Milwaukee hosts Convention ’08, offering elections, workshops

CRP early-out bad idea for America’s grain producers

Sept. 28 brought good news for grain growers - and their bank accounts.

USDA Acting Secretary Chuck Conner announced there would be no penalty-free releases from the Conservation Reserve Program.

National Farmers had recommended against early release of CRP acreage, which would bring significantly more land into production, and ultimately negatively impact grain markets for producers.

“National Farmers’ focus remains on improving producers’ ability to earn their returns from the marketplace,” said Gene Paul, National Farmers ag policy analyst.

The National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) had cited shrinking global grain stocks as a rationale for allowing penalty-free early outs from the CRP. NGFA predicted that without a CRP policy reversal, shrinking grain stocks could cause potentially severe rationing of grain by as early as the 2009-2010

New York dairy family encourages quality mindset in next generation

Family ties mean camaraderie and partnership for the Skip and Selena Clark family, Cambridge, N.Y. As the third generation on a family farm launched in 1924, success in the high-quality dairy operation means continuing a tradition.

And the story continues beyond Skip and Selena, to their three children, Tyler, 15, Taylor, 13, and TONYA, 11. Those three make up the Clark’s generation four in the family tree of dairying and agriculture. That fourth generation – and all the ways they help on the farm and experience agriculture – means the world to Skip and Selena. All three kids enjoy working with the cattle, and Taylor has been dubbed their little herdsman. “We miss her a lot when she’s at school,” Selena said. “She checks the cows’ feet, tags them and tells us when a cow is sick.”

Tonya’s interest in farm life is growing. “She’s very proud of being a farm kid,” Selena said.

Tyler finds the crop work in Skip’s custom crop business - with 2,000 acres of corn harvest this year – most rewarding. “He helps in the field in the summer and on weekends. And he talks about farming himself someday, including milking 500 cows.

“My hopes are that they continue to farm it, because it’s a three-generation farm,” Skip said. The Clarks are in the process of purchasing another farm of a similar size to their home place for when their kids are ready to start.

Still, the Clarks make no assumptions about their children’s eventual career paths. They try to balance their children’s activities
President’s Message
By Paul Olson

One of the best ways to steer your farm toward ag success in 2008 includes putting National Farmers national convention and a trip to Milwaukee, Wis., on your calendar. Convention offers a great opportunity for our producers to talk with one another, get ideas and hear from National Farmers ag marketing and risk management professionals.

We are looking forward to a productive, positive national convention in Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 14-17. I am inviting you to participate in this important event, and help chart the course for the farm organization that focuses on putting more revenue in your operation.

While in Milwaukee, you’ll hear from your commodity marketers and risk managers in the Grain, Dairy and Livestock Divisions, learning what may lie ahead in the commodity markets, and how it will impact your operation. For dairy producers, the panel discussion “CWT: What’s next?” will include Steve Larson of Hoard’s Dairyman and Dr. Jim Beatty of Louisiana State University.

Looking back at 2007, and commodity marketing opportunities it brought to us, shows it was a year of better prices, and more opportunities for farm profit. At National Farmers, our negotiators and risk management consultants capitalized on the circumstances for you.

The better pricing opportunities of 2007, provide a solid step forward, and we as producers can use this to make financial progress in our operations, meet equipment upgrade goals, livestock investments and so on. A similar plan holds true for your commodity marketer.

National Farmers leaders and staff are using their knowledge and experience to build on marketing programs that work for you, the producer.

We’re tuning up and emphasizing our most successful efforts at the farm level, and tracking new opportunities for grain, livestock and milk sales. Our risk management staff in each division are analyzing strategies to secure protected prices and contracts for you, and tracking industry changes.

In the organization, we’re focusing on ways to assure you, our producers, receive service and information when you need it. The organization will continue to center itself around progress for you, on your farms and ranches. These are all ways we can build on the best year in commodity marketing we’ve seen in some time.

As 2007 closes, I can look back on the year with gratitude for many blessings in the organization, on the farm and with my family. I wish each and every one of you a merry Christmas, and a happy, prosperous New Year. I hope to see you in Milwaukee.

We are looking forward to a productive, positive national convention in Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 14-17.

