

The 2007 Farm Bill: An Opportunity for Northeast Graziers

The following are priority issues for the 2007 Farm Bill identified by stakeholders (producers, agri-business suppliers, and NGOs) involved with the Northeast Pasture Consortium (NEPC). The Farm Bill will be finalized this summer. It is bound to be different from the previous farm bill in 2002 which was written when there was a budget surplus of \$120 Billion. This farm bill is being written with a budget that has a deficit of \$250 Billion. In order for graziers to have input, they need to contact their congressional representatives before the end of May.

These are the issues and positions that the NEPC feel are important:

- Of the current bills under consideration, **the Kind Bill** or “Healthy Farms, Foods, & Fuels Act.”, best addresses the needs of NE Graziers. Ron Kind of Wisconsin is the author.
- **The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)**, and the grassland technology transfer, research and extension program that supports grassland management must be **continued and strengthened**.
- **The CREATE-21 Proposal** does not appear to be in the best interest of graziers. This plan would combine: Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Economic Research Service (ERS), and research components of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Under this proposed reorganization, the resulting National Institutes for Food and Agriculture would be directed by an executive branch appointee. This system will limit the diversity of research and instead focus it on limited issues of national importance. The structure and membership of an advisory board would seem to favor corporate agriculture at the expense of the small producer and research issues of regional importance.
- **The REES** plan is not as broad as CREATE-21, but the more limited proposal for reorganization appears to carry the same disadvantages for the small producer.

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

NEPC has signed on to a letter from the National Farmers Union in support of the effort to fund COOL. COOL is needed to enable consumers to buy foods produced in the US. Mandatory country of origin labeling for foods was directed in the 2002 Farm Bill but implementation has been postponed until 2008. The letter drafted by the National Farmers Union requests that it be moved forward and rules established for its implementation at an earlier date.

Decreased Availability Of Petroleum Will Necessitate A Change In Animal Production Regimes

The future of animal production in the US depends on research that will look at petroleum usage in relation to the production of meat, milk, and fiber production and its delivery to concentrated consumer areas. In the Northeast, pasture usage is a reliable

regime for animal production. With its proven environmental and economical benefits, the Northeast Pasture Consortium recommends that funding be made available to quantify petroleum usage for pasture based animal raising regimes and to encourage adoption of producing livestock on pasture to reduce petroleum use.

The Northeast Pasture Consortium is a private-public partnership of producers, agribusiness suppliers, and NGOs from the Northeast Region (13 states, New England to Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio), and representatives from land-grant university Experiment Stations and Extension Services, USDA-ARS, and USDA-NRCS who conduct grazing research and provide education and technology transfer. The stakeholder members of the Consortium recommend the priorities for research and educational programs. Emphasis is on dairy, beef, sheep, goat, and horse enterprises across the Northeast Region.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Please contact any member of the Consortium Stakeholder Action Committee:

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