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Inside This Issue

NEWS

1 Ag leaders push for farm bill as Congress passes temporary funding measure

2 [NGFA urges federal agencies to revise bank capital proposals](#)

3 [Updated NGFA feed safety resources available](#)

3 [Reminder: Submit recommendations for NGFA Board and committees](#)

EVENTS

4 [Nominate a fire department to win grain bin rescue resources](#)

5 [Meet with Mike, NGFA's president and CEO, on Jan. 24](#)

5 [Convention early bird rate ends Jan. 28](#)

SUPPLEMENTS

6 [NGFA accepting applications for 2024-25 CAP class until Feb. 1](#)

6 [Extra Supplements](#)

NEWS

Ag leaders push for farm bill as Congress passes temporary funding measure

Congress passed a temporary measure on Jan. 18 to keep the government funded until March, averting a partial shutdown of federal agencies. Meanwhile, House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders continue pushing for a farm bill this spring amid the funding debates.

Congress has yet to pass the annual appropriations bills to fund the government for the full fiscal year – Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced on Jan. 7 a topline deal to fund the government through the rest of the fiscal year. Appropriations committees can work on spending deals under those parameters, but in the meantime, Congress passed a third continuing resolution to avoid a shutdown that would have gone into effect at the end of this week. The House passed the legislation (HR 2872) on a 314-108 vote a few hours after the Senate passed it 77-18. Under this temporary measure, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration are funded until March 1.

The ongoing appropriations delays have fueled uncertainty about the timing of the next farm bill. In November, Congress agreed to a one-year extension of the 2018 Farm Bill through Sept. 30, 2024. Meanwhile, Agriculture Committee leaders this week have reiterated their interest in moving a farm bill during the March congressional session.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson, R-Pa., said he aims to unveil a farm bill in his committee this March with the goal of congressional passage in 2024.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., who is not running for re-election this year, outlined her goals for the farm bill in a letter to colleagues this week.

“This may be my last farm bill, but it’s not my first. If we’re going to get a farm bill done this spring to keep farmers farming, it’s time to get serious,” she noted in the Jan. 17 letter.

She cited a vision for the legislation that would include effective reference prices for all commodities and improvements in marketing loans. She emphasized the importance of crop insurance as a key tool to advancing farm bill improvements. “Whether I’m talking to farmers at a hearing, field day, or local diner, they all emphasize the importance of crop insurance,” she said.

Stabenow also said she is working with Ranking Member John Boozman, R-Ark., to double funding for trade promotion programs over the next five years. “If we act fast, the new farm bill could leverage this one-time action to bump up permanent baseline funding for trade promotion, which has not happened in the previous three farm bills.”

NGFA urges federal agencies to revise bank capital proposals

In comments [submitted Jan. 16](#) to federal banking agencies, the NGFA said recent proposals to overhaul bank capital rules would increase costs for accessing cleared derivatives markets.

“NGFA’s members and their customers depend on derivatives markets to hedge their risks and central clearing provides agricultural hedgers with confidence that they can trade contracts without fear of loss if their counterparty defaults,” noted NGFA President and CEO Mike Seyfert in comments submitted to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (Board), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). “U.S. banks are major contributors to the clearing system, and we are concerned a contraction in the availability of clearing services will have a disproportionate impact on agriculture.”

In September 2023, the Board, the FDIC, and OCC proposed a rule to increase the capital requirements applicable to large banking organizations and those with significant trading activity. The Board also issued a separate proposal that identifies and establishes risk-based capital surcharges for global systemically important bank holding companies (GSIBs).

“If the proposals are implemented as currently drafted, NGFA is concerned GSIBs will cease providing futures commission merchant (FCM) services,” NGFA noted.

“The FCM capacity GSIBs bring is necessary for hedging risk and we strongly urge the Board to modify the proposals to remove the impact on derivatives and risk management tools that end-users rely upon,” NGFA concluded. “We urge you to modify the proposals so that they do not disincentivize banks from providing this important service to their customers.”

NGFA and several other agricultural groups submitted comments in December outlining their concerns as an industry. They noted that the strength of central clearing depends on the participation of banks and other institutions as members of clearinghouses. The proposals could reduce the already low number of firms available to provide clearing services to agricultural end-users.

Read NGFA’s [full comments here](#).