National Farmers est. 1955
Collective Bargaining for Agriculture

THE REPORTER
The Voice of family farmers and ranchers
The NFO Reporter is published six times a year by National Farmers Organization, 528 Billy Sunday Road Ames, Iowa 50010-2000 (515)292-2000 e-mail: nfo@nfo.org
Internet: http://nfo.org
Non-profit third class postage paid at Princeton, Minn.
Postmaster: Send address changes, along with mailing labels, to: The NFO Reporter, 528 Billy Sunday Road, Ames, Iowa 50010-2000.
Subscription price for members, $1 per year; for non-members, $5 per year.

MaximumMarketing services deliver profits to America’s dairy, grain and livestock producers.

National Farmers Credentials Reminder
County Officers: Send in your delegate lists for Convention 2008 ASAP.
District Officers: Send in your names of delegates elected to serve on committees at national convention ASAP.
States desiring to pay their members’ registration fee must provide written notice from the state president, delivered to the Ames, Iowa, office by Dec. 31.

National Farmers Union Vice President of Government Relations Katy Ziegler, stressed the importance of increased collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) this fall.

In testimony before the House Small Business Subcommittee on Rural and Urban Entrepreneurship, Ziegler relayed the importance of establishing a permanent disaster program for agricultural producers. Existing disaster programs at SBA are not available to producers who lose production as a result of weather-related disasters.

“Farmers and ranchers have no control over the weather and can face devastating losses, yet a permanent disaster program will eliminate the timely and tedious process of ad hoc disaster assistance,” Ziegler said.

She also noted while rural America faces many challenges, there are also a number of opportunities for growth and revitalization, such as fuels from the farm. “Because of the advancement of renewable energy production, we have witnessed the plywood boards coming off main street businesses, instead of going up,” Ziegler said.

Ziegler encouraged the subcommittee to work with their colleagues to ensure all federal incentive programs used for renewable energy development give a competitive advantage to farmer-owned and locally-owned efforts.

Grain producers urged to retain CRP acres
—Continued from page 1

“The EU has released their 10 percent set aside to be put back into production, which will restore a sizable amount of acres to production,” said Paul. And Brazil has increased their soybean plantings this year.

Most American CRP land consists of marginal acres, which would be planted to soybeans or wheat.

National Farmers extended its thanks to Acting Secretary Conner and USDA for the foresight in protecting land and producer income.

Information about CRP can be obtained at local Natural Resource Conservation Service offices.
NFO commends nomination of former North Dakota Governor Schafer as ag secretary

National Farmers commended former North Dakota Governor Edward Schafer’s nomination to become U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

“We look forward to Governor Schafer building upon his past record and solid North Dakota tradition of putting people first,” said National Farmers President Paul Olson. National Farmers members believe Schafer would join other North Dakotans in Washington who are strong supporters of independent farmers and ranchers, and understand agriculture’s challenges.

North Dakota is a state built on a rich history of independent, family farm agriculture and Schafer could look to Senators Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) and Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), and Representative Earl Pomeroy (D-N.D.) as his guideposts on farm-related matters.

As governor, Schafer worked to open new markets for North Dakota farmers and ranchers by expanding trade with China. He oversaw the development of the state’s agricultural biofuels industry. He helped families recover from natural disasters — including drought, fires and floods.

He pioneered innovative programs to increase economic opportunity in rural communities.

Former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns has noted that Schafer has been a leader in developing value-added products for agriculture and believes that farmers will approve of Schafer. “What you see with Ed is what you get,” Johanns said.

The Secretary of Agriculture heads a Cabinet department of more than 100,000 employees.

Clark family enjoys MaximumMarketing’s competitive pricing premiums, good service

—Continued from page 1

with sharing responsibilities on the farm. “The kids are involved in sports and we don’t push them, so they end up doing what they want.”

When he was 18, Skip started on other farms — another brother was on the home farm, so there wasn’t room for another 30 cows. And he wanted to do his own thing. So he spent four years on his own, then returned to the home farm.

He has been farming for 23 years.

Their 325-acre home farm lies within one mile of the Vermont border, and its mountainous terrain means just 50 of those acres are tillable. This home farm started with Guy Clark Sr., then Guy Clark Jr., and then Skip, who is Guy Clark III. It provides a place for the dairy, and they rent and own land in various locations, the farthest being 30 miles from the Cambridge dairy base.

Selena manages the dairy, handles the milking with one full-time milker, and sees to feeding the calves. She was raised on a small dairy farm, also in Cambridge.

