

Ohio Wheat Industry News

Ohio Wheat Growers Association newsletter

June 2009

Wheat growers join group to counter urban media's misconceptions about agriculture issues

DELAWARE, OH – The Hand that Feeds U.S. (THTFU) is a project of Farm Policy Facts that exists to counter the media's misperceptions about U.S. agriculture, farm policy and renewable fuels on the heels of the 2008 farm bill and in preparation for the next farm bill.

The Ohio Wheat Growers Association and the Ohio Small Grains Marketing Program have recently joined this effort to help promote understanding of wheat growers and farmers in Ohio and around the nation.



This project focuses on reaching out to urban media - an audience we all agree can use a farm education.

At the end of May some members of The Hand That Feeds U.S. gathered in New York City for face-to-face meetings with journalists, including reporters from the New York Times, CNN, FOX News and Marketplace (public) radio.

"We met with media outlets that have not always been favorable to production agriculture or farm policy, but that's the whole point

of this campaign," said former House Agriculture Committee Chairman and THTFU Spokesman Larry Combest.

"These meetings went a long way in building a lasting relationship with key reporters and ensuring they have accurate information about America's farmers at their fingertips."

(Combest was the chief architect and negotiator on the 2002 Farm Bill and directed the Agricultural Risk Protection Act.)

One such fact that THTFU passes on through materials and through their Web site, www.thehandthatfeedsus.org Japanese grocery shoppers spend 26% of their incomes on food-Americans only spend 10%, thanks to farm policy.

New York City is the first stop in a series of urban media tours—other stops will include Chicago, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles.

Study shows positive impact of biotech for farmers, earth

Farmers around the world utilizing biotechnology are growing more crops in a more environmentally sustainable manner, according to a report issued this week from the United Kingdom-based PG Economics.

The PG Economics annual Global Impact Study quantifies the impact of agricultural biotechnology on the environment and on farmer

incomes since biotech's commercialization in 1996. A record 13.3 million farmers in 25 countries are now using agricultural biotechnology.

According to the 128-page study, the use of biotech crops has contributed significantly to environmental sustainability by reducing the release of greenhouse gas emissions from less fuel use and additional soil carbon storage from reduced tillage. In 2007, this reduction was equivalent to removing nearly 6.3 million cars from the road for one year.

The study also showed reduction in the need for pesticide spraying, indicating that for the years 1996-2007, global pesticide applications were reduced by 8.8 percent.

The use of biotech crops has provided substantial net economic benefits at the farm level amounting to \$10.1 billion in 2007 and \$44.1 billion for the 12-year period. Of the total farm income benefit, 46.5 percent has been due to yield gains, with the balance arising from reductions in the cost of production.

The study also provided further evidence that the use of biotech crops has helped to increase productivity and crop yields. It showed corn production saw a 7.6 percent gain, cotton production saw a 19.8 percent gain and canola saw a 8.5 percent gain.

There is currently no commercial production of biotech wheat in the world.

Important wheat issues: biotech and fighting HSUS

By Mark Wachtman
OWGA President

This year finds us with many new opportunities. Some will be easy to grasp while others may be cloaked in many disguises.

One is biotech wheat. The National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) states that 70 percent of consumers are in favor of biotech wheat.

NAWG has been in contact with the Australian and the Canadian Wheat Producers to coordinate a launch at the same time.

The major benefit from this is we would not lose our exports to another country with the three largest exporters in the world all

having biotech wheat.

Look at what biotech has done for corn, and if the seed companies are correct, what it will be doing for us soon in beans. New traits can be brought to market quicker, and it opens the opportunity for traits we may not yet realize. It would be great to eradicate head scab and have wheat which may yield 10 to 20 percent greater. Or end traits that would help millers and bakers.

The second issue before us is HSUS, or the Humane Society of the United States (an animal rights activist group not to be confused with local animal shelters).

What does wheat have to do with HSUS? I have yet to meet an Ohio wheat producer who

only raises wheat.

HSUS wants to ban the use of veal crates, put restrictions on poultry crate sizes and take away gestation crates from the pork industry. This would ruin these end markets for our Ohio- raised grains. And much of our live-stock industry may end up leaving our state in the end.

This could increase the cost of raising these animals and food.

Most livestock producers are doing a great job of animal husbandry. If they don't, their animals would not be healthy

I would ask you to look them up at hsus.com. This is a well-funded organization that is masked by looking like our local humane societies.

Clearly this could be a trying year but one full of possibilities.