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TO: NARD Washington DC Conference Attendees
FROM: NARD Staff
RE: 2023 NARD Washington DC Conference

NARD 2023 Washington DC Conference

2023 NARD Washington DC Conference – Fifty-five NARD members, representing 15 NRDs, were in Washington DC this week attending the annual NARD Washington DC Conference. On Monday and Tuesday attendees participated in sessions to learn more from federal agencies and partners about natural resources issues at the national level, on Wednesday, the NARD members spent a day on the hill visiting Nebraska US Senators and Congressional Representatives.

Members of the NRD delegation met personally with Senator Deb Fisher, Senator Pete Ricketts, Congressman Don Bacon, Congressman Mike Flood and Congressman Adrian Smith at the U.S. Capital. Each provided a summary of the political climate in congress and outlined their legislative priorities.

NARD staff would like to thank all the board members and staff who attended and helped bring the message of what local NRDs are doing to protect lives, property and the future of Nebraska to Washington. NARD staff would like to extend a special thanks to NARD President Orval Gigstad for leading the conference.

A summary of the presentations provided follows. Links to presentations from presenters with prepared slides are also linked in the summaries below.

Photos from the conference can be found [HERE](#).

Day 1 Speakers – Monday, March 20, 2023

Dale Nellor, Executive Vice President, National Water Resources Association (NWRA)

Dale started his career with an internship opportunity in Washington DC funded by the NARD Foundation and it has led him to where he is today.

It's important to be a part of the process and the government process can feel frustrating because you may not feel like you are being heard but it matters to be a part of the process.

We have a divided government right now and the Republicans control the House and the Democrats control the Senate. The Republicans have a very thin majority. There are 218 votes required to pass legislation and Republicans have 222 seats right now.

The focus is to bring regularity back to the appropriations process, but to do that the House and Senate must agree on an appropriation budget. It will be hard to agree on the budget numbers and most likely they won't get anything passed this year.

The challenge with the Farm Bill is funding and the baseline for the Farm Bill is continuing to decline. The National Water Resources Association is interested in the money from the Inflation Reduction Act. We will be very active in the conservation forestry title. We will be looking to expand resources of the Forest Service to address wildfires.

Next year is a presidential election year and a lot of things don't get done in a presidential election year. We are watching things closely in Clean Water Act, endangered species, and environmental issues.

NWRA's top three priorities are water infrastructure money, Waters Of The U.S. (WOTUS), and the Farm Bill. We are focused on water infrastructure projects and getting the money obligated through the departments and agencies. We are looking at how we can collaborate with these agencies. NWRA is also concerned about implementing projects and improving the efficiency of getting projects on the ground.

Under WOTUS we are interested in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, and Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). PFAS are an emerging issue that are going to be very challenging for many sectors (not just water but also agriculture). PFAS were thought to originate from Teflon and fire retardant but as they look into this, they are finding more sources.

Dillon Kuehn, Sr. Legislative Assistant, Water Strategies

The appropriated money for infrastructure projects is known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) has been passed and any federal infrastructure project will come under scrutiny of the BABAA. The Office of Management and Budget will release guidelines for federal agencies that will implement projects under their jurisdiction. Any projects under these monies, will have to follow these guidelines (construction material will need to be made in America).

Dillon summarized what committees the Nebraska Senators and Congressmen sit on.

Questions

When asked about WOTUS, Dillon mentioned a case between the Supreme Court that is expected to be ruled on shortly. Unfortunately, the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers put out a new rule recently. No matter what the Supreme Court decides, they are likely going to have to redraft the WOTUS definition.

The audience noted that the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) is slowing down the Water Smart Grants, which have a deadline and the accessibility of American-made products for water smart projects are hard to come, which increases the length of the project by 1-2 years. Republicans and Democrats are in agreement on the BABAA so some of the provisions may be easier to address.

He noted that the main water issue is PFAS, but heavy metals are also getting looked at. The PFAS or "forever chemicals" are what is driving the discussion at EPA.

He noted that nitrate as a water quality issue is not a topic that is being discussed at the national level, it's more the forever chemicals and heavy metals. Nitrate is primarily discussed on the food side and the residual chemicals left on food.