The Holstein dairy consists of 98 milkers. They stress producing quality milk — earning Super Milk awards from the Super Milk program in New York almost every year. Achieving this goal comes from putting cow comfort at the top of the list. They make sure they produce and feed their bovine ladies quality feed. Skip grows 1,200 acres of corn and chops it for silage for use in the dairy. Plus they use sand bedding — always. They also keep the facility well-maintained and updated. A freestall built 10 years ago has been added onto.

In the operation, they milk twice daily, each session taking 3 1/2 hours, tallying up to nine hours of work with cleanup.

“I enjoy the dairy cows,” Selena said. “I like the family aspect of it, the hard work, the togetherness. Raising children on the farm. Responsibility to be adults.”

Their cow breeding is handled with AI, and they generally raise their own replacements. And Skip talks with the nutritionist weekly to assure the feeding program will meet the cows’ needs and their goals for the dairy.

For marketing, Skip connected with National Farmers because his brother also ships his milk through the MaximumMarketing program. “So we switched and we’re very satisfied. The pricing is good and the people are very good to work with. We’ve had good luck with them,” Skip said. They’ve marketed their milk through National Farmers for 10 years. The pricing premiums are competitive, too, he added. “The good service from our rep makes us feel really good, too.”

Hog producers encouraged to market aggressively; decrease animal weights

Nov. 26-28, U.S. pork packers processed more than 1.3 million hogs, a historic level. That means processors could slaughter nearly 14 percent more hogs than just one year ago.

In mid-October, National Farmers Organization, concerned about family pork producers’ economic viability, urged producers to market aggressively and decrease animal weights.

“Aafter a long run of good prices, America’s pork producers face a double-troubling scenario of dramatically falling price levels, assisted by a record-breaking supply, and escalating input costs,” said National Farmers Organization President Paul Olson. “We’re encouraging producers to get those weights down and market hogs.”

That’s why the organization of farm and ranch members supports the position that it is time to balance supplies with domestic and international demand, and that producers should consider cutting back on farrowing. “We urge National Pork Producers and their state affiliates to come together and find a way to manage the supply of hogs until the demand grows enough to keep production profitable, ” said NFO Livestock Director Garry Crosby.

In the summer, Chinese pork orders came in at about half of what market analysts had predicted. But on a positive note, analysts predict that if China decides to purchase more U.S. pork, prices could recover.

Often in rural areas, state economic development efforts have encouraged expanding hog and milk production, to build the local tax base and increase jobs. But, in some cases those local incentives have created an increase in commodity supply levels. “When naturally-occurring, market-driven forces create expansion that’s one thing, but when state-sponsored economic incentives drive expanding numbers, it can cause an oversupply situation and lower prices, which can harm all producers,” Crosby emphasized.

NFO livestock marketing advisers have encouraged producers to protect a percentage of their hogs against downside markets. “Some producers are comfortable with 60 percent, and others with 20 percent, but it’s best to have a risk management program in place all year,” said Crosby. Profitability is of utmost importance because it affects all rural Americans.
Convention ’08 kicks off Jan. 14

Company (including its historic caves), and a trip to Usinger’s, a German family sausage maker.

The Milwaukee City Center Hilton Hotel lies in the heart of downtown, just a short walk from the lakefront, and only a block away from the famous Grand Avenue Mall.

The nation’s second largest brewery and 7th largest brewer in the world, Miller Brewing Company has served Milwaukee since 1855. And Lakefront Brewery, located along the Milwaukee River is a mecca for the most sought after award-winning suds like Riverwest Stein, Cream City Pale Ale, Eastside Dark, Cherry Beer, and Holiday Spice to name a few.

The Discovery World at Pier Wisconsin offers interactive activities, the latest technology, fresh and saltwater aquariums as well as a digital high-definition theatre. It’s brand new and you won’t want to miss it!