Updated NGFA feed safety resources available

The NGFA reminds members that a variety of resources are available on the [NGFA's website](#) to assist in understanding and complying with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements that apply to the grain, feed and processing industry.

Among others, topics addressed by the resources include:

- Rights and obligations during FDA inspections.
- FDA regulatory guidance on mycotoxins.
- Foreign animal disease preparedness and response.
- Animal food ingredients and supplier selection.
- FDA qualified individual training.
- Sanitary transportation of food.
- FDA hazard assessment tool.
- Testing animal feeds for *Salmonella*.
- Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) questions and answers.

In addition to written resources, NGFA and Kansas State University partner to conduct Preventive Controls for Animal Food Courses that provide comprehensive information for companies that need to comply with FDA's rule for Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Food for Animals. The next in-person training course is scheduled for April 9-11, 2024, in Manhattan, Kan. More information about the course is available on [NGFA's website](#).

Questions about NGFA's feed resources or other FDA-related topics can be directed to David Fairfield, NGFA senior vice president, feed at dfairfield@ngfa.org.

Reminder: Submit recommendations for NGFA Board and committees

Members interested in being considered for the Board of Directors should notify NGFA leaders by Jan. 22 and those interested in serving on an NGFA committee should notify staff by Feb. 1.

NGFA initially notified members of this deadline in the [Jan. 12 NGFA Newsletter](#).

The Nominations Committee appointed by NGFA Chairman Greg Beck, senior vice president and chief administrative officer at CGB Enterprises Inc., will work through early February to make final recommendations for election to the Board of Directors. Electronic ballots will be distributed to NGFA member companies in mid-February. Officers and directors newly elected or re-elected will be seated at the Board of Directors meeting on March 19 occurring in conjunction with NGFA's 128th annual convention in Orlando, Fla.

Board of Directors: Anyone wishing to be considered or make a recommendation for the Board of Directors should reach out directly to Committee Chairman [Benjamin Smith](#) or NGFA President and CEO [Mike Seyfert](#) no later than **Jan. 22, 2024**.

Committees: Anyone employed by an NGFA member company who would like to be considered for appointment to a committee can reach out directly to either the staff liaison listed below or President and CEO [Mike Seyfert](#) no later than **Feb. 1, 2024**.

Committees that will meet for the first time in March include:

- **Sustainability**
 - Staff Liaison: [David Fairfield](#)
- **Feed** (This committee will include a Feed Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee and a Feed Manufacturing and Technology Subcommittee).
 - Staff Liaison: [David Fairfield](#)
- **Trade and Crop Technology** (This committee will include subcommittees for Crop Technology and Trade).
 - Staff Liaison: [Jess McCluer](#)
- **Ag Policy and Legislative Affairs**
 - Staff Liaison: [Stephanie See](#)
- **Transportation and Logistics** (This committee will include subcommittees for Rail Shipper/Receiver, Motor Carrier, and Waterborne).
 - Staff Liaison: [Max Fisher](#) and [Stephanie See](#)
- **Communications, Marketing and Membership**
 - Staff Liaison: [Rebecca Grubbs](#) and [Sarah Gonzalez](#)

NGFA has maintained the following committees, most of which will also meet in March:

- **Trade Rules**
 - Staff Liaison: [Charlie Delacruz](#)
- **Arbitration and Appeals**
 - Staff Liaison: [Charlie Delacruz](#)
- **Grain Grades and Weights**
 - Staff Liaison: [Jess McCluer](#)
- **Foundation Trustees**
 - Staff Liaison: [Rebecca Grubbs](#)
- **Rail Arbitration**
 - Staff Liaison: [Charlie Delacruz](#)
- **Risk Management**
 - Staff Liaison: [Max Fisher](#)
- **Safety, Health and Environmental Quality** (This committee will meet in February before the convention).
 - Staff Liaison: [Jess McCluer](#)
- **Country Elevator Committee** (This committee will be renamed to better reflect its scope).
 - Staff Liaison: [Max Fisher](#)

EVENTS

Nominate a fire department to win grain bin rescue resources

NGFA members should be aware of an opportunity provided by Nationwide Insurance to “[Nominate your Local Fire Department](#)” for a grain rescue tube and training. The [nomination form](#) is available online.

