



Southern Seed Association

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Delivering Value that Serves the Membership

**April/May
2009**

Seed Industry Washington D.C. Fly-in

SSA In Partnership with ASTA

April 28-29, 2009

Pat Miller, ASTA Director of State Legislative & Regulatory Affairs

The weather was rainy and cold, but that didn't deter the 26 participants of the Washington DC Seed Industry Fly-in from making their 60 appointments with Congressional members and staffers. The theme was "Advocacy Matters" with the focus of the event to raise the profile of the seed industry discuss priority seed issues with government policy-makers. By all accounts, the event was a success.

Because the new administration in Washington DC has many challenges before them, they are seeking factual information for their new directives. For the seed industry, this presents an opportunity to present the realities of this dynamic industry. As a result of the visits, the Members of Congress, and the Senate can now put a "face" to our vital industry. The issues discussed included intellectual property rights; energy/conservation; trade; stewardship and immigration to name only a few.

To prepare the participants for their appointments on the Hill, a warm-up program included presentations by ASTA staff on protocol for the appointments, a state-of-the-state policy update by Tyson Redpath, Leshner & Russell, Inc., (governmental consultants) and a visit by Michael Gruber from the office of Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA) to outline the current considerations at the Capitol. To wrap-up the program, all of the participants met to present their impressions of their Congressional visits day. Even though everyone was tired from lots of walking during the day the energy level remained high throughout the evening as everyone related their stories from the day.

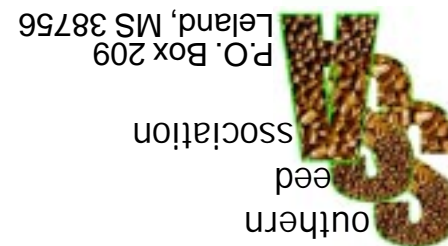
The participants remarked that the Congressmen and their staffers were very receptive and wanted to know more about our industry. Obviously, the industry has a positive story to tell and it was well timed. During the visits, invitations were extended to the Congressmen to visit their seed business they next time they come home. All were excited for the opportunity and said they would try to work that into their schedule.

On a very important side note; SSA Executive Director Richard Taylor was presented with the MVP Award for his efforts and ideas for the production of the fly-in. The SSA's participation definitely made the event successful.

The next time you feel that you don't have any input into the efforts of our leaders in Washington DC, ask a participant of the fly-in – they will tell you that they found out that is not true.

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- D.C. Fly-In
- Planting/
Crop
Production
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- From Richard's
Desk
- Calendar of
Events



P.O. Box 209
Leland, MS 38756

Schedule of Events

June 15-17, 2009
Florida Seed Trade Association
Key Largo Marriott Bay Resort
Key Largo, FL

June 20-24, 2009
ASTA 126th Annual Convention
Gainey Ranch Resort & Spa
Scottsdale, AZ

July 12-14, 2009
Georgia Seedsmen's Association
Sandestin Beach & Golf Resort
Sandestin, FL

July 12-14, 2009
Alabama Seedsmen's Association
Sandestin Beach & Golf Resort
Sandestin, FL

July 16-18, 2009
South Carolina Seedsmen's Association
Crowne Plaza
Hilton Head Island, SC

July 25-28, 2009
North Carolina Seedsmen's Association
Hilton Riverside
Wilmington, NC

Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2009
Missouri Seedsmen's Association
Resort of Port Arrowhead
Lake of the Ozarks, MO

Nov. 15-17, 2009
Texas Seed Trade Association
Hyatt Regency - Lost Pines
Austin/Bastrop, TX

Jan. 15-19, 2009
91st Annual Southern Seed Association Convention
Royal Palms Resort & Spa
Phoenix, AZ

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Richard Taylor
Leland, MS

Planting/Crop Condition Report

Alabama Report:

May has been unusually wet in Alabama. Field crop plantings are somewhat behind but making progress. We anticipate a reduction in corn, peanut and cotton acreage with a moderate increase in soybeans. Grass seed sales, primarily Bahia grass, are at a record low. Small grains look good with harvest underway in South and Central Alabama.