Chris Young, NACD Director of Government Affairs

Chris stressed the importance for local districts to be present in Washington, D.C. The NACD team is in D.C. to help with issues or matters on the federal level.

Chris provided a recap of the political climate. He note the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law and includes \$18 billion to fund NRCS conservation programs, including \$1 billion immediately available for technical assistance and \$1 billion for forestry management and drought control.

NACD received a \$90 million grant to strengthen capacity to scale climate smart practices and assist underserved producers. The terms of the funding are still being developed with more information coming soon.

He noted that Congress is preparing to write the new Farm Bill. Over the past year, the House and Senate Ag Committees have been holding hearings to review current USDA program operations. NACD highlighted locally led conservation district management in front of House Agriculture subcommittee hearings and at Senate hearings on conservation. This included testimony on the need to support NRCS and local partners like conservation districts. There's strong bi-partisan support for locally led conservation. NACD recently participated in a hearing last week on USDA oversight and climate smart funding.

The House Agriculture Committee has had a lot of turnover with only 15 members of 52 having participated in the development of the last Farm Bill.

Chris discussed the NACD Issue Papers that were distributed to attendees, which can be found at the following links:

- Wildlife Management - [2023-NACD-Wildlife-Management-Issue-Paper.pdf \(nacdn.net.org\)](#)
- Farm Bill Requests - [2023-Farm-Bill-One-Pager.pdf \(nacdn.net.org\)](#)
- Appropriation Requests - [NACD-FY2024-Appropriations-Requests.pdf \(nacdn.net.org\)](#)
- Forestry & Wildfire - [2023-NACD-Forestry-and-Wildfire-Issue-Paper.pdf \(nacdn.net.org\)](#)

Wildlife Management – This paper focuses on invasive and disruptive species. Locally led conservation efforts are critical to endangered species.

Farm Bill Requests – this paper focuses on maintaining locally led conservation and providing additional flexibility and power. The goal is to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach with national funding priorities. NACD seeks to streamline and simplify application and delivery processes – particularly within EQIP and CSP. NACD is asking congress to sustain \$18 billion funding that was authorized with IRA within the conservation title of the Farm Bill, hoping it would ease some of the workload of NRCS and stretch the funding over a longer period. They also asked for an examination of payment rates. They stressed removing barriers for historically underserved communities and tribes including some advance payment. For watershed funding, NACD is asking for decrease in local cost share and increase in overall funding. Right now, they are focused on practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions – asking for support of broader suite of practices, which may increase nutrient management.

FY24 Appropriations Requests – At the end of December Biden signed the FY23 appropriation bill. NACD believes the appropriation bill has been happening too late and hoping budgets can be passed earlier moving forward. The Administration is just launching the first stage of FY24 budget preparation and last week President Biden released the first draft of the budget. The preliminary draft budget was

positive for conservation and the next stage is that the House and Senate need to agree to top line spending limits.

Congress has until Sept. 30, 2023, and each member has the ability to submit appropriation requests.

NACD appropriations requests include:

- \$1.2 Billion for conservation operations
- \$200 Million for Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations Programs
- \$75 Million for Watershed Rehabilitation Program
- \$300 Million State and Private Forestry Program
- \$30 Million for Forest Stewardship Program
- \$200 Million for 319 Nonpoint Source Management

Forestry and Wildfire – NACD believes streamlining distribution of funds to local conservation districts can streamline conservation and NACD is working with NRCS to assist with those efforts.

Technical Assistance grants support a lot of work with local districts and NACD is working to make the case that these grants can help administer some of the IRA funds.

Karis T. Gutter, VP Government & Industry Affairs, North America

Karis provided an overview of Corteva business. Corteva employees 10,000 individuals across America in a variety of sectors of the Ag industry. Corteva is working with regulatory individuals at EPA and FDA.

Corteva's 2023 priorities include investing in gene-editing technology. Karis noted that current rules at USDA, EPA and FDA are 30 years outdated so Corteva is working with those agencies to update them.

Corteva is focused on ensuring trade markets are open for producers. Four years ago, they saw the first signal of instability with trade wars, tariffs and additional restrictions during COVID complicated trade markets further. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine created more instability.

