Soybean Farmers ‘See for Themselves’
How Local and National Regulations Affect Nebraska Farmers

Lincoln, NEB – February 14, 2012 – Eight Nebraska producers gathered in Omaha last week to take part in the first See For Yourself educational mission to Washington D.C., hosted by the Nebraska Soybean Association and funded in part by the Nebraska Soybean Board. With the added challenge to produce more food on less land while sustaining natural resources, farmers are facing increased potential regulations, including the upcoming 2012 Farm Bill. It’s more important than ever for farmers to become educated on the potential impacts of regulation.

Immediately after arriving in Washington D.C., participants started digging into the current issues, and by the end of the first day, had a deeper understanding for where representatives in Washington D.C. stand in terms of the 2012 Farm Bill, current hot-topic issues being brought forth and where various organizations stand on each issue.

From the get-go, the participants realized just how important their trip out to Washington D.C. was, and how education is the first step to understanding farm regulations. “It is critical for us to hear messages and concerns from our nation’s farmers and local people. Reach out to your congressional staff when you are back home and invite them to your farms,” said Beau Greenwood, executive vice president of Government Relations and Public Affairs, CropLife America.

The most reoccurring issue throughout the mission was the 2012 Farm Bill. Participants heard over and over again how crucial it is for the agriculture industry to pass a bill this year. “You need to think about what issues are hindering your children from coming back to the farm. Those are the issues that are most important for this next farm bill,” stated Brandon Willis, deputy administrator for Farm Programs.

While many speakers were enthusiastic about a bill being passed, many were apprehensive and are giving it a 50/50 chance. Participants came back to Omaha with a deeper understanding for topics such as crop insurance, biodiesel initiatives, child labor laws and pesticide spray drift.

Participants heard from various organizations and speakers including, Krysta Harden, Chief of Staff, USDA; Doug O’Brien, Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development; Beau Greenwood, Executive Vice President of Government Relations and Public Affairs, CropLife America; and William Murphy, Administrator for the Risk Management Agency.
“I now have a deeper understanding of the current issues affecting agriculture, and with the education I received through this mission, I can stay abreast of all the issues directly affecting Nebraska farmers,” said Nathan Dorn, farmer from Hickman, NE. “We heard over and over again how important it is for us to reach out to our local government officials when we are back at home and I now realize the impact we could have with a simple visit.”

The soybean checkoff is a federal program meant to increase farmer profitability by driving demand for soybeans. Each time a farmer sells soybeans, one-half of one-percent of the market price is collected from the sale. Half of those dollars remain in Nebraska for state-specific projects. The other half is sent to the United Soybean Board to be used for national and international programs.

The nine-member Nebraska Soybean Board collects and disburses the Nebraska share of funds generated by the one half of one percent times the net sales price per bushel of soybeans sold. Nebraska soybean checkoff funds are invested in research, education, domestic and foreign markets, including new uses for soybeans and soybean products.