Jim Bostick, Alabama Crop Improvement Association

Arkansas Report:

Wheat: May 1 – Last dry day wheat was good – since then the crop has gone south – Scab Glum Blotch – test weight – fields ran out of nitrogen, state average yield will be down 10% – 20% - 40 to 50 bushel range. Will not harvest over 400,000 acres.

Corn – The crop varies – rated average – a lot of yellowing lost oxygen – need sulfur, needs nitrogen, needs zinc – weed control – estimated planted acres 250,000 – 300,000.

Rice – Crop conditions – all over the board – NE AR- very stressed – some of the crop under water will make it and some will not – 30% hasn't been planted as of Friday May 15. Maybe 10% will have to be replanted. Estimated acres 1.4 to 1.5 million. Farmers will shift to soybeans the week of May 25 if it rains anymore.

Soybeans – Crop conditions – as of Monday May 18 we were 26% planted compared to 5 year average of 48% - Predicted was 3 – 4 million but could go up 3.5 -3.6 million – of the 26%, 5% to 10% replanted. The early soybeans are starting to look good.

Jim Craig, Stratton Seed Co.

Georgia Report:

This spring has been very unusual for us. It started out cool and wet for most of March. Then April came with more big rains. The ones in South Georgia had planted corn washing away in the fields. Our corn acreage was going to be close to the past. But, since all the rain, I think they will go to the Soybeans.

I see a lot of farmers converting to several lines. Instead of growing two crops, they will be more diversified. The Lawn and Garden business has been exceptional. More vegetables are being planted than I can remember in my 30 years of the industry.

I think we will have a good summer in wildlife products as well.

Prices are in the tank for most of the grass seed industry. Maybe they need to be where we can move some excess products.

Tony Harper, Athens Seed Co., Inc.

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From Richard's Desk

The saying that "All good things must come to an end" has unfortunately hit home. SSA office manager, Louise Etheridge will retire at the end of this month. Louise has been a dedicated employee of SSA for 3 1/2 years and for 15 years with my private seed company. Even though I feel like I am losing my right arm, I know you join me in wishing her the best in a well deserved retirement. Louise has had the pleasure of getting to know many of the wonderful SSA members via phone conversations and e-mail. She will always treasure her newly developed friendships.

SSA welcomes Kim Ware as its new office manager. Kim is quite capable and with her experience will no doubt do a fine job in this capacity.

Please contact the SSA office if we can ever be of assistance.

RICHARD TAYLOR

SSA
91st Annual Convention
Royal Palms Resort & Spa
Phoenix, AZ
Jan. 15-19, 2010

Louisiana Report:

Louisiana crop conditions are quite weather dependent! Southwest Louisiana had an early start to the crop planting with rice and corn planting beginning in early March. The cool & windy second half of March and all of April slowed crop progress but it has rallied with the warm nights and warmer days of May. North Louisiana has struggled with near constant rain. Corn planting stretched from March through May with numerous replanting. Some rice is still waiting for a weather break to be planted along with cotton, grain sorghum, and soybeans. Wheat harvest began on May 9th in South Louisiana with yields and quality being good. Crawfish crop is now plentiful and affordable - Ask for "Louisiana Crawfish" at you local grocery & restaurant!

Michael Hensgens, G & H Seed & Outdoor Store

Mississippi Report:

From April through mid-May, the word in Mississippi agriculture has been WET, WET, WET. The State's corn crop is now finally planted, albeit a little yellow. Soybeans are probably 60% planted on average, but expecting significant replants due to early May rainfall that accumulated as much as 10" or more across large areas. The Rice crop is over 90% planted and off to a good start (something likes all that water). Cotton, unbelievably now a much smaller crop in the Magnolia State (maybe 300,000 acres – down from 1,230,000 acres in 2006!) is less than 50% planted with some replanting and a great deal of first-planting still to go. The winter wheat crop is small but mature, and ready to cut as soon as growers can get their combines in the field – call the outlook cautiously optimistic.