Corteva is also focused on the Farm Bill. Corteva is leveraging policy for three goals: 1) food security, 2) energy security, 3) sustainability and climate change.

They are also focused on crop insurance within the Farm Bill. Corteva is part of the conversation with USDA talking about climate smart commodities to ensure farmers and ranchers have fair opportunities. Corteva is looking to provide resources for soil and nutrient management.

Karis noted that IRA is pumping \$40 billion into agriculture including money for Title II of the Farm Bill. Corteva is helping direct how those funds can be used.

Corteva has a full-time team in D.C. that can assist and support engagement in the political conversation. There are two pieces of legislation likely to move this year: 1) debt ceiling and 2) Farm Bill. What is concerning is that 90% of people setting policy for the Farm Bill have no experience of being on a farm and 70% of staff of congressional members working on Farm Bill have no experience with prior Farm Bills.

Karis noted that it's important to get to know congressional staff. The average age of entry-level staff (aides) is 24, legislative director is 26, and chief of staff 40, these individuals are the last voice voting members hear and who voting members rely on most for information.

Corteva is now the largest biological business in the world and will be helping to educate and bring sustainable offerings to market. Karis noted challenges with EPA bringing new technologies to market. The new chemistries are safer than older stuff on the market, but they're held to a higher regulatory standard.

Courtney Briggs, Farm Bureau Federation - Senior Director, Government Affairs

[Courtney Briggs WOTUS Slides](#)

Courtney provided an overview of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and WOTUS. Congress left WOTUS undefined to gain nonpartisan support of the CWA. Even though Congress wasn't clear on WOTUS, Congress was very clear about the partnership between the federal and state governments to regulate waters. We see a ping pong of regulatory definitions of WOTUS depending on who is in office.

The focus of WOTUS is the cost associated with the 404 program even though other programs depend on the definition.

The Biden Administration rule greatly expands the scope of federal jurisdiction. The Significant Nexus test created more questions than answers. It allows for the use of ambiguous definitions and allows government to assert jurisdiction as they need. WOTUS is a joint role between EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers, and they don't agree on the definitions being used.

It's the role of the states to regulate ephemeral streams.

Farmers and ranchers care because the regulations of low spots on farmlands and pastures as jurisdictional "waters" means that any activity on those lands might require a permit. That includes moving dirt (404) or applying any product (402) to that land could be subject to regulation including everyday activities such as plowing, planting, or fence building in or near ephemeral drainages, ditches or low spots. The problem with having to obtain a CWA permit for these activities, is it takes time to get the permit and money for the permit and mitigation.

March 20, 2023, is the day the WOTUS rule goes into effect in 48 states. Does not go into effect in Texas and Idaho because of a court case filed in those states.

Briggs noted the upcoming Supreme Court case – Sackett v. EPA – which questions if you can use the Significant Nexus test to assert jurisdiction over wetlands. A decision on Sackett v. EPA could provide clarity to the proper scope of WOTUS. Farm Bureau thinks there is a good chance the court will shut down the use of Significant Nexus.

She noted it is concerning you can use subsurface connection to assert jurisdiction, and this is a big concern for Nebraska with areas where depth to groundwater is shallow.

There will be another WOTUS rulemaking in 2023. People need to know where federal jurisdiction ends, and state jurisdiction begins.

Day 2 Speakers – Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Jerry Raynor, NRCS Financial Assistance Program Division Director

Jerry noted that NRCS doesn't expect very many changes to the Farm Bill. There continues to be discussions around challenges and barriers with the Farm Bill and those responses are being provided to the congressional delegates. The focus is on trying to remove those barriers that are in place.

There is no discussion of adding additional programs but focusing on improving the existing programs.

NRCS's biggest concern is if the new Inflation Reduction Act funding will be consistent with the next Farm Bill and how will that impact the budget. Additionally, staffing and partnerships continue to be challenged.

What does NRCS want to see done with the Farm bill and what are NRCS plans to make change?

