



NCGA Position

Title: Domestic Environmental Policy
Position Number: V-A-1

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Background: Corn growers are very concerned with the health and well-being of American citizens and are mindful of the need to balance environmental stewardship with the need for a long-term, dependable food and energy supply and necessity for long-term profitability in farming. We support interaction with any organization that shares our concern for the environment.

Resolution/Position:

1. Support a domestic environmental policy based on sound science.
2. Actively work on reform of the Endangered Species Act.
3. If any public environmental demands or regulations are placed on private land, the loss of income, loss of property value including the cost of capital improvements to make those changes should be paid by the public.
4. Water Flows
 - a) Urge federal government agencies to fully consider impacts of regulating water flows on agriculture.
 - b) Urge all federal, state and local governmental agencies to expeditiously repair water retention and protection structures damaged by flooding to protect all cropland producers who wish to keep their land in production.
 - c) Support individual's water rights.
5. While noting the importance of eminent domain for the orderly growth of our country and the expansion of our land transportation system, we oppose any government action that would infringe upon property owner's rights without appeal and proper compensation. We also recognize the importance of conserving agricultural land for future generations and oppose the unnecessary use of Eminent Domain to convert agricultural lands to other uses.
6. Natural Resource Policy. Encourage a system that incorporates local farmer input as a model for dealing with farm-related environmental issues and regulations.
 - a) Encourage the development of local resource planning groups composed of agricultural landowners and producers to address local conservation and environmental issues.
 - b) Encourage the utilization of organizations and government agencies as technical advisers to the local resource planning group.

Producer Notification: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) shall issue timely notification of regulatory changes to allow individual producers adequate lead time to adjust agricultural production practices.



7. Conservation/Tax Policy
 - a) Encourage states to enact legislation providing tax incentives for crop land converted to filter strips.
 - b) Oppose taxes on the usage of crop inputs as an effort to reduce their usage.
 - c) Recommend legislation be enacted to allow farmers and landowners income tax credits for approved conservation structures and practices.
 - d) Support a change in the U.S. tax code to allow tax deductibility for permanent conservation practices to land owners who cash rent their land.

8. Support farmland protection and smart growth partnerships that would provide funding, in matching grants to states, communities, tribes and land trusts, for the purchase of development rights with the underlying fee running with the land to be used on farmland threatened by development. This program should be administered by USDA.

9. Support state corn grower association efforts to secure federal funding for state water quality efforts.

10. We support sound science-based efforts to address air quality. Current efforts by the EPA to regulate agricultural dust go beyond what is reasonable or sound science-based and should be reevaluated.
 - a) We support gathering more data and science about the human health effects of agricultural dust.
 - b) Additionally, we support Congressional oversight to review the effects of air quality standards on agriculture to ensure they are workable.
 - c) We oppose mandatory air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter on agriculture.

11. Require that any new environmental regulations show a positive cost and risk benefit analysis before implementation.



NCGA Position

Title: Global Climate Change
Position Number: V-A-2

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Resolution/Position:

1. The administration must address technical issues specific to agriculture including treaty implementation, emissions credits, consumer costs and potential economic benefits and require meaningful participation by all nations in any global climate treaty submitted to the United States Senate for ratification.
2. Support the concept of carbon credit trading through sound agronomic practices, such as conservation tillage, which leave carbon in the soil. The NCGA should explore economic opportunities of trading credits.
3. We encourage NCGA to be prepared for the introduction of climate change legislation and be actively engaged in the environmental legislative process.



NCGA Position

Title: Water Quality
Position Number: V-B

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Background: The quality of water is a critical national issue, and the efficient use of nutrients is essential for profitable crop production.

Resolution/Position.