Weed control, in all Mississippi crops, may be a challenge due to the wet start and the inability to work fields for a number of weeks. Early season fertility is also a big concern that will need to be addressed soon; some estimate that 50% of pre-plant Nitrogen has been lost to denitrification. There is no doubt that good subsoil moisture holds the promise of a bountiful harvest but right now, with the calendar quickly approaching June, the State's growers and seedsmen are just ready to put the long planting season behind them and move on to the next stage.

Bud Hughes, Verdant Partners, LLC

New Mexico Report:

New Mexico moisture conditions have not changed we are dry – dry - dry!!!

Northeastern New Mexico has had some spotted moisture over the last two months, while eastern and southeastern New Mexico has remained dry. Crops were planted on a normal schedule for the dairy industry. Corn silage planting is mostly finished and forage sorghums are just beginning to be planted here in central eastern NM. Dry spring winds have made for reduced yields in wheat silage. What was cut was very expensive due to high pumping cost. Dry weather has the forest service and grassland areas of NM being watched with great concern for potential fire damage. We have seen unusual temperature swings for this time of year more on the high temp side. Dry-land farms are waiting for some moisture to plant grain sorghum and forages. Alfalfa is NM number one crop the dry weather is great for hay production, so we know someone is always happy here.

Planting/Crop Production Report Cont'd.

North Carolina Report:

Crop conditions in North Carolina have been mixed this spring. April was dry and hot with 90 degree temperatures many days the last two weeks. This was good in that wheat diseases have been minimal but the crop yield may have been reduced. We still expect a very good crop on the reduced acres this season. Corn planting is mostly complete with good stands and early growth. Cotton and soybean planting is getting underway. Wheat harvest will begin by the end of May as the dry hot weather speeded maturity and double crop soybeans should be planted mostly in June. Tobacco was transplanted beginning in mid-April and many stands were destroyed by the hot dry conditions and wind swept sand. There has been a shortage of additional plants so farmers are struggling to get their crop acres set again.

We are still at a deficit moisture level but rains have been widespread during these two weeks in May and another storm is wetting the coastal counties today. This will help young seedlings get off to a good start. We look forward to some drying now so wheat harvest can begin.

Phil Farmer, AgriPro Coker Wheat

Northwest Report:

The Northwest vegetable seed production has, as it seems is the norm the last couple years, has been impacted by adverse weather. The bi-annual crops seemed to be impacted by the sub-zero temperature of the winter with results of some fields of carrots being lost or severally damaged. It is reported that some onion seed production were lost and additional acreage sustained damage rated from "almost no damage to 50 - 60 % reduced yields". Most brassica's (turnip, collard, kale, cabbage, kohlrabi) seemed to winter well.

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The issue of concern at this point is the late freezing temperatures (26 degrees on May 10). The brassica’s are in full bloom and could be impacted by the freeze.

The spring planted crops are very late as the cold wet spring has kept the ground temperatures well below normal, and the rains made most “on time planting” impossible. As a result, we expect well below normal yield on peas, and many other small seeded varieties. Beans are not scheduled for planting for another couple weeks and we are hopeful for a normal planting schedule. Most acreage is contracted with growers.

Inventories are very low; consequently, any reduced yields will be felt by the consumers as stocks on many varieties are gone. As we expect a late harvest this year due to the cold wet weather and the low inventories, early shipments to “carry us until new crop” will be very few and small.

Doug Dorsing, Dorsing Seeds, Inc.

Virginia Report:

Wet, how wet depends on how many localized showers fell on you in the last 10 days—some areas have received 2 inches, some as much as 10 inches. Worried about scab in wheat—too early to tell for sure but conditions are just about textbook. Corn is planted, looking pretty good; waiting for fields to dry out enough to plant beans.