---

M O N D A Y  J a n . 1 4

8:00 am Board of Directors
10:00 am Bylaws Committee
2:00 pm Resolutions, Credentials Committees Registration
3:00 pm Committee Meetings
3:00 pm Resolutions
3:05 pm Credentials Committee Registration
5:00 pm Committee Meetings
5:00 pm Arrangements Election & Tally
5:00 pm Delegate Registration

W E D N E S D A Y  J a n . 1 6

7:15 am Member Appreciation Breakfast - Sponsored by Wisconsin State NFO
7:30 am Chapel
8:00 am Registration
8:15 am General Session
8:30 am Commodity Division Reports
10:30 am Member Break - Sponsored by CROPP & Organic Valley
11:45 am ACGA’s Keith Bolin
12:30 pm Exhibits open
2:00 pm National Farmers Workshops
  • Dairy Workshop
  • Livestock Workshop
  • Grain Workshop
  • Women’s Workshop
3:30 pm Break sponsored by National Farmers
  • Dairy Producers
  • Organic Valley Workshop
  • NForganics Workshop
  • Securian Advisors Workshop
  • The 2007 Farm Bill Workshop
8:00 pm Evening Dance featuring Passion
  Farm Kids for College Raffle Drawing

T U E S D A Y  J a n . 1 5

7:30 am Convention ’08 Welcome Breakfast
8:00 am Chapel
8:00 am Registration
8:45 am General Session
9:45 am Preliminary Committee Reports
10:30 am Member Break - Sponsored by Dairy Management, Inc.
10:45 am Financial Report
1:00 pm Gene Paul
1:15 pm Bylaws & Membership
3:00 pm Member Break - Sponsored by Clark County Wisconsin NFO
3:15 pm Ag Columnist Alan Guebert
3:30 pm Vice President Ron Mattos
4:15 pm Resolutions
4:30 pm Old and New Business

T H U R S D A Y  J a n . 1 7

6:30 am Maximum Marketing Breakfast
7:30 am Registration
8:15 am General Session
8:20 am National Election events
10:30 am Member Break - Sponsored by Dairy Management, Inc.
10:45 am Institute For Rural America—Cindy Fitterling
11:15 am Seating of Directors
Noon Ag radio commentator Rod Thorsen
12:30 pm Convention Closing

---

American Corn Growers Association

American Corn Growers Association’s national convention will be held in conjunction with National Farmers Convention ’08 at The Hilton Milwaukee City Center Jan. 17-20.

For convention details call 202.935.0330 or visit: http://www.acga.org/convention/

---

Convention Sponsors

Our complete family of National Farmers Sponsors

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
Foremost Farms USA
DMG Dairy Management Inc.
Organic Valley
RSM McGladrey
Organic Valley
Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
Foremost Farms USA
If you love food or beer, this tour is for you! You’ll hop on a luxury coach at convention end and head to Saz’s, voted #1 for the city’s best barbecue and ribs. The buffet lunch features a choice of BBQ riblets or meatloaf with Saz’s Vidalia onion sauce, and all the trimmings.

After lunch, the bus will take you to the Miller Brewing Company, in business since 1855. Experience a three-screen video before watching the brewing and packaging process firsthand. Next, you’ll get to ride the bus and visit the historic caves, where the beer kegs were kept cool in the early days. Then you’ll visit the tasting room where everyone 21 years and older (i.d. required) can enjoy frosty beer samples, or request a soda.

Finally, a trip to Milwaukee wouldn’t be complete without a stop at Usinger’s, where you can shop for delicious bratwurst, summer sausage, ham, frankfurters and link sausage. You’ll arrive back at the Hilton at about 5 p.m.
Voluntary incentive program introduced in Iowa legislature to reduce livestock odors

By Sarah Nelson

Since Mid-November the cattle market has slowly started to wake from its slumber of the previous weeks. Product value is increasing, carcass weights are decreasing, retailers are featuring beef more now than they were a month ago, and the cash market is gaining some strength.

The Cattle on Feed report indicates the combination of feeder cattle price decline, corn costs, uncertainty of exports to Asia and negative consumer sentiment have feedlots nervous about increasing their numbers.

On Nov. 26, Canadian cows will again be allowed across the border. But, the impact is anticipated to be minimal. NCBA’s Chief Economist, Gregg Doug reports lack of proper age identification will disqualify most Canadian beef cows. And, transportation costs, strength of the Canadian dollar and excess Canadian packing capacity will also be deterrents. In addition, only a few cull cows are waiting to be killed due to capacity Canada has added since 2004.

Feeder cattle imports from Canada have averaged 16,108 head since mid-September compared to last year’s figure of 5,364 during the same period. CattleFax estimates a 211,000 head increase this year compared to last year’s figure of 16,108 head since mid-September compared to last year’s figure of 5,364 during the same period.