1. Urge the appropriate federal and state agencies to work with universities, commodity groups and general farm organizations to:
 - a) Urge the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use scientifically sound health-based maximum contaminant levels (MCL) when establishing the rules for restricted use crop protection products and nutrients. State governments should use the federal standards for evaluating any need for remedial action.
 - b) Determine the methods and quantities by which contaminants enter water.
 - c) Research effects of such contaminants on human health and environment.
 - d) Acknowledge that the best way for producers to do their part in protecting the quality of our water resources is through the recommended use and safe handling of fertilizers and crop protection products. Develop and prove best management practices to protect water quality and educate farmers in their implementation.
 - e) Make the goal of maintaining and achieving quality water the mutual responsibility of all rural, urban and industrial users of water.
 - f) Acknowledge the importance of responsible nutrient use in profitable crop production.
 - g) Use state land grant university developed nutrient management recommendations for their programs.
2. Support continued funding for federal non-point source pollution programs authorized by the Clean Water Act.
3. Encourage all contractors, state agencies and individuals to properly close all test wells, abandoned wells and boreholes to protect groundwater.
4. Whether agriculture contributes to hypoxia should be determined based on sound scientific facts. We support the right of growers to voluntarily develop a plan of action to address the agricultural non-point source portion of the plan developed by the interagency task force addressing hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. We believe the plan's goals and objectives can best be administered at the local level through soil and water conservation organizations and farm groups.
5. Support an independent peer review of the original findings that non-point source runoff is the major cause of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.
6. Support voluntary non-point source programs to assist farmers in achieving water quality goals.



7. Support research on the impact of site specific application technology on the environment and agriculture.
8. Encourage any guidelines for watershed nutrient management to be constructed through watershed and statewide stakeholder input.
 - State Departments of Agriculture should manage nutrient application issues.
 - Continue promoting programs to educate producers on the benefits and need for voluntary Best Management Practices.
9. All Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plans for watershed protection programs should remain voluntary, be incentive based, and provide for farmer input into the decision-making process concerning TMDL assessment and monitoring.
10. NCGA believes that manure applied on cropland at agronomic rates using Best Management Practices should not be considered point source pollution under the provisions of the Clean Water Act.
11. Water quality cost share assistance programs, such as EQIP, should be made available to livestock/poultry facilities without bias to size or location.
12. Identify water quality, equity and usage- issues that affect corn producers, ultimately leading to future water policies.
13. Support the concept of science-based surface and groundwater monitoring on a local, watershed basis to provide a baseline set of data and to help determine the extent and sources of water quality impairment. Historical monitoring data should be considered when setting nutrient standards for surface water.
14. Encourage EPA to adopt science-based water quality standards that are reasonably attainable for the TMDL process.
15. Encourage farmer involvement and participation in watershed planning committees and state technical committees.
16. Support industry, urban and agricultural practices which continue to minimize sedimentation.



NCGA Position

Title: Crop Protection Use Policy
Position Number: V-C

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Background: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should recognize the importance of crop protection products as effective and economical corn production tools, and should recognize that, over the past few years, manufacturers of these products and corn growers have voluntarily initiated and adopted changes in use rates, application practices and additional best management practices (BMP) that have resulted in significant decreases in total volumes applied and significant increases in soil and water protection measures. We urge EPA to objectively evaluate the risks and benefits of these crop protection products using the best available science.

Resolution/Position:

1. Farmers should not be held liable if they use products according to label directions and generally accepted agronomic practices.
2. Encourage all producers to become certified applicators of restricted-use crop protection products.
3. Support efforts to increase the testing, research and adoption of science-based, environmentally safe methods and products for the control of pests and diseases. Encourage the use of these methods by agriculture.
4. Mandatory record keeping of crop protection products should be limited to restricted-use crop protection products. Confidentiality of the individual's records should be maintained.
5. Support the FQPA to take precedence over local crop protection product regulation.
6. Oppose efforts by EPA to require implementation of pesticide management plans. Support individual state water quality plans.
7. In its review of the registration of the triazines, EPA should recognize the importance of these products as effective and economical corn production tools that work well with conservation tillage.
8. Encourage and support the labeling of all crop protection product containers to clearly state the trade names and the amount of each chemical in a premix product, as well as the disclosure of this information in print advertising and promotional materials.
9. Require a cost risk/benefit analysis for the registration and re-registration of crop protection products.
10. When addressing risks of crop protection product residues in food, the most scientifically reliable estimates of risk and exposure should be used.