Howard Tabor, Southern States Coop.

Planting/Crop Production Report Cont'd.

Oklahoma Report:

Our Oklahoma weather has been normal of late, unpredictable and unsettled.

As you maybe aware we had an April 6th and 7th freeze that pretty well took care of the southwestern Oklahoma drought stressed wheat crop. Many of these producers were able to disaster their crop, collect insurance, and begin planting sorghum and forage sorghum. They have been rewarded by regular rains after planting, every day for 3 straight weeks, and now they are beginning to see their results of their plantings. As far as Northern Oklahoma, for some reason our crop survived and we will have a ½ of a normal wheat crop with far Western Oklahoma and the Panhandle's crop being better then normal.

The reduced acres of cereal rye will have varying potential to fit the reduced demand picture. We are seeing an increased interest in growing peas this year on the disaster rye acres. Oklahoma has seen an increased interest in diversifying away from continuous wheat and rye production into more row crop and oil seed acres. In the same thought we are seeing many small acreages being planted to permanent grass and also seeing hundreds of thousands of acres of CRP contracts mature. It will be interesting to see how the producer manages these acres to pay taxes, with a planter or a cattle herd.

Gene McVey, Johnston Seed Co.

Oregon Report:

Oregon seed production fields are looking good due to the wet weather conditions that we continue to experience. Very little Tall Fescue and Orchardgrass were planted this spring. There were more acres plowed than planted; which is a good thing considering both 2008 carry and the crop that will be coming in shortly.

Generally speaking Tall Fescue acres are down substantially, but likely not enough to correct current trends. Annual Ryegrass acres are about the same as last year and spikelet counts are average or above. Perennial Ryegrass acres have seen the highest reduction of any grass production in the valley, which was necessary due to high inventories. Fine Fescue production looks good, again due to ample moisture and good growing conditions. Orchardgrass is the only species that looks like it may have received damage from the recent high winds and heavy rains. Traditionally it doesn't like wet springs. Certified Orchardgrass acres are up; uncertified acres are down, with overall production about the same as last year.

Risa DeMasi, Grassland Oregon

Texas Report:

Early spring (March) Texas was still very much in a drought which severely limited planting in South Texas. Several reports show that dealers were not picking up seed to plant.

April to Mid May we have seen almost all areas of Texas getting some rain with Northeast Texas benefiting the most with several places receiving two inches or more but San Antonio south still a very dry area. At least our temperatures have been cooler and pastures in many areas have had a chance to recover.

The Texas Panhandle has received some rain and planting conditions have been more normal but much more moisture is needed. Dry land cotton areas will need rain very soon to and chance of having a crop. Much of the summer annual seed acreage in the Panhandle has been planted.

Mike Northcutt, Production Plus+

Planting/Crop Production Report Cont'd.

Texas Report:

The Rio Grande Valley and the Coastal Bend Areas of Texas are bone dry. Only irrigated crops are planted and growing at this time. Dry-land acres are a total loss. Central, North Central and East Texas have excellent moisture and crops are normal. The rolling plains area from Abilene, Texas to the north is dry. On a line from Abilene, northwest through Snyder, Lubbock, Amarillo and Dumas. The west side of this line is dry and the east side has had some rains. Dry-land acres in the Lubbock area do not have adequate moisture to plant as of this writing. There are some 3 Mil acres of dry-land in the West Texas area. Sufficient rainfall in May will cause these acres to be planted in cotton. If it does not rain in May and does in June, the majority of these acres will be planted in sorghum and sunflowers. Of course irrigated acres are in the process of being planted. Wheat acres are in trouble. Dry-land is a total loss. Some irrigated acres were damaged by an Easter freeze. There are various amounts of damage determined by maturity of the crop.

Wendell Howard, Richardson Seeds, Inc.

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