

Trade and Crop Technology Committee

Report to NGFA Board of Directors

March 2024

I. Key Issues:

- Based on a recommendation from the Committee Task Force, that was approved by the Board in September 2023, the Crop Technology committee and the International Trade/Ag Policy committee were disbanded and replaced by a new **Trade and Crop Technology Committee**, which has a **Trade Subcommittee** and a **Crop Technology Subcommittee**.
- **Matt O'Mara**, Senior Director, International Government Relations at ADM is serving as the Trade and Crop Technology chairman. **Augusto Bassanini**, President and CEO at United Grain Corp. is serving as the Trade Sub-committee chairman and **Andrew Utterback**, Global Lead for Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture at Ingredion is serving as the Crop Technology Sub-committee chairman. Jess McCluer will serve as the principal NGFA staff liaison to the full committee and each sub-committee.

II. Committee Activities:

- A. Meeting with U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador:** NGFA attended an in-person meeting with USTR Ambassador Katherine Tai and senior USTR staff along with several representatives from the agricultural, chemical, and manufacturing industries to discuss international trade issues. Ambassador Tai spoke to the group for over an hour and provided a detailed update on President Biden's November meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping as well as several other industry specific trade issues related to either the EU or the WTO. Ambassador Tai noted that the supply chain and market access has been volatile and unpredictable over the last several years due to COVID, regional conflicts and digital transformation, e.g., A.I.

Ambassador Tai noted that China is our most important trading partner and there are many challenges that have yet to be addressed due to a lack of communication because of COVID and leadership changes in the Chinese government. She also said that the controversial weather balloons that were sighted over U.S. military bases in 2023 caused delays in addressing important issues. Ambassador Tai said that U.S. agriculture is productive and strong and that diversified supply chains will build further confidence in the U.S. economy. 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.

- B. Trade and Crop Technology Meeting:** NGFA hosted a meeting with representatives from fourteen trade associations in the corn, soybean, and wheat value chains to discuss NGFA's new committee on Trade and Crop Technology. The discussion was used to help craft the agenda for the committee's kick-off meeting at the NGFA annual conference in March. Topics included: China's most favored nation trade status and WTO enforcement of agreements; EU deforestation, sustainability, and gene editing regulations; EPA-FDA-USDA *Coordinated Framework for Biotechnology Regulatory Approval*; Mexico non-

GMO corn and trade disruption at Eagle Pass; domestic and international stewardship programs; pesticides and MRLs; and the status of Bioceres HB4® GMO wheat trait.

- C. APHIS Grain Sector Meeting:** NGFA attended the annual APHIS Grain Sector meeting where senior leadership from the agency provided an update on the status of important sanitary/phytosanitary topics for grain and oilseed stakeholders. Representatives from NAEGA, U.S. Soybean Export Council, American Soybean Association, National Association of Wheat Growers and U.S. Wheat Associates also attended. Domestic and international issues discussed included: status of potential changes to *Coordinated Framework for the Regulation of Biotechnology* and various U.S. grain exports to South and Southeast Asia: Vietnam: Dried distillers grains (DDGs), soybeans, and wheat (weed seed concerns); Thailand: DDGs, corn, and sorghum (new market access); and India: Sorghum (new market access). Other topics included: ephyto certificates, Japan's new requirements on fumigation documentation and the phytosanitary certificate requirements and the ongoing discussions with China on various issues.

III. Other Activities:

The committee and NGFA staff also were engaged in the following activities from September 2023 – March 2024:

- The committee is continuing to monitor the status of Mexico's decree calling for a phase out of the use of GM Corn (and glyphosate) for human consumption by participating in meetings with other producer and agribusiness groups to discuss strategy and next steps.
 - In early February, a tentative schedule was published for the USMCA dispute in which the United States is challenging Mexico's ban on genetically engineered corn. Hearings should take place in June with a final report issued in November.
- NGFA presented to the American Seed Trade Association's (ASTA) Plant Breeding Innovation Committee at their annual meeting, Dec. 11 in Orlando, Fla. The presentation focused on NGFA's new Trade and Crop Technology committee, NGFA's biotechnology policy and the concerns and priorities of the commodity value chain.
- NGFA participated in a panel discussion with representatives from ASTA and CropLife America during a meeting of the ASA's working group on innovation and marketing, Jan. 24 in Arlington, Va. The discussion focused on seed innovation and the needs of the grain industry in the global market.
- In January, NGFA along with several other agribusiness and producer groups met with staff from the House Ways and Means Committee's Trade subcommittee to discuss several policy recommendations that were part of a [report](#) released by the House Select Committee on Communist China back in December. The group specifically highlighted the serious repercussions on the ag economy and exports if China's permanent normal trade status is revoked.