When we are implementing conservation in early years it was a simple one-to-two-page application process. Many of the things NRCS are asking for is written in law. As issues have been encountered, they continue to address those issues by writing it into law to prevent the same issues from happening in the future. This has caused the paperwork to increase over the years making the paperwork heavy. Now we are looking at our policy and asking, "do we truly need this?" and we are trying to remove the barriers.

NRCS is working to streamline the application process, and every time we try to streamline the process it adds another page to the application process.

No. 1 question is what are you going to do to reduce the paperwork for a producer to participate in conservation programs? If we want to change the application process, we must change statute.

Crop insurance will not change much, we can't continue to increase the payout of crop insurance.

We are going to have to rely on land grant institutes to fill all our staffing vacancies.

How do we get NRCS to come to the producer?

Personally, NRCS should be visiting the producer but that's the difficulty we have with staffing and the amount of paperwork. We used to be structured where we could go to the producers. But that's not the way we are structured anymore. We have to get back to the point where we are building relationships between our staff and our producers. Technology is a wonderful thing, but we've lost the relationship with the producer.

As NRCS has grown, grassroots efforts have changed because there is so much funding available and NRCS is short staffed. We need to look at how to restructure our delivery system. How do we restructure so we can meet the face-to-face demand with producers yet still spend the money.

NRCS needs to get to a staffing level where they can maintain quality service with producers.

When we talk partnerships we have to look at what everyone brings to the table and use each other's area of expertise.

Megan Kenney and Laura Lee Burkett, Sen. Fischer Legislative Staff

[Megan & Laura Presentation Slides](#)

Megan and Laura briefed the group on how Sen. Fischer's team can help navigate federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

They discussed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) process. The Act authorizes projects and then you look for funding. Currently, it is hard to find the federal dollars for authorization because there is so much demand. They noted there are hundreds of projects that are authorized that have never received funding. It helps to get funding being in the president's budget.

Additionally, funding sources to consider are the State Revolving Fund (SRF); FEMA (hazard mitigation, BRIC and STORM grants); USDA programs; EPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and Economic Development Administration (EDA).

What can be done to increase our ability to cope with the stand-still mentality of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is the place to start with policy change. Let Sen. Fischer's staff know when you are having a situation with an agency and funding and the team can assist by being a squeaky wheel and move that process along. Policy change does take time, but the staff can help to try and move the process along when it's stalled.

Continuing Authority Program (CAP) was created for projects that are taking a long time like flood control, ecosystem restorations, etc. You don't have to get an authorization for this program, which can help speed the process along for smaller-dollar projects (under \$5 million).

What can we provide to Senator Fischer to make things easier for you on the hill?

We don't know what folks are dealing with unless you reach out to us. If you have a project that you are unsure of how to proceed, reach out and let us know so we can try and help with funding or move it along. Next year, we will be doing another call for projects so please reach out and let us know what you have going on in your district.

Inflation Reduction Act - where is that money going?

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) occurred through reconciliation and was pushed through without any Republican input. A reconciliation bill does not create a new program, so money is funneled through existing programs.

We have a rural drinking water project that is getting very expensive due to inflation. Is there funding?

Rural Drinking Water (Rural Water System) is an EPA program and there are also two programs through the USDA. Send us the project specifics and we can review it to try and fund a funding program that may work for your district.

Dana Ashford-Kornburger, NRCS National Climate Coordinator

[Dana Ashford-Kornburger NRCS Climate Slides](#)

Climate Smart Ag and Forestry focus is mitigation addressing causes of climate change, while adaptation and resilience address the consequences of climate change.

NRCS role in climate change includes three components – science, adaptation, and mitigation.

The three main greenhouse gases (GHG) have several intervention opportunities for each – carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane. Approximately 17% of total emissions are from agriculture (11% in U.S. with 42% of methane and 80% of nitrous oxide emissions).

Mitigation includes activities targeted at quantifiable results in reduction of GHG emissions.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding provides \$19.5 billion in additional funds for existing conservation programs. It includes direction that NRCS use additional funds specifically for climate change mitigation. The following links to Climate Smart mitigation activities: [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry \(CSAF\) Mitigation Activities List FY2023 \(usda.gov\)](#), which includes 137 activities – 39 practices, 3 bundles, and 95 enhancements.