The annual grain bin rescue tube contest runs from Jan. 1 – April 30. In conjunction with its Grain Bin Safety Week (Feb. 18-24, 2024), Nationwide teams up with the National Education Center for

Agricultural Safety and KC Supply to award grain rescue tubes, valued between \$3,000 to \$5,000; and six-hour grain entrapment rescue training sessions at the winner's location, valued at up to \$5,000.

Since 2014, the contest has received over 11,000 nominations and has awarded grain rescue tubes and hands-on rescue training to over 332 fire departments in over 32 states saving ten lives. The most recent rescues occurred this year with one rescue on Jan. 1 in Jackson County, Ind. (which took four rescue tubes) and two men rescued in the same bin in Lepanto, Ark., on Jan 5.

Opportunities to sponsor a grain rescue tube, rescue auger, and training to a volunteer fire department are also available.

More information about Nationwide's Grain Bin Safety Week and several grain safety resources, including NGFA's Safety and Grain Quality Management video, [are available here](#).

Meet with Mike, NGFA's president and CEO, on Jan. 24

NGFA members are invited to a virtual meeting with NGFA President and CEO Mike Seyfert on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 1 p.m. Eastern.

If you wish to attend, please RSVP to sgonzalez@ngfa.org to receive the Zoom meeting information.

This is a casual meeting open to any topic for discussion.

Convention early bird rate ends Jan. 28

The early bird discounted registration fee for [NGFA's 128th annual convention](#) ends on **Jan. 28**.

Join hundreds of industry members on March 17-19 in Orlando, Fla., at the Omni Orlando Resort at Championsgate. Confirmed speakers include Scoular CEO Paul Maass; Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw; and Nathan Gonzales, the publisher and editor of Inside Elections.

During convention, NGFA members conduct association business including meetings of NGFA's committees and Board of Directors. Attendees will hear from distinguished speakers at two morning general sessions, during which NGFA will distribute several awards to industry volunteers and announce the results of its most recent election.

Nightly networking receptions allow for making connections and enjoying time with friends and colleagues on the grounds of the beautiful Omni Orlando. Have fun to benefit the National Grain and Feed Foundation with opportunities to sign up for group tours of the Kennedy Space Center and Wild Florida. And good news for golfers – this year's National Grain and Feed Foundation Golf Tournament will be held at the Omni's International Course. A 9-hole par 3 course, hitting bays and night golf at Eagles Edge, and mini golf course make this the perfect resort to enjoy Florida's golf scene, and multiple pools, hot tubs, and a lazy river make this the perfect resort to enjoy Florida's springtime weather.

Go to ngfa.org/convention to register.



SUPPLEMENTS

NGFA accepting applications for 2024-25 CAP class until Feb. 1

NGFA is accepting applications to its [Committee Apprenticeship Program](#) (CAP) **until Feb. 1.**

Apply for the 2024-25 CAP class [here](#). Applicants will be notified by Feb. 16.

CAP is designed to develop future leaders within the industry and the NGFA by allowing early-career professionals (ideally between 5 – 10 years of work experience) to become apprenticed to an NGFA committee. Once appointed, apprentices participate fully in all committee activities, including meetings, conference calls and email exchanges. They are encouraged to learn the committee's issues thoroughly and to participate actively in discussions.

The CAP year runs from March Annual Convention to March Annual Convention. A limited number of apprentice positions are available – generally, one to three per committee, based on committee size. Those interested must apply for selection, including completing an application form and sending in a resume and letter of recommendation from the applicant's current supervisor.

Extra Supplements

NGFA in the news:

World Grain: [NGFA wants revision to bank capital rules that increase cost](#)

Feed & Grain: [NGFA urges revisions to bank capital proposals](#)

American Ag Network: [NGFA Urges Federal Agencies to Revise Bank Capital Proposals](#)

Red River Farm Network: [Administration Considers Removal of Snake River Dams](#)

Grain Journal: [Labor Department Issues New Contractor Rule](#)

Other news:

Agri-Pulse: [Key legal doctrine for federal regulation may be on thin ice following SCOTUS arguments \(log in\)](#)

Feed & Grain: [Record US corn crop to speed declining feed costs](#)

RFD-TV: [USDA looks to boost ethanol production and infrastructure through a new incentive program](#)

CNN: [Johnson refuses to commit to putting an immigration deal on the House floor, if it passes the Senate](#)

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