11. Require that any new environmental regulations show a positive cost and risk benefit analysis before implementation.
12. Oppose EPA efforts to implement zero tolerance or unrealistic spray drift policies or otherwise attempt to implement drift policy on a case by case basis.
13. With the passage of the FQPA, we recommend that the EPA move expeditiously to:
 - a) Make decisions based on sound science instead of based on default assumptions.
 - b) Register new crop protection products.
 - c) Release regulations and tolerances for products that have completed data.
14. Support the use of counterpart regulations to clarify the process of pesticide reviews under FIFRA and endangered species reviews under the Endangered Species Act.



NCGA Position

Title: Conservation Program
Position Number: V-D-1

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Resolution/Position:

1. Cost-Share Programs. Urge USDA to fund conservation cost-share programs with local farmer-elected committee oversight.
2. Urge the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide technical and financial assistance and educational resource planning programs to agricultural producers to help them meet society's expectations for clean water, clean air and healthy land.
 - a) Urge Congress and USDA to ensure that adequate technical assistance is available to agricultural producers to help them address conservation challenges.
 - b) Urge Congress and USDA to look at a long-term view of budgeting for technical assistance that balances national priorities with local needs.
 - c) Encourage USDA to explore the use of multi-year agreements when arranging Technical Service Providers (TSPs) to address year-to-year fluctuation of financial assistance.
3. Encourage NCGA state affiliates and individual growers to participate in state technical committees.
4. Support compensating producers who already utilize conservation practices in the event that a portion of future program payments are based on switching to such conservation practices.
5. Support matching federal funds to state and local governments for research and education to adapt conservation practices to a modern agriculture.
6. Conservation programs should be uniformly implemented.
7. Oppose the public use of private lands enrolled in conservation programs without owners permission.
8. Funds should be made available for agricultural uses from Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) on a cost-share basis for environmental conservation practices.
9. Support voluntary programs that create environmental incentive payments for implementation of conservation practices.
10. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) contracts should be administered as the contract was written with original intent maintained.
11. Support conservation cost-share work to be done after the 8th year of a 10-year CRP Contract without forfeiture of CRP payments.
12. Support using EQIP funds for livestock operation odor control mechanisms.



13. Support significant improvements to the application, selection and implementation process with regard to the Conservation Security Program (CSP) so that the program's provisions are fairly applied to all eligible growers.
14. Conservation Compliance
 - a) Urge conservation plans to incorporate sound acceptable cultural practices for the area and provide for the economic capability of the producer to implement the plan according to a defined timetable.
 - b) Recommend that the USDA allocate the necessary resources to adequately and fairly implement the conservation compliance requirements of current and future farm acts, including continued research to update the universal soil loss equation.
 - c) Penalties assessed to commodity program participants, under the conservation provisions of the Farm Bill, should only be the amount of the payments received on the tract found to be out of compliance.
15. Urges USDA to retain local farmer elected committee oversight of cost-share programs and the Conservation Security Program.
16. Support funding conservation incentives from sources other than the commodity title.

