

NASDA Policy Statements

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NASDA Policy Statements updated with amendments passed during the 2013 Winter Policy Conference.

their extensive use of oil and gas products in agricultural production. Agriculture already has a low return on investment and equity when compared to many sectors of the American economy, so volatile swings in energy and other input costs can drastically alter farmers' net revenue. USDA's projection for farmers' expenditures for fuels and oils, electricity, fertilizer, and pesticides in 2001 is \$30.0 billion, up \$700 million from 2000. That equals a decrease in net cash income of about 10 percent.

Increased energy prices, especially fuel prices, immediately impact farmers' costs of production. Even though farmers are more energy efficient than ever before, spikes in energy costs hit particularly hard their already tight profit margins. But when considering the impact of higher energy prices on agriculture, it is also important to remember that the amount of energy used in agriculture is significant beyond the traditional gas and diesel for vehicle and machinery use. They use heating oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene and/or electricity to heat or regulate temperature in their hog or chicken facilities and dry their crops. Even pesticide costs are directly related to petroleum. As a general rule, it takes the equivalent of one gallon of diesel fuel to make one pound of active ingredient of pesticides.

Farmers are limited in what they can do to mitigate the effects of higher energy prices. When and where possible, producers are limited to employing different production strategies, such as reducing field operations by switching from conventional tillage practices to reduced till, adjusting fertilizer application rates, changing the timing of fertilizer applications and using animal manure and green fertilizer. Unfortunately, however, for the foreseeable future the costs of energy will remain relatively high and it is in the nation's best interest to deal with how to adjust to the increased prices.

NASDA recommends that government support for alternative fuel sources to fossil fuels continue, focusing on the use of ethanol, biodiesel and biomass production. In the interim period, there should be a renewable fuels content standard in energy legislation, and preferential tax treatment for ethanol, such as in the small ethanol producer tax credit. Congress should also provide funds to continue the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation Bioenergy Program. Renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel are the cornerstones in assisting American agriculture in terms of the use of its product and energy requirements.

Industrial Hemp

NASDA supports revisions to the federal rules and regulations authorizing commercial production of industrial hemp.

NASDA urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to collaboratively develop and adopt an official definition of industrial hemp that comports with definitions currently used by countries producing hemp. NASDA also urges Congress to statutorily distinguish between industrial hemp and marijuana and to direct the DEA to revise its policies to allow USDA to

establish a regulatory program that allows the development of domestic industrial hemp production by American farmers and manufacturers.

11.11 FEDERAL SEED ACT ENFORCEMENT

The Federal Seed Act (FSA) (7 U.S.C. 1551-1611) is a truth-in-labeling law that regulates the labeling of seed in interstate commerce. The label must contain information on origin, purity, germination, chemical treatment and noxious weeds as well as the lot identity number, the date of test, and the labeler's name and address or AMS number.

Interstate seed shippers are required to keep receiving and shipping records that include documentation for each seed lot they ship in interstate commerce (7 CFR 201.7). Currently, the records are not being routinely examined for origin verification, allowing violations to go undetected. Origin violations are usually uncovered only during a record examination pertaining to other labeling violations such as purity, germination and noxious weed seed content. Inaccurate origin labeling can result in seed dealers and farmers purchasing seed that is not adapted for the area of intended use, or purchasing seed that is of inferior quality than represented on the label.

NASDA encourages the increased investigation of origin labeling of seed shipped in interstate commerce. Investigation needs to be supported by both state seed inspectors, state directors of agriculture, and federal Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) officials. Vigorous enforcement of the origin labeling provisions of the Federal Seed Act will help to ensure that farmers have the ability to purchase seed that is adapted for the area of intended use and have the assurance that the seed they are purchasing is of represented quality.

11.12 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

(Updated September 2009)

NASDA supports recommendations that enhance National Organic Standards (NOS) and the National Organic Program, (NOP) and efforts to increase growth of the organic industry. These efforts include increases in organic research and in the collection of organic production and market data. For purposes of trade, NASDA supports the establishment of bi-lateral agreements on the equivalency of organic standards provided those standards are truly equivalent.

National Organic Standards

National Organic Standards (NOS) are necessary to protect organic growers, consumers, and markets and to ensure a consistent and practical National Organic Program (NOP). A successful program, however, cannot be accomplished without adequate dependable funding and a transparent regulatory process. NASDA supports the following policies.