Meanwhile, feeder cattle prices have dropped about 9 percent from their mid-September highs, while corn prices have been increasing.

What’s in store for 2008? The USDA recently adjusted its forecast to range between $87 and $94 per cwt. Adjusted its forecast to range between $87 and $94 per cwt.

November farm prices received increases 2 points

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in November, at 143 percent, based on 1990-92=100, increased 2 points (1.4 percent) from October. The Core Index is up 2 points (1.4 percent) and the Livestock Index increased 3 points (2.1 percent).

Producers received higher commodity prices for soybeans, eggs, corn, and broilers and lower prices were received for lettuce, hogs, cattle, and broccoli. The overall index is also affected by the seasonal change based on a 3-year average mix of commodities producers sell. Increased average marketings of milk, cattle, cotton, and cottonseed offset decreased marketings of soybeans, peanuts, potatoes, and lettuce.

The preliminary All Farm Products Index is up 24 points (20 percent) from November 2006. The Food Commodities Index, at 147, increased 2 points (1.4 percent) from last month and increased 27 points (23 percent) from November 2006.

Prices Paid Index Up 1 Point

The November Index of Prices Paid for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates (PPIW) is 161 percent of the 1990-92 average. The index is up 1 point (0.6 percent) from October and increased 13 points (8.8 percent) above November 2006. Higher prices in November for diesel fuel, complete feeds, and gasoline offset lower prices for feeder cattle, potash & phosphate materials, and hay & forages.

A comprehensive plan to reduce livestock odors received unanimous, bi-partisan approval in November from the interim Livestock Odor Study Committee of the Iowa Legislature.

The proposal calls for a five-year project to provide incentives to producers to utilize technologies available to reduce livestock-related odors.

The proposal, which calls for $22.7 million in funding spread out over five years ranging from ($3 million to $5.8 million per year) was jointly presented to the committee by Department of Natural Resources Director Richard Leopold, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey and Iowa State University Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Wendy Wintersteen.

“Odors associated with livestock facilities have been a divisive issue for far too long in our state. It is time to re-direct our efforts into finding effective, long-term solutions,” said Leopold.

“The fact that a bi-partisan committee of Legislators can agree that this proposal offers a significant opportunity for progress on this very difficult issue is definitely a giant step in the right direction,” Leopold added.

The interim committee, which commended Iowa State University, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for its work in developing a plan that could lead to odor reduction efforts at hundreds of livestock facilities around the state, has directed staff to begin working on language for a bill. The proposal will later be considered by the full Legislature in the upcoming session.

Under the proposal, applied research cost-share incentives would be offered to producers to adopt technologies designed to reduce odors including methods such as biofiltration, diet manipulation, manure storage covers, vegetative environmental buffers, and siting assistance to producers. A second level of more experimental technologies that would be explored include wet scrubbers, biocurtains, ultraviolet light treatment, topical treatments and digesters.

Iowa State University would be conducting the monitoring and research to measure the effectiveness of different methods on emerging technologies used to reduce odors. Data collected would be aggregated to evaluate variables such as effectiveness, design, costs, and management.

“We believe the research component is key to finding the long-term solutions that will best serve Iowa’s citizens,” said Wintersteen.

Leopold emphasized that the goal of the project is to put odor reducing technologies at hundreds of livestock facilities around the state.
This summer, wheat led the grain markets higher. Catastrophic shortages. World wheat production problems pressured levels for the first time since 1996. The price all led commodity funds to enter the market. Because of ethanol production and soy oil tied to the crude oil market, the USDA's first estimated planted acres would climb out of the February lows. We would climb out of the February lows. Then move down again into February. The market would decline in December, experience a slight bump in January and then move down again into February lows. We would climb out of the February lows to encourage acres ahead of the USDA's first estimated planted acres report in March. The last year has been anything but normal. Farm policy that mandated increased ethanol production and soy oil tied to the crude oil price all led commodity funds to enter the market in record numbers, pushing prices to profitable levels for the first time since 1996. It also encouraged farmers to plant an extra 15 million acres of corn. Because of 600 million bushels of ending stocks for soybeans from 2006, the 8 million acres cut in soybean plantings did not create shortages. World wheat production problems and shortages triggered another round of buying. This summer, wheat led the grain markets higher.