NCGA Position

Title: Swampbuster and Sodbuster Programs
Position Number: V-D-2

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Resolution/Position:

1. The Swampbuster provision should not apply to lands cropped or considered cropped during any one year of the 1981-1985 period. Federal program benefits should be denied only to those lands broken after the enactment of the legislation.
2. Any penalties assessed by the county Farm Service Agency (FSA) committee for violations of the current regulations should be comparable to the severity of the infractions.
3. Swampbuster and sodbuster provisions should have clear and concise definitions, with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) being the sole regulatory agency.
4. Support a simplified, timely and equitable dispute resolution process.
5. Support the rights of farmers and drainage districts to repair, upgrade, and maintain all public and private drainage systems.
6. Support the rights of farmers and drainage districts to drain, improve or maintain any land that has been changed by wind, floods or any forces beyond the farmer's control.
7. Proper compensation should be provided to property owners, drainage districts and other units of local government if delineation of a parcel of land as a wetland results in an economic loss.
8. Support mitigation banking for agricultural wetland conversions utilizing a values and functional use criteria which is reasonable and reciprocal.
9. Delineation of agricultural wetlands should be made by soil and water district boards, with state NRCS offices providing standard interpretation of wetland guidelines.
10. Support a paid wetlands reserve program.
11. A minimal effects system should be developed and implemented that would permit acreage with little or no wetland value to be exempt from regulation under Section 404 and Swampbuster.
12. To be classified as a wetland, a parcel of land must exhibit during the growing season (to be defined as historical average of frost-free days in the geographic area) all three of the following criteria:
 - a) Hydric soils.
 - b) Hydrophytic vegetation.
 - c) Saturation to the soil surface for 21 days or standing water for 15 days following normal rainfall.



13. Maps used for wetland determinations must accurately reflect the above criteria. Farmers should have the right to local on-site determinations, if they wish.
14. Oppose wetlands determinations based on the 15 days standing water criteria that resulted from failure of internal drainage due to high river stages.
15. We believe all land farmed and/or where conversion was commenced or was within a drainage district prior to December 23, 1985, should be considered prior converted and exempted from further regulation.
16. Appropriate agencies should conduct educational programs to encourage the voluntary conservation of wetlands.
17. Wetlands guidelines should allow the benefits of agricultural conversion to be considered in the Section 404 permitting process and the determination of farm program eligibility.
18. State wetland regulations should be no more restrictive than comparable federal guidelines.
19. The scope of wetlands regulation should be limited to wetland areas of 5 acres or larger.
20. Sunsetting of wetland determinations and certifications should be discontinued.
21. All regions of the country should use the same wetland hydrology criteria with no exception areas such as prairie potholes and playa lake regions.
22. Support all federal regulatory agencies claiming jurisdiction over wetlands being required to identify and coordinate their areas of jurisdiction and to submit proposed rules to public comments to avoid abuse of authority and to prevent overlapping regulations at any specific site.



NCGA Position

Title: Conservation Reserve Program
Position Number: V-D-3

Date: 7/07
Expires: 3/08

Resolution/Position:

1. Support enrollment into and renewal of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts targeted to the most environmentally sensitive land, such as:
 - a) Field borders, large waterways, filter and buffer strips and other areas needed for conservation compliance. If areas above are included, then grazing would be allowed during non-growing seasons. These targeted areas should be allowed to be managed in such a manner that would not disrupt the normal management of the entire field.
 - b) Other land that has a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Erodibility Index (EI) using a weighted average of 8 or greater.
 - c) Other land that affects water quality.
2. Oppose permanent easements.
3. USDA to ensure that payments for whole field enrollments do not exceed county average rental rates for similar land capability classes.
4. Urge that CRP rental rates should not be inflated to keep non-environmentally sensitive land in the CRP program.
5. Urge Secretary of Agriculture to allow individual states to start on conservation work prior to the land coming out of the CRP Program.
6. Support full utilization of the Conservation Reserve Program. In addition, NCGA recommends that continuous enrollment acres be fully supported and removed from the existing acreage cap.
7. Promote and support the voluntary enrollment of filter strips under the continuous enrollment provision of CRP.
8. Established waterways and turn rows should be allowed to enter the CRP buffer and filter strip program.
9. Support the rights of farmers to bring land back into production at the end of their CRP contract. Encourage utilization of sound conservation practices as land is returned to production.
10. Support allowing mechanically harvested hay crops as an acceptable rotation crop for CRP eligibility.