NRCS wants to setup an opportunity for states and partners to provide input on practices they feel should be evaluated to be on the Climate Smart mitigation activities list.

The practice standards are reviewed every five years and part of that evaluation now includes how the standard is impacting climate.

Adaptation includes seven main action areas and you can see the adaptation plan online. There is a team of 52 individuals representing multiple industries and ag sectors working on the implementation work group to review the areas. Unfortunately, no one from Nebraska is on the team. Recommendations will be released later this spring and considered moving forward.

There are USDA Climate Hubs across the country doing research, compiling science, and taking those resources down to state and field level.

The public federal register process provides opportunities for review of updated practice standards including the state technical committee groups and state offices. They should be good resources for information on practice standard evaluations and updates.

Matt Filsinger, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[Matt Filsinger Wildlife Program Slides](#)

Matt summarized the partnership for the Wildlife Program. Since 1987 the program has completed more than 60,000 projects and restored 7 million acres with more than 50,000 landowners nationwide.

The program funds 240 biologist staff across the country working on threatened and endangered species.

Their budget currently operates at \$60 million and the President's proposed FY24 budget includes \$80 million; however, the program is waiting to see results of the congressional appropriation process.

There are seven focus areas across the state of Nebraska that were developed in conjunction with local stakeholders. There are more than 1,650 landowner agreements in Nebraska with 70,000 acres of wetland restoration; 475,000 acres of upland habitat restoration; and 350 miles of stream habitat restoration. Last year, \$250,000 were leveraged to complete more than \$3 million in projects across Nebraska. The Wildlife Program staff are an available resource for technical assistance.

Martin Lowenfish, NRCS Landscape Conservation Planning Branch Chief

Martin Lowenfish WaterSMART Slides

The WaterSMART program is the result of ongoing partnership between the Bureau of Reclamation and NRCS. Reclamation provides WaterSMART grants to districts for improvements and NRCS subsequently works with producers on technical and on-farm implementation.

In 2023, \$25 million in EQIP funding was available through 37 existing projects in 12 states.

The proposal process is internal to NRCS with funds awarded to the state. The process relies on the EQIP process through each state's technical committee.

Elements of a proposal must include:

- A map of the priority area;
- Description the overall water resource problem or opportunity in it;
- Identity of the priority resource concerns;
- Identity of the specific Reclamation WaterSMART Program project;
- Description of how it will be complemented by EQIP-WSI activities;
- Description of how EQIP-WSI assistance will leverage community partnerships and inclusive approaches to benefit disadvantaged communities;
- Identity of the type and extent of conservation practices proposed for implementation in the priority area;
- Estimation on the number of contracts, contract acres, and EQIP FA funds needed annually for up to five years (annual budget);
- Definition of the anticipated benefits and identity of key measures to indicate a successful outcome; and
- Description of how success or lessons learned will be shared with others.

Priority area proposals will be evaluated based on how well the proposed activities:

- Align with and complement the identified Reclamation WaterSMART Program project;
- Leverage community partnerships and inclusive approaches to benefit disadvantaged communities;
- Address a water quantity resource concern and any related secondary concerns;
- Address the overall problem or opportunity in the area; and
- Tracks progress, evaluates outcomes, and shares successes or lessons learned.

When NRCS reviews proposals they look at the partnerships formed and the local investment.

Martin provided a summary of the current Nebraska WaterSMART project in the Upper Republican NRD.

David Maurstad, FEMA Associate Administrator and Camille Crain, BRIC Section Chief

[Maurstad FEMA Slides](#)

[BRIC Program Slides](#)

David noted that storms are increasing and getting more costly across the nation, and he used the 2019 floods and 2022 wildfires in Nebraska as an example. We need to take additional mitigation actions in addition to identifying and assessing natural hazards risks and developing strategies to reduce those risks.

He noted the \$6.8 billion bipartisan infrastructure law, which provided funding to advance mitigation investments.

He mentioned the West Papio regional basin 4 project as an example of a mitigation project funded where the Papio-Missouri River NRD received \$5.34 million for mitigation efforts.

He discussed the four-legged stool approach to mitigation – Mitigation Grants, Flood Hazard Mapping, Floodplain Management, and Flood Insurance.

