

Trade and Crop Technology Committee

Report to NGFA Board of Directors

September 2024

I. Key Issues:

- Summer Fly-In
- Mexico Non-GMO
- EU Deforestation

II. Committee Activities:

- A. Summer Fly-in:** The 2024 NGFA Washington Fly-In was held June 3-5. Members of the NGFA Executive Committee, Business, Merchandising and Operations Committee, Ag Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee, and Trade and Crop Technology Committee met with nearly 100 Members of Congress and Federal Officials to discuss the Farm Bill, NASS County Estimate Reports, WRDA, and the importance of trade to the industry. Details for the 2025 Fly-In will be available soon.
- B. Meeting with U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador:** NGFA attended an in-person meeting with USTR Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Small Business, Market Access, and Industrial Competitiveness Sushan Demirjian and senior USTR staff along with several representatives from the agricultural, chemical, and manufacturing industries to discuss international trade issues. Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Demirjian spoke to the group for over an hour and provided a detailed update on industry specific trade issues related to either the EU or the WTO. Representatives from the ag industry highlighted the importance of better access to international markets due to a more competitive global marketplace and the projected decrease in exports of U.S. grains and oilseeds in the coming year.
- C. EU Deforestation:** The Trade Sub-committee met to discuss NGFA's position on the implementation of EU's deforestation regulation on Jan. 1. Specifically, the regulation imposes strict rules in terms of due diligence to all companies wishing to export soybeans to the European market to prove that the products do not originate from recently deforested land or have contributed to forest degradation. The committee recommended that NGFA work with NAEGA and NOPA to develop a document providing a summary of the industry's position on the issue as well as background information and FAQs. The group also agreed to wait on developing the material until getting further information from the U.S. Soybean Export Council.

III. Other Activities:

The committee and NGFA staff also were engaged in the following activities from March 2024 – September 2024:

- The committee is continuing to monitor the status of Mexico's decree calling for a phase out of the use of GMO Corn (and glyphosate) for human consumption by participating in meetings with other producer and agribusiness groups to discuss strategy and next steps.
 - In June a USMCA dispute panel met in Mexico City and heard arguments from the U.S. and Mexico over Mexico's ban on GM corn imports for human food. The

U.S. worked to show how Mexico's biotech rules are not based in science and therefore violate USMCA. A final decision is expected in November. President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum announced agronomist Julio Berdegué will serve as her Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. In an interview following the announcement, Berdegué noted his intent to maintain the cultivation ban on genetically modified crops and stated he does not agree with the import of GM corn for human consumption.

- In August, the Commission on Constitutional Issues of Mexico's House of Deputies approved a bill that seeks to constitutionally ban GMO corn, advancing a constitutional reform initiative by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. While it is similar to the decree calling for a phase out of GMO corn, there are some distinctions, including the introduction of new vague terminology, i.e. broken corn and grain fragments and non-science based criteria for risk assessment. In addition, the scope could also impact gene editing.
- NGFA staff attended a breakfast on April 10 hosted by the European Union Delegation to the United States in cooperation with the U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade for a discussion with the Acting Director International of the Agriculture and Rural Development Directorate in the European Commission on the EU's trade policy and EU-U.S. trade relations in agriculture. Specific issues discussed included EU Deforestation, recent farmer protests in the EU and free trade with Ukraine.
- NGFA staff provided an update on NGFA's biotechnology policy and focus on continued outreach and communication on April 15 to the Ag Biotech Alliance that is composed of producer groups and tech provider companies.
- NGFA staff attended the April 17-18 BIO Ag Summit that included presentations by government and industry reps regarding the role of biotech in addressing climate change and sustainable farming, among other topics.
- On May 20 NGFA participated in a webinar hosted by USSEC regarding the status of the EU Deforestation issue.
- On June 18 NGFA and NAEGA staff met with the Global Stewardship Group to discuss the introduction of their Plant Breeding Innovation Program and Transgenic Technology.
- NGFA staff met with the Center for Food Integrity on June 24 to discuss CFI's origin of source verification program.
- On July 30 Alpine Bio provided an update on a cheese product made from their plant-produced casein. The Crop Technology sub-committee also held a virtual meeting to discuss in-person meeting dates and priority issues.