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September 23, 2009

FROM STEVE'S DESK

by Steve Taylor



Carrots and Sticks

For many years, there have been reports of excess nutrients causing hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico and that agriculture is a primary source of these nutrients. Also for many years, government agencies have supported programs to help agriculture voluntarily meet water quality goals. However, recent reports out of EPA suggest that these voluntary efforts have not been enough and that stronger actions are needed. The reports point out that EPA has only limited regulatory control over agriculture and that states do not have the regulations or funding necessary to influence agricultural producers to change their practices and that "while significant efforts and progress have been made, improperly applied fertilizers and pesticides still flow into creeks."

Having worked on these issues for most of my career, it appears to me that we may be seeing a significant shift in how our government uses its "carrots and sticks." The government's main "stick" is its regulatory authority. Whether EPA does it directly or through state regulatory agencies, more regulatory type action to change agriculture practices are being considered. The "carrots" are financial incentive programs like EPA's 319 program and various USDA programs. These recent EPA reports call for more efficient use of these programs and possibly new programs that could change land uses.

These are big issues. At MO-AG, we are working with our national and regional partners and keeping the lines of communications open with the government agencies. While we all may debate many aspects of these issues, we can all be for clean water and a productive agriculture.

For more background and a thorough discussion of these issues, I invite you to visit [MO-AG's website](#).

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MEMBER NEWS

2009 MO-AG Regional Meeting - October 6 Country Club of Missouri - Columbia, MO

Don't miss this opportunity to golf at one of the best golf courses in Mid-Missouri and meet with some fellow MO-AG members. The registrations for the 2009 MO-AG Regional Meeting at the Country Club of Missouri in Columbia, MO are due by October 1. The registration brochure has been mailed and is now available on MO-AG's website by [clicking here](#).

NEWS YOU CAN USE

MO-AG's Taylor Elected to Mid America CropLife Association (MACA) Board

The Mid America CropLife Association (MACA) held its annual business meeting at the Marriott West Hotel in Saint Louis, Missouri, and elected officers for 2009-2010. The group also filled seven Board of Directors positions at the September 10 meeting.

New officers include President John McKinney, Helena Chemical Company; Vice President David Flakne, Syngenta Crop Protection; and Secretary/Treasurer Matt Wagner, Banjo Corporation. Jim Lehman, AMVAC, will serve as Immediate Past President.

Elected to three-year Board of Director terms were: Rob Dittmer, DuPont Crop Protection; Inci Dannenberg, Bayer CropScience; Keith Conrad, Monsanto; and Jason Paris, MFA.

Tom Quade, FMC and Steve Koziolk, Rosen's Inc., were elected to complete two-year terms which were vacant.

Steve Taylor, Missouri Agribusiness Association (MO-AG) was elected to fill the State Association position which is a two-year term. [Source: *MACA*]

USDA Launches "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" Initiative

This past spring, MO-AG hosted a luncheon in Jefferson City with guest speaker Leonard Gianessi, Director of the Crop Protection Research Institute for the CropLife Foundation. Leonard discussed how the potential for organic agriculture was being oversold. In the question and answer session that followed, discussion revolved around

how the biggest risk may be the potential for the government to divert significant dollars from conventional agriculture programs to efforts to promote organic agriculture. Just a few months later, it appears this could be the case.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan have announced a new initiative - "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food." In announcing this initiative, Secretary Vilsack stated "An American people that is more engaged with their food supply will create new income opportunities for American agriculture. Reconnecting consumers and institutions with local producers will stimulate economies in rural communities, improve access to healthy, nutritious food for our families, and decrease the amount of resources to transport our food."

Secretary Vilsack stated that Deputy Secretary Merrigan, a long-time supporter of organic agriculture, will chair a task force to help USDA build stronger local and regional food systems. So far, USDA has dedicated approximately \$65 million in funding for "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiatives.

In discussing this initiative, Deputy Secretary Merrigan stated that "Americans are more interested in food and agriculture than at any other time since most families left the farm. 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' seeks to focus that conversation on supporting local and regional food systems to strengthen American agriculture by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and spurring economic opportunity in rural communities." [*Source: USDA*]

HSUS, Association of Irrigated Residents, and Others Petition to Regulate CAFOs

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and others have filed a legal petition with the EPA seeking to regulate air pollution from factory farms.

"Unregulated air pollution from massive factory farms has a devastating impact on human health and the environment," says Jonathan Lovvorn, vice president and chief counsel for Animal Protection Litigation and Research at the HSUS. "The EPA should hold these big agribusiness corporations accountable for the enormous harm they are inflicting on local communities, independent family farmers, and the environment."

The petition suggests that reducing emissions from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) will improve human health, reduce suffering of farm animals, protect habitat for wildlife, and reduce the effects of climate change and other environmental problems. The Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has deemed the livestock sector "one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." This same report found that animal agriculture was responsible for contributing 18 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions - more than even the transport sector.

The group further alleges that CAFOs economically harm small family farms engaging in practices that are better for animal welfare and more environmentally sustainable. They claim these independent farmers cannot financially compete with large factory farms, which cut corners and jeopardize environmental and public health, and that forcing factory farms to comply with environmental and health standards would level the playing field and help small farmers become more competitive.

"Our lungs and the future of our planet are not animal factory subsidies," said Tom Fratz, president of the Association of Irrigated Residents and a resident of the San Joaquin Valley, an air basin in California with more than 2.6 million dairy cows. "President Obama promised us during the election that he would protect rural residents from this pollution and we expect EPA to keep that promise."

"Hog lots and other factory farms aren't just stinky, they're also destabilizing our climate," said Kate McMahon of Friends of the Earth. "The EPA has a legal obligation to protect the public by cracking down on this economic and public health threat - a threat that has yet to be addressed by climate legislation pending in Congress." [Source: *Friends of the Earth*]

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER, 2009

30- Oct 2 Missouri Seedmens Association Annual Meeting;
Lake Ozark, MO

OCTOBER, 2009

6 2009 MO-AG Regional Meeting; Country Club of
Missouri; Columbia, MO

NOVEMBER, 2009

19 ALOT Annual Meeting and Seminar
Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia, MO

DECEMBER, 2009

- 6-8 Missouri Farm Bureau Annual Meeting; Tan Tar A;
Camdenton, MO
- 11-12 Missouri Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting and
Convention; Springfield, MO

JANUARY, 2010

- 6-7 **MO-AG Winter Convention; Lodge of Four
Seasons; Lake Ozark, MO**
- 7-8 Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture; Hyatt
Regency; St. Louis, MO
- 8-9 Missouri Land Improvement Contractors Winter
Convention; Isle of Capri Hotel; Boonville, MO

FEBRUARY, 2010

- 10-11 Missouri Pork Expo

Note: Items in **red** are new postings since the last Wrap-Up issue.

Letters to the Editor

Do you have a response to the Missouri Agribusiness Wrap Up? Let us know! The Missouri Agribusiness Wrap Up is a bi-weekly publication of the Missouri Agribusiness Association (MO-AG). MO-AG is a member-owned association based in Jefferson City, Mo. which protects members' interests in state legislation and provides educational opportunities.

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