He noted FEMA is working on reforms for NFIP with an effort to close the flood insurance gap. He asked for assistance encouraging people to purchase insurance.

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program is funded by set aside from the disaster relief fund. The Program is administered by six guiding principles – capability and capacity-building; encouraging and enabling innovation; promoting partnerships; enabling large projects; maintaining flexibility; and providing consistency.

The FY22 application period is closed and the 2022 priorities included – activities that mitigate risk to public infrastructure and disadvantage communities; nature-based solutions; and climate resiliency.

Camille noted that funding for FY23 will most likely come out the end of summer. The application period will close in winter and be followed by review through spring 2024. Applicants can include states and sub-applicants can include local governments.

There are three categories of set aside – State Allocation, Tribal Set-aside, and National Competition. The eligible activities include – capability and capacity-building activities and project activities.

Camille provided a summary of the technical and qualification criteria. She also noted the Non-Financial Direct Technical Assistance program, which is available to provide support for communities or potential applicants to pursue applications.

Astrid Martinez, NRCS Conservation Planning Technical Assistance Division Director

[Astrid Martinez NRCS Program Slides](#)

Astrid provided a brief history including that the NRCS Watershed Programs started with the Flood Control Act of 1944.

Programs include the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program (WFPO), Watershed Rehab Program (REHAB), Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP).

The watershed funding has grown since 2017, In 2023, \$125 million for WFPO, \$2 million for rehab, and \$925 million for EWPP.

EWPP provides recovery assistance through the federal emergency declaration. EWPP practices including streambank and shoreline protection; critical area planting; clearing and snagging; obstruction removal; mulching; etc. Astrid provided an overview of the EWPP process including that it provides protection from flooding and soil erosion when necessary to safeguard lives and property when a natural occurrence causes a watershed impairment. She covered several EWPP success stories.

The WFPO program purpose is for flood protection, erosion, and sediment. Some of the statutory requirements include public sponsorship; watershed projects up to 250,000 acres; max total capacity of 25,000 acre-feet, and 20% of benefits must be agriculture/rural related and include an authorized NRCS watershed plan EA/EIS.

The process is phased and includes the following: PIFR, planning, design, and construction. The purposes of the program include flood prevention, watershed protection, fish/wildlife/public recreation, agriculture water management, municipal & industrial water supply and water quality management.

Astrid provided an overview of the Dam Rehab Program. NRCS has built more than 11,850 dams in 1,271 watersheds since 1948. The main purpose of this program is to make sure the existing dams continue to protect and serve the communities nearby. To be eligible, the dams must be originally constructed by NRCS; past their evaluation life; and the operation and maintenance must be upkept on the dams.

The Dam Assessment Program looks at the possibility of rehabilitating a dam to the federal standard.

Wayne Stoskopf, National Corn Growers Association Director of Public Policy

National Corn Growers Association's Four Primary Farm Bill priorities:

1. **Protect Crop Insurance:** focus on and do no harm to current programs. Some of their efforts are focused on addressing affordability.
2. **Strengthen Price Programs:** bolster international market-development markets. The existing programs have not seen an increase in about 20 years.
3. **Conservation:** there are a lot of dollars through IRA and Climate Smart available for conservation, but efforts are needed to shore-up working lands. There are also efforts by NCGA to bolster the Farmers for Soil Health Program to increase use of cover crops.
4. **Weed Resistance:** within the Farm Bill, NCGA is looking to address weed resistance. This is a growing issue and the more that can be done to address it the more NCGA can focus on conservation programs like no-till. The Farm Bill may be a mechanism for a new program to fund full-time coordinators for conservation programs such as nutrient management. NCGA is also working to expand transparency of NRCS practice standards.

There was a lot of emphasis outside of the Farm Bill to increase conservation. The NCGA's full-time staff in D.C. is focused on conservation, sustainability, and water quantity and quality, which are all top-of-mind as NCGA's sustainability goals.

Year-round E15 (gasoline with 15% ethanol) continues to be a priority for NCGA. NCGA petitioned EPA for year-round E15 and EPA is looking at regulations for year-round E15 by 2024.