



KyCGA is a grassroots organization organized in 1982. The association is comprised of dues-paying members and is governed by an elected Board of Directors. KyCGA actively works to influence policy and regulation pertaining to corn farmers' interests on state and national levels. Also, the organization is focused on protecting agriculture's image held by consumers and the media.

Biotechnology

Farmers are under immense pressure to increase production to meet rapid global population growth. Biotechnology enables farmers to meet these demands with consistent high yields, even when faced with challenges such as drought, excessive moisture, pests and weeds. Additionally, numerous environmental benefits are allowed by biotechnology such as widened ability to use no-till systems and reduced chemical requirements to adequately control pests.

Due to the complexity of the technology and lack of acceptance by some markets, the future of biotechnology requires strict management and broad education by biotech providers, producers, grain merchandisers and food processors. Continued efforts to better inform consumers about the environmental and health benefits this technology provides are critical to consumer acceptance.

Trade

Without export markets for corn, farmer income would be significantly lower. The United States is expected to export 2 billion bushels (about 14% of supply) worldwide during 2010. The export of value-added corn products, such as meat products, is also a priority for corn farmers. Various corn co-products, such as dried distillers grains, are another growing export opportunity for corn farmers.

Considering the importance of corn exports to farm income, corn farmers are active in the discussion of trade friendly policies. KyCGA supports Trade Promotion Authority and several Free Trade Agreements. KyCGA is committed to the World Trade Organization process. KyCGA supports the elimination of trade barriers for agriculture products derived from biotechnology.

Transportation

Corn farmers depend on reliable, cost-effective transportation – whether by barge, truck or rail – to receive inputs and to deliver harvested grain to markets. Presently, the United States' per-ton cost for transporting grain is lower than other countries' costs. This advantage is largely attributable to the extensive river system throughout our country. But the United States is allowing its infrastructure to deteriorate while our competitors make major investments in their transportation systems. Overlooking our aging transportation infrastructure has placed our international competitiveness in jeopardy.

Our barge system allows us the cheapest, safest and greenest mode of grain transport. However the potential of barge transportation is not fully met because more than half of the 240 lock chambers within our inland waterway system are more than 50 years old. They have been poorly maintained and are too small for modern use. Delays in moving grain to export markets caused by outdated locks cost farmers \$72.6 million per year according to the US Army Corps of Engineers. The process and funding for modernizing our river system is outlined in the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan that corn growers helped create. This plan should be adopted in the next Water Resources Development Act Reauthorization Bill.

Ethanol

As our nation's energy needs increase, corn farmers support the expansion of all energy technologies, tools and resources. Although many technologies show potential, corn ethanol is the only alternative to liquid automobile fuel that is available for immediate industrialized use in our existing automobile fleet. The benefits of corn ethanol and its co-product (dried distillers grains) should be clearly understood by policy makers and consumers.

Animal Care

Animal agriculture's importance to the Kentucky corn industry cannot be understated. More than half of the corn produced in Kentucky is utilized as livestock feed. Livestock producers also utilize 100% of Kentucky's dried distillers grains. The welfare of the animals that are fed by Kentucky corn is also as important to corn farmers as it is to the livestock producers themselves. Kentucky farmers understand that a healthy animal industry cannot be achieved without healthy animals. To farmers, humane treatment of animals is more than an ethical issue; it is an economic issue.

Attempts by extreme organizations to damage any sector of the agriculture industry in Kentucky directly affect all farmers. Therefore, all segments of the industry work together to combat these efforts. KyCGA is a founding member of the Kentucky Livestock Coalition and works aggressively to ensure that all farmers strictly adhere to the highest standards of livestock care. Additionally, KyCGA seeks a full understanding by policy makers, media and consumers about farmers' priority and ability to maintain these standards relating to livestock care and maintenance.

Conservation

American farmers set the world standard for environmental conservation. Farmers know that arable land in the United States is decreasing because of urban sprawl, so they intensely work to protect what they have. Kentucky farmers are proud that no-till was invented in Western Kentucky several decades ago and since then have achieved nearly 100% adoption of continuous no-till. USDA estimates that farmers have reduced soil erosion by 44% through conservation tillage.

Beyond no-till, farmers are rapidly adopting precision technology that allows them to dramatically reduce energy use and artificially-applied crop inputs (nutrients and protection products) while significantly boosting productivity. Precision farming has helped farmers increase the output of an ounce of fertilizer by 70% according to USDA, and energy use has decreased 37%. Also, farmers have quickly learned the value of crop residue to build soil organic matter and sequester greenhouse gas. Extensive efforts are placed on spreading the residue evenly and ensuring that it is undisturbed throughout the winter. When residue is not adequate, cover crops are installed.

Risk Management

Since the first farm bill in 1938, Congress has provided critical farm income protection from adverse weather, crop diseases, and instable markets. Today, USDA's budget is roughly 0.5% of the total federal budget, yet it helps sustain the food and agriculture industry, which is responsible for one-sixth of our nation's economy.

Farmers prefer to receive their income from the market, and the corn industry has performed well in the recent economy. But regardless of prices, corn farmers face several challenges such as drought, rising input costs and greater volatility in the commodity markets. A properly designed and promptly implemented safety net is important so family farms can persevere such challenges. Through crop insurance, farm bills should provide adequate protection against significant crop and revenue losses.

Kentucky Corn Growers Association

PO Box 90 - Eastwood, KY 40018

800-326-0906

www.kycorn.org