



# National Corn Growers Association

In less than five decades, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) has grown from a group that represented a few hundred farmers in nine Midwestern states to a vibrant association of nearly 33,000 dues-paying corn producers in 48 states. As the largest and most diverse trade association representing corn growers, NCGA serves more than 300,000 farmers who contribute to corn checkoff programs in 20 states. NCGA is a federation of state organizations, corn boards, councils and commissions developing and implementing programs and policies on the local, state and national levels to help protect and advance the corn producer's interests.

Much like the crop our members grow, the association enjoys a rich history. In 1956, Iowa farmer Walter Goeppinger began to organize with corn farmers from several states in the upper Midwest because he believed politicians and the public alike were largely unaware of the contributions of corn growers.

Today, NCGA and its affiliated state associations continue to reach out to elected officials, industry leaders, trade partners and consumers worldwide to tell the story of the nation's corn grower. NCGA members focus a great deal of their resources on six key issue areas – ethanol, research and business development, biotechnology, farm policy and rural development, trade and transportation. Action teams and committees made up of growers from across the country determine NCGA's policies on these key issues and others.

One of NCGA's top priorities in 2005 is to increase ethanol demand by establishing a Renewable Fuels Standard as part of a comprehensive energy policy. A 5-billion-gallon RFS would reduce energy prices, enhance national energy security, help the environment and spur rural development. NCGA's ethanol efforts are paying off. In 2004, Congress passed the corporate tax bill, which included legislation that extends the ethanol tax incentive to 2010 and redirects more than \$2 billion annually to the Highway Trust Fund. NCGA also continues to educate consumers on the benefits of ethanol through initiatives like the AgriTalk Ethanol Pump Tour.

NCGA is also working to develop new uses for corn through research and business development programs. As demand for compostable, environmentally friendly consumer items continues to increase, corn growers are positioning themselves to take advantage of new market opportunities. In 2004, NCGA announced an initiative in which Monsanto, Ceres Inc. and Pioneer agreed to provide their corn genome sequencing data to a centralized database managed by NCGA. The corn genome could now be completely sequenced by 2007, years ahead of previous estimates.

The association is also recognized as the leading voice for corn growers in the area of biotechnology. NCGA participates in biotech missions to foreign countries to interact with international government leaders and agriculture decision makers who want to learn more about biotechnology. Last year



NCGA leaders traveled to the European Union, Russia and other countries to discuss the use of biotech crops. We also introduced the Insect Resistance Management Learning Center, an online education tool that provides training on proper biotechnology stewardship.

Farm policy and its impact on rural development is also a top priority for NCGA. We ensure corn growers are fairly represented in discussions of the farm bill and promote government policy that allows U.S. growers to compete in a global economy. Last year, NCGA conducted a comprehensive survey to get producer feedback on how to improve the selection of crop insurance and other risk management tools. Our Future Structure of Agriculture Task Force also completed work on a report called "Taking Ownership of Grain Belt Agriculture." The report, which offers recommendations for moving growers further into the value chain, will be publicly released Feb. 24 at Commodity Classic in Austin, Texas.

NCGA and its state associations also work to open new markets and protect existing opportunities through trade programs. The association supports ratification of the Central America and Morocco Free Trade Agreements, both of which are expected to increase export opportunities for U.S. corn growers. We actively monitor trade agreement negotiations to ensure corn grower interests are protected. In 2004, several of our members testified

before House and Senate committees on the importance of trade to the U.S. corn sector.

Transportation issues are also critically important to corn growers. NCGA continues to push for authorization of new navigation locks on the upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers to replace the antiquated, undersized structures that cause costly shipping delays. Corn growers attended numerous public hearings in 2004 to voice their support of modern, well-maintained locks.

In addition to these key issues, NCGA is a leading voice in helping to communicate the story of U.S. farmers and ranchers. The enormous contributions farmers make to the quality of life in America are often overlooked, and NCGA is doing its part to inform consumers about the role of agriculture in the nation's future. We also collaborate with other farm groups to defend agriculture against unfounded attacks.

To learn more about NCGA's programs and policies, or to become a member contact:

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