

Senator Johnson's Weekly Ag Round-Up: October 2, 2009

Johnson: Ag Appropriations Bill Finalized

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD), a member of the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Committee, announced September 30, 2009, funding levels secured for South Dakota priorities as part of the final version of the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2010. Johnson secured millions for South Dakota as part of the bill, including landmark funding totaling \$2.25 million to continue the Sun Grant Initiative.

"I am proud to be a member of this conference committee to fight for South Dakota's priorities. The levels secured for important ag programs provides for our agricultural communities, while also investing important research dollars for our colleges and universities," said Johnson, who is also a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee. "I am glad that the spending measure also includes historic funding for the Sun Grant Initiative and assistance for struggling dairy farmers."

"Today is a milestone day for the Sun Grant Initiative," said Dr. Kevin Kephart, South Dakota State University Vice President for Research and National Chair of the Sun Grant Initiative. "South Dakota State University and the national leadership of the Sun Grant Initiative are grateful to Senator Tim Johnson for his many hours of work and for his commitment and vision in making this appropriation a reality. Thanks to his efforts, the initiative has received its first official appropriation from the United States Department of Agriculture."

The conference committee is made up of Senate and House negotiators including Johnson, who signed the conference report finalizing these funding levels this afternoon. The completed report will now go to each chamber for a final vote, before going to President Obama to be signed into law.

Johnson-Secured Funding for South Dakota Projects Includes:

North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory - Biomass Crop Production - \$1,250,000

This project will develop value-added uses for byproducts (DDG and DDGS) resulting from corn-based ethanol production. The Biomass Crop Production project would be used to support existing research conducted by United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service North Central Agricultural Research Laboratory (NCARL) in Brookings, South Dakota, South Dakota State University, and MBI International in Lansing, Michigan.

South Dakota State University - Crop Integration and Production- \$400,000

This project will integrate pulse crops and other emerging opportunities into regional production systems in order to diversify agriculture and improve economic options for producers. Benefits of diversifying crop production systems will include an overall reduction in input costs. South Dakota State University leads this cooperative program with North Dakota and Nebraska.

South Dakota State University - Ruminant Nutrition Consortium - \$563,000

This special grant funds the Five State Ruminant Consortium. The objectives of this program entail adding value to grain and forage crops through ruminant livestock. Topics being addressed are production and environmental aspects of the livestock industry, including integrating rangelands, annual crops, and livestock to enhance economic return and positively impact the environment. South Dakota State University leads this collaborative program with North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, and Nebraska.

South Dakota State University - Seed Technology- \$350,000

The South Dakota State University Seed Technology Center conducts research, training and the development of seed technologies to support the safe delivery of traits to producers while protecting the traditional production systems. Seed will be the means for the continued specialization of crops with traits that enhance the value of our crops and the profitability of producers.

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks - Wildlife Services, South Dakota - \$519,000

Funding for the Wildlife Services, South Dakota project is used to assist producers impacted by predator and nuisance animal damage, which is at a comparatively historically high level. A cooperative program has been developed between the state of South Dakota and the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, which ensures adequate response to producer concerns. The cooperative federal-state program provides management to control wildlife-caused agricultural damage with various proactive and reactive management techniques.

National Programs of Interest to South Dakota Include:

- Sun Grant Initiative - \$2.25 million
- Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program - \$50,730,000
- Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant Program - \$20,367,000
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program - \$171,409,000
- Assistance to dairy farmers suffering from historically low prices - \$350 million
- The National Identification System - \$5.3 million, a dramatic reduction in funding for this program

Johnson, Others Call on Vilsack to Provide Relief to the Pork Industry

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) joined Sens. Richard Burr, Al Franken, Richard Lugar, Thad Cochran, Carl Levin, Tom Harkin, Christopher Bond, Kent Conrad, Russ Feingold, James Inhofe, Pat Roberts, Richard Durbin, Evan Bayh, George Voinovich, Debbie Stabenow, Ben Nelson, Saxby Chambliss, John Thune, Claire McCaskill, Amy Klobuchar, Mike Johanns, Kay Hagan, and Roland Burris in sending a letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack requesting he take immediate action to alleviate suffering in the pork industry. While USDA has already taken several positive steps to assist pork producers, the letter called on Vilsack to take the following additional actions:

- Purchase an additional \$100 million of pork for various federal food programs with the authority granted under Section 32.
- Work with appropriate federal agencies to help address swine disease surveillance on farms, related diagnostic and vaccine development, and swine industry supports.
- Work with the U.S. Trade Representative to open export markets to U.S. pork, particularly China, which continues to impose non-science-based restrictions on U.S. pork since the outbreak of the 2009 H1N1 virus. In 2008, China was the second largest volume market for U.S. pork exports, accounting for nearly 20 percent of total U.S. pork exports. Given the severely depressed state of the U.S. pork industry, resuming pork exports to China would give producers around the country a much-needed economic boost.

In addition to the requests listed above, the senators also asked Vilsack to review other USDA programs to see if there are additional opportunities for assistance to aid the U.S. pork industry.

USDA News

USDA Begins Issuing Livestock Forage Disaster Payments

Producers in Two Texas Counties First to Receive Payments Due to Drought Loss

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced September 28, 2009, that ranchers who have signed up for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) have begun receiving disaster payments for forage losses due to severe drought. Producers are reminded that LFP sign up for 2008 losses ends Dec. 10, 2009, and Jan. 30, 2010, for 2009 losses.

"These payments will help producers recover from financial setbacks due to drought," said Vilsack. "This program is just one of our disaster programs, which help stabilize the livestock industry when disasters occur."

The first LFP payments were issued to ranchers in two of the hardest hit disaster counties in the nation: Wilson and Guadalupe counties in Texas. These payments will compensate ranchers who suffered extreme drought losses in 2008 and 2009. This assistance will help ranchers provide feed for their livestock this fall. Producers in all counties that have suffered a severe, extreme or exceptional drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor are encouraged to visit their local FSA county office to apply for assistance under LFP.

LFP provides payments to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock grazing losses due to qualifying drought or fire. Eligible livestock under LFP include beef cattle, alpacas, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep and swine. Losses due to drought and qualifying drought ratings are determined using the U.S. Drought Monitor located at www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html.

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