zach, he utilizes the latest technologies while integrating conservation tillage practices and cover crops, on a nearly 100% irrigated farm. On the national level, Brandon serves as a member of the Corn Board of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) and also chairs the Engaging Members Committee. He previously served as chair of NCGA’s Grower Services Action Team and vice chair of the Freedom to Operate Action Team. At the state level, Brandon is vice chair of the Nebraska Corn Board. He is also a past president of both the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and the Nebraska Agricultural Technologies Association.

“It’s an honor to be elected as the first farmer to lead the Alliance’s board of directors,” said Hunnicutt. “Field to Market continues to distinguish itself as the premier multi-stakeholder initiative for sustainable agriculture and a leading example of how farmers can inform and guide these important conversations across the value chain.”

Brandon Hunnicutt began his role as the chairman of Field to Market on February 1, 2020.
Fellow corn growers:

As I wrote my last letter to you for the Spring 2020 edition of the Nebraska Corn Update, February was coming to a close. Who could have imagined how much our world was about to change in a few short weeks? As we now live in a seemingly chaotic world, with COVID-19, economic uncertainty and killer hornets, I hope you are all hanging in there as we slowly make our way to better days.

The Nebraska Corn Board just wrapped up its 2019-2020 fiscal year on June 30. It was certainly a much different conclusion to the budget cycle than we would have ever predicted. Usually, there are numerous meetings and promotional events that occur late-winter/early-spring, which were either canceled or moved to virtual platforms. It’s amazing to see how well our local, state, national and international staff and partners are able to adapt day-to-day operations to continue to help us achieve our mission of promoting the value of corn by creating opportunities. Many programs continued during quarantine without skipping a beat.

July 1 marked the beginning of our 2020-2021 fiscal year with our state’s corn checkoff program. I can guarantee that a lot of thought and time went into developing our budget and outlining key programs. Countless Zoom sessions, phone calls, emails and texts were exchanged with members of the Nebraska Corn Board, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, staff, Nebraska farmers and local and national partners as this budget was being developed. Every project is evaluated carefully to ensure it fits into our strategic plan and helps to add value to Nebraska’s corn bushels. We know times are tough in agriculture right now, so we invest all checkoff dollars wisely to maximize return.

In these next several pages, I encourage you to take the time to read about several of our ongoing programs. You can read about how Nebraska farm women are actively working to connect with consumers, you can find new ethanol infrastructure in the state and you can see how local leaders from Nebraska are impacting agriculture at the national level. Throughout this next fiscal year, we plan to keep you updated on several additional programs we’re working on related to market development, research, promotion and education. Keep your eye out for a much more in-depth piece in July highlighting specific projects we’re working on to add value to Nebraska’s corn crop.

Harvest will be here before long. I hope you all have a positive growing season with plenty of sunshine and timely rains. Stay safe and healthy!

David Bruntz
Chairman, Nebraska Corn Board
Despite COVID-19, CommonGround Volunteers Continue to Engage with Consumers

While COVID-19 did its best to bring the world to a halt, the farm women of CommonGround, continue to press on in bridging the gap between consumers and farmers. There may not be any face-to-face interactions, but through various media buys and virtual interactions, CommonGround volunteers are making an impact with urban audiences across Nebraska even during times of quarantine.

In early spring, just as restaurants and businesses were changing the way they conducted business, CommonGround Nebraska collaborated with the Omaha World Herald (OWH) to develop a Cooking@Home Recipe Series. This 12-week series included print and digital components which consisted of informative articles from CommonGround volunteers on food misconceptions consumer often have. The print version was delivered to both subscriber and non-subscriber households in the Omaha Metro (totaling over 300,000 printed pieces per week). Every week, the CommonGround content was posted and archived on Omaha.com, included on the homepage for 24 hours, was included in the OWH E-newsletter and was shared through social media boosts on Facebook and Twitter.

“In times of social distancing, it’s so important we don’t lose any of the momentum we’ve gained over the last several years in helping consumers make food purchasing decisions based on facts and not fears,” said Deb Gangwish, CommonGround volunteer and farmer from Shelton. “It’s important to keep these conversations going especially as our key audiences are preparing more of their meals at home and there are new questions relating to the supply chain. Obviously, we’d love to have these conversations in person, but this is the next best thing.”

In addition to the partnership with the OWH, CommonGround volunteers engaged with consumers through social media, Zoom interviews with Pure Nebraska on Channel 10/11 and through the Fearless Food Update, a bi-monthly newsletter sent to subscribers.

CommonGround Nebraska engaged with consumers across the state through a 12-week series in the Omaha World Herald print and online editions.
In May, David Bruntz, chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board, was appointed to serve on the executive committee of the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). The committee is made up of 17 members from across the U.S. and each individual represents key industries important to U.S. red meat exports.

Bruntz represents feed grain and oilseed producers across the U.S. Through this leadership role, David will work with the executive committee and USMEF leadership around the world to fulfill the mission of the organization “to increase the value and profitability of U.S. beef, pork and lamb industries by enhancing demand for their products in export markets through a dynamic partnership of all stakeholders.”

“We like to say we’re putting U.S. red meat on the world’s table,” said Bruntz. “The U.S. is known world-wide for the quality meat we produce. By supplying our current international customers with quality products and expanding market opportunities in other countries, we’re adding value to all of our local livestock and crop producers in the U.S.”

David is a farmer from Friend and farms with his brother, Bill, and his nephew, Allen. Together they raise irrigated and non-irrigated corn and soybeans along with feeding cattle.

