



News & Views

A Monthly Publication Dedicated to the Feed, Seed, Grain and Farm Supply Industries of Wisconsin

Greetings from the Wisconsin Agri-Service Association! I hope this letter finds you all doing well. This past month, a lot has been going on around your association, agriculture, and agricultural legislation. I have included a small "taste" of these activities in this newsletter.

As I get the chance to meet more and more of you great WASA members, it is very gratifying to see the trust you are putting in me and your association. This past couple of weeks have been filled with phone calls asking questions about tax issues, interpretation of legislation, the agriculture producer security program, federal versus state warehouse licensing, and many others. It is a real pleasure researching issues that are important to our members, and finding them answers. In part, that is what WASA is here for. If you have questions that your association can help with, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will do all we can to help.

I am also excited to tell you that in about two weeks, you will be receiving a special Safety & Health Program addition of the WASA News & Views Newsletter that I think will be very useful to everyone. We are all aware of the Special Emphasis Program that OSHA has on the grain and feed industries, and that they are spending more time doing inspections of grain elevators and feed mills. Well one of our members was one of the first to get an OSHA inspection. And for everyone else's benefit, they are writing a paper on that inspection to help you know what to expect and what to prepare for in case you are next on OSHA's list. I look forward to sharing that report with you.

Also, thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership for the 2011-12

year. For those of you who have not done so yet, let us know if you have questions or concerns. As always, thank you so much for your membership. It is a pleasure serving you.

Sincerely,
Tom Bressner
Interim Executive Director

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS ISSUES ON THE HOT SEAT IN WASHINGTON D.C.

The week of June 13th was an excessively busy week for attacking agriculture in our nation's capital, as both the House and the Senate voted on multiple pieces of legislation vital to the agriculture sector. On June 14th, an amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) aimed at repealing the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit (VEETC) failed in the Senate by a vote of 40-59. However, just two days later when the same proposal was reintroduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Sen. Coburn on a stand alone vote, the measure passed 73-27. The ethanol industry obviously hopes that the measure will not be approved when it moves to the House of Representatives in the coming days.

Also on June 16th, both chambers proposed amendments calling for the barring of federal funds to be used for blender pumps. The amendment offered in the Senate by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) failed by a 41-59 vote. However in the opposite chamber, Rep. Jeff Flake's (R-Ariz.) amendment to the FY 2012 House Agriculture Appropriations bill passed with a 283-128 vote.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) offered an amendment to impose a \$125,000 pay limit on the farm bill which failed 154-262. Rep. Flake

offered an amendment to defund the Market Access Program (MAP), which is designed to encourage development, maintenance, and expansion of commercial agricultural export markets. This amendment also failed with a vote of 101-314.

These along with other measures proved to make it a very challenging week for agriculture. With the federal budget crisis as severe as it is, I am sure we will have a lot more attacks on agriculture to talk about in the coming weeks as well.

WISCONSIN SALES TAX ON FARM SUPPLIES: WHAT IS TAXABLE AND WHAT IS NOT?

This past week, a WASA member called into the association office with a great question. Trying to be proactive, and wanting to be sure they are doing things correctly, they asked if there is a document published that will help them be sure they are accurately charging (or not charging) sales tax on items being sold out of their farm store.

Knowing that this caller isn't the only one with this question, we want you all to know that there is a publication issued by the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue that does a good job at defining what is taxable and what is not taxable. The publication is Publication 221 entitled: Farm Suppliers And Farmers: How Do Wisconsin Sales and Use Taxes Affect Your Operations?

If you sell any type of farm supplies to farmers, are interested in this sales tax issue, and would like a copy of this 23 page publication, you can go on line and copy it from the following web address:

www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/pb221.pdf

If after reading this publication, you still have taxable/non-taxable questions, give us a call.

We will confidentially contact the Department of Revenue to get you answers.

USDA ISSUES NEW UNIFORM GRAIN, RICE STORAGE AGREEMENT CONTRACTS TO WAREHOUSE OPERATORS

During the week of June 13, The U.S. Department of Agriculture released a new updated version of the Uniform Grain and Rice Storage Agreement contract. Warehouse operators wishing to renew their UGRSA will need to sign and return the new contract by no later than August 11th. If not returned by that date, your existing contract will terminate on that date. The new UGRSA will go into effect on March 31, 2012, and will automatically renew for one year each April 1 thereafter.

GRAIN BIN SAFETY VIDEO AVAILABLE ON LINE

The National Grain and Feed Association and the National Corn Growers Association recently unveiled a joint video project to promote awareness about grain bin safety. The video was created in response to an increase in fatalities and injuries associated with grain bin entry.

The new video provides a wide range of information from prevention tips and background data on grain bin accidents. The video also includes interviews with professionals in the fields of grain bin safety research and rescue.

The NGFA has made the video available on its website at www.ngfa.org, and encourages its grain elevator members to view the video and share it with your farmer-customers.

ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO ELIMINATE HALF OF TOP LEVEL GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Do you have some government websites that you routinely go to for information? I think many of us do. However, there is a chance that one of these days when you go to visit that website, it may be gone. Within the next year, the Obama administration wants to eliminate or consolidate about 2,000 top level government websites, a move they hope will save millions of dollars. The total impact, however, could be much greater because those top level sites contain thousands of other small websites. For instance, if you go to the main website for the USDA, there are numerous other agency, departmental, and program websites you can access from it. It is currently estimated that all together, there may be as many as 24,000 government websites and stand alone pages (maybe even more) currently in existence. The US Department of Energy is one of the agencies that has researched potential savings. Just that one agency believes that by consolidating hardware, hosting services, and IT systems, they can save as much as \$10 million annually.

Of course, while we are all in favor of seeing the government save money, the real concern to many is that valuable data may evaporate along the way as well. Current directives require all government agencies to pinpoint websites that can be eliminated or consolidated by October 2011. They will then be required to post any actions they take following their reviews.

YOUR INPUT IS APPRECIATED

In mid July, plans will begin to take shape for the 2012 WASA/Corn/Soy Convention and Trade Show to be held at the Kalahari Resort. If you have topics that you would like to suggest for breakout sessions, or if you know of affordable speakers that would appeal to our

attendees, your input will be welcomed. This is your convention and we will do all we can to make it serve your needs and interests.

JUST FOR FUN – HUMOROUS QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE

To survive in this world today, a person has to have a good sense of humor. So, in closing out our letter for this month, let's take a look at some quotes from famous people. I hope you enjoy...

"Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else."

Will Rogers

"Always do right. That will gratify some of the people, and astonish the rest."

Mark Twain

"If life were fair, Elvis would be alive and the impersonators would be dead."

Johnny Carson

"Many of us spend half our time wishing for things we could have if we didn't spend half our time wishing."

Alexander Woollcott

"It's a dog eat dog world, and I'm wearing milk bone underwear."

Norm, from the TV show "Cheers"

"Everywhere is within walking distance if you have the time."

Steven Wright

"My computer beat me at checkers. But I got even. I beat it at kick boxing."

Emo Philips

WASA DIRECTORY UPDATE

The following addition should be made to your WASA Directory.

Brock Grain Systems
A division of CTB, Inc.
611 N. Higbee Street
PO Box 2000
Milford, IN 46542-2000

Changes are indicated in bold. As additions or changes are made throughout the year, we will notify you here in *WASA N & V*.