Before Marketing Plus for Grain was designed and branded, the major focus of our studies were charts. How did markets react in short crop years, long crop years, El Nino or La Nina years, RSII's and stochastics affect, and the affects of farm bills on prices. We found that in a normal crop year, the market would find its harvest lows and then we would experience the "dead cat bounce," which has not been your friend. But again, this has not been a normal year. We are making sales for our Marketing Plus members during these profitable times, not only for 2007 crop, but also 2008. How high can a dead cat bounce? There are no guarantees, but with a good harvest behind us, a slowing of ethanol expansion, speculative funds holding huge positions, and a new farm bill being written, don't miss opportunities. In 1996, when Freedom to Farm was being written, it was rumored that we had achieved a new plateau in grain prices and we would never see $2 corn or $5 soybeans again. Eighteen months later we were learning how to use the LDP.

We saw harvest lows on corn and soybeans on October 1. The dead cat bounce started and took off like a jet. Now we are entering the time frame that most dead cat bounces come to an end. But again, this has not been a normal year. We are making sales for our Marketing Plus members during these profitable times, not only for 2007 crop, but also 2008.

Now we are entering the time frame that most dead cat bounces come to an end. But again, this has not been your normal year.

By Linda Reineke

Maximum/Marketing for today's dairy producer has been the blue print for many producers to follow while working toward goals they expect to achieve. In most instances, today's dairy producer wants an effective strategy to eliminate price volatility. It is this premise that makes the foundation for Maximum/Marketing. To gain desirable results, a plan must first identify what the objective is and then move forward. Maximum/Marketing is designed to fit the needs of all dairy producers, large or small. It offers flexibility with both long-term and short-term goals. It gives dairy producers market muscle by working together with other dairy producers across the country.

Dr. Richard A. Levins, one of the country's leading thinkers on farmer marketing power said, "When farmers become more powerful players in the food system, they will receive the full share of profits they deserve." Levins also stated, "Maximum/Marketing puts the power of price negotiation to work for you."

Through Maximum/Marketing, dairy producers become part of a nationwide bargaining group. Experienced negotiators, Dave Kaseno, Gary Schmiesing, Ron Stetzer, Terry Nelson, David Inman and Jim Steier work closely with lead negotiator Nick Nerheim to secure the very best sale.

Maximum/Marketing was created to enhance "Collective Bargaining" and give dairy producers strength in the marketplace. Convention '08

During the past year or so, I've spent a lot of time thinking about what might be next for CWT (Cooperatives Working Together). I'm sure you have, too. Will we keep it centered on herd retirements and export enhancements, or move to another model that might even better serve the interest of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own?

You are invited to a special workshop we are conducting at National Convention this January in Milwaukee. Several knowledgeable guests will participate in a convention workshop Wednesday, January 16 to discuss the future of CWT.

Consider joining us there. The guests are Dr. James F. Beatty, Louisiana State University, Steve Larson, Haardt's Dairyman, Dr. Richard A. Levins University of Minnesota and Jim Tillison, CWT.

The workshop will have a large audience of dairy producers. Prioritize an ag business trip to Milwaukee. Perhaps, the workshop discussion will lead us in a new direction that will benefit all of us.

By Brad Rach

Most rumors leaking out of the recess meet-ings indicate that the number of amendments allowed would be in the range of 10 for each side. But that the Republicans could offer their irrelevant issues. Of course, some democrats want to offer unrelated amendments as well–as an ag jobs program to provide national immigration of farm workers. Like the tax amendments, this is an issue that belongs to other committees, but the Senate is generally more accommodating on procedural questions. However, even if the Senate completes and passes the farm bill this year–it still has to be reconciled with the House approved bill, and a possible presidential veto threat will have to play out. So, my fairly safe prediction is that the 2007 Farm Bill is morphing into the 2008 Farm Bill.

Washington's Cash-dollar reports Farm Bill timing uncertain

In the last days of November, during the Congressional Thanksgiving recess, backroom solutions were sought to break the Senate logjam which prevented substantial movement of the farm bill on the Senate floor earlier in November.

The House passed its bill in early August and President George Bush threatened to veto either current version. It appears the Senate may make more progress on the bill during the two week December session, but few observers believe the bill will be wrapped up until next year.

Most major food and agricultural interests expressed their support for the Senate to resolve its stalemate and move ahead with the bill this year. The delay encouraged more game playing, and there were about 250 amendments pending for the farm bill.