Two Nebraska corn farmers are seeking election to the National Corn Growers Association’s (NCGA) Corn Board. The purpose of this board is to work on the behalf of the 40,000 dues-paying NCGA members nationwide and also to serve the interests of more than 300,000 U.S. corn growers who contribute to their state’s corn checkoff programs.

This is the first time Dan Wesely, from Morse Bluff, is applying to serve on NCGA’s Corn Board.

Brandon Hunnicutt, from Giltner, is seeking reelection to NCGA’s Corn Board.
Motorists in Lexington, North Platte, Ravenna and Hildreth can now fill their vehicles with higher blends of ethanol. These new infrastructure projects were made possible in part through grants from the Nebraska Corn Board (NCB).

In North Platte, two Kwik Stop locations (one located at 1421 South Dewey Street and the other at 101 Platte Oasis Parkway) now offer three additional ethanol options: E15 (a 15% ethanol blend), E30 (a 30% ethanol blend) and E85 (an 85% ethanol blend). E15 is approved to be used in all vehicles 2001 and newer. Any blends higher than 15% are approved to be used in flex fuel vehicles only.

In Lexington, NCB provided Country Partners Cooperative with grant dollars to convert four existing fuel pumps into blender pumps at their Lexington Ampride location in order to offer higher ethanol blends. The station now offers E20 (a 20% ethanol blend), E30 and E85. The station is located at 2700 Plum Creek Parkway (off the west bound lane of I-80 north).

Hildreth has E15, E30 and E85 available at its Cooperative Producers, Inc. station located at 201 Nelson Street. Farmers Coop Association also has these three blends available in Ravenna at 35885 Ravenna Road.

Through NCB’s blender pump infrastructure incentive program, the board has worked with several fuel retailers across Nebraska over the last several years to promote the growth of biofuel usage.

Brandon Hunnicutt, Nebraska Corn Board vice chairman, is running for reelection to the national Corn Board. His current term ends this fall, which began Oct. 1, 2017. Hunnicutt farms near Giltner.

Dan Wesely, Nebraska Corn Growers Association chairman, is a first-time candidate running for NCGA’s corn board. Wesely farms near Morse Bluff.

The election will be held during NCGA’s Corn Congress, which will be held virtually this year on July 15. Delegates consisting of corn farmers from across the U.S. will vote on the candidates during this time. NCGA’s Corn Board is made up of 15 corn farmers from across the country. In addition to Hunnicutt, Deb Gangwish, from Shelton, and Lynn Chrisp, from Hastings, also presently serve on NCGA’s Corn Board.
Renewable Fuels Month
Delayed Until June

On June 11, 2020, Gov. Pete Ricketts proclaimed June as Renewable Fuels Month in Nebraska during a press briefing. To watch the proclamation, visit YouTube.com/NebraskaCorn.

May is typically the kick-off to the summer driving season and has historically been a time Nebraska’s renewable fuels industries have come together to highlight the importance of clean-burning biofuel options. However, because of COVID-19, Renewable Fuels Month was postponed and was celebrated throughout June 2020. Since 2006, the acting Nebraska governor has dedicated one month out of each year to serve as a public awareness campaign to bring attention to the state’s ethanol and biodiesel industries.

Renewable Fuels Month is a collaboration between the Nebraska Corn Board, Nebraska Soybean Board, Nebraska Ethanol Board and Renewable Fuels Nebraska. Because COVID-19 made it difficult to offer in-person pump promotions at various retailers throughout the state, the organizations worked together to implement other strategies to promote biofuels.

The Nebraska Corn Board partnered with radio stations across the state to promote ethanol during key drive times throughout the day. Most of these radio segments were live endorsements on the Big Party Show (94.1 - Omaha), Todd and Tyler (Z-92 - Omaha), JP, Lizz and Husker Nick (96.9 - Lincoln), Froggy Morning Show with Gary and Nelson (98.1 – Lincoln) and on the Rural Radio Network.

Promotions and contests were also prevalent throughout the month on NCB’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

Motorists looking for higher ethanol blends can visit getbiofuel.com or UNL88.com. Biodiesel information and locations can be found at biodieselNE.com and biodiesel.org.
10th Annual NeCGA Corn Grower Open

Monday, August 17, 2020
Lochland Country Club
Hastings, NE

9 AM – Registration
10 AM – Shotgun start

Fill out the information below and return with checks made payable to the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. If you wish to pay by credit card, you may fill out the form and mail to the office OR call the office at (402) 438-6459 to pay over the phone. Cost includes lunch, heavy hors d’oeuvres after the tournament, and prizes. Credit card transactions will be charged a 5% processing fee.

The cost is $130 per person or $520 per team. *Pre-payment is required*

REGISTRATION IS DUE BY FRIDAY, JULY 31st

NAME: _______________________________ COMPANY NAME: _______________________________
ADDRESS: ______________________________ CITY/STATE: _______________________________
ZIP CODE: _____________ PHONE: ___________________ EMAIL: _______________________________

*NeCGA has sponsor representatives that would like the opportunity to golf with growers. If you do not have a complete foursome, please register and we will fill the foursome with our gracious sponsors. *

Method of Payment: [ ] Check [ ] Visa [ ] MasterCard [ ] American Express

Name on Card: ____________________________________ Card Number: ___________________________
Expiration Date: _________________ Security Code: _____________ Amount to be Charged: ______________

Number of Golfers: _____
Names of Golfers:

1) ______________________________________________________________
2) ______________________________________________________________
3) ______________________________________________________________
4) ______________________________________________________________

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mwrich@necga.org
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NeCGA 2020 Annual Meeting
Tuesday, December 22
Holthus Event Center
York, Nebraska