The current impasse is based on procedural questions in the Senate and not farm policy or spending issues yet to be addressed on the Senate floor. In short, Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) wanted to limit the number of Senate floor amendments to 20 and wanted to restrict floor amendments to matters which are relevant to the farm bill. Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) charged that "relevant" is not a legal term and that Reid was simply trying to decide which amendments Republicans were allowed to offer. However, Republicans did have in mind offering amendments to eliminate estate taxes and make changes to the alternative minimum tax which would have been a stretch even by the loose Senate rules.

Reid felt these important non-ag amendments should be dealt with separately from the farm bill and offered a motion to limit debate and proceed to votes on the pending amendments--but the motion failed.

So any farm bill movement until after the Thanksgiving recess was halted and possibly delayed until 2008.

This type of maneuvering is not unique, nor limited to the farm bill. Despite the fact the bill is a great target because of its cost and impact on every single American. But, those same factors mandate the bill must be dealt with, and a lot of people will receive a lot of what they want.

Most rumors leaking out of the recess meet-ings indicate that the number of amendments allowed would be in the range of 10 for each side. But that the Republicans could offer their irrelevant issues. Of course, some democrats want to offer unrelated amendments as well–as an ag jobs program to provide national immigration of farm workers. Like the tax amendments, this is an issue that belongs to other committees, but the Senate is generally more accommodating on procedural ques-tions. However, even if the Senate completes and passes the farm bill this year–it still has to be reconciled with the House approved bill, and a possible presidential veto threat will have to play out. So, my fairly safe prediction is that the 2007 Farm Bill is morphing into the 2008 Farm Bill.
Make your Convention '08 Hotel reservation

Hilton Milwaukee City Center
509 West Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414.271.7250

Room rates – $80 single - double, plus state and local taxes.
Deadline to receive this room rate is December 21, 2007

Arrival date: _______________  Time: ______  Departure date: _____________
Name: ______________________________  Share with:________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________ State: _______   Zip:  _________
Telephone: (      ) _________________________ No. of people: ________________
Room type requested: (   ) 1 person  (   ) 2 people  (   ) 3 people (   ) 4 people
(   ) Smoking   (   ) Non-Smoking
Credit Card for guarantee: (   )AmEx   (   )Visa   (   )MC   (   )Discover
Card Number ___________________  Guarantee signature __________________
Expiration Date ________________

Cancellation Policy: 48 hrs prior to arrival
Check in time: 3:00 p.m.  Check out time: 11:00 A.M.
1 night's deposit with check or credit card is required.
Call 414-271-7250 and ask for the National Farmers group rate.
To FAX your reservations: 414.271.1039

Convention '08 Jan. 14-17, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Board of Directors of NFO, Inc., will make recommendations to delegates at Convention '08 to modify the membership agreement.

The recommended wording modifications will ensure that the Membership Agreement complies with the Bylaws as amended by the delegates at Convention '07.

The Board of Directors will also recommend that membership dues be increased from the current $75 to an amount determined by the delegates.

Article VIII of the current Membership Agreement contains language about how modifications can be made. The language, which calls for area meetings, is cumbersome in today's farming environment.

At the time this language was adopted, there were enough members in every chartered county to hold area meetings. But the geographical dispersion of members today makes it ineffective to conduct area meetings, or ratify decisions of the delegates attending national convention.

Because of that, the Board of Directors is establishing one and only one area meeting for the purpose of modifying the membership agreement.

The area meeting will be held January 15, 2008, at 1:15 P.M. during our national convention in Milwauk ee. All members in good standing who attend at Convention '08 will be allowed to vote on the Membership Agreement modification.

Members who cannot attend Convention '08 should discuss these proposed changes with their

The National Farm

ers Executive Board has voted to assign a surcharge fee of $50 to the annual membership fee of $75.

Because of increased

The National Farmers

work for America's family producers, and for the future of agriculture.

www.maximarketing.org

- Provides price premiums
- Fulfills needs of today's organic producers
- Connects you to OFARM—giving you marketing intelligence

QUICK FACT: As of 2002, 57.5 percent of ag producers listed farming as their primary occupation. Source: USDA Economic Research Service

• Provides price premiums
• Fulfills needs of today’s organic producers
• Connects you to OFARM—giving you marketing intelligence

From the National Farmers Organization...