Federal Government Steps Up Commitment to Bio-based Products, Farmers

LINCOLN, Neb. (2/24/12) – The Nebraska Soybean Board (NSB) commends the recent announcement by the Obama Administration encouraging executive departments and agencies to take full advantage of the Federal BioPreferred program.

Established by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, the Federal BioPreferred program was created in an effort to, “promote rural economic development, create new jobs, and provide new markets for farm commodities,” which will help increase U.S. energy security and independence.

The announcement, which reinforced the Obama Administration’s commitment to “drive innovation and economic growth in rural America,” adds meat to the bones of Executive Order 13514, which aims to promote sustainable product acquisition throughout the Federal Government.

The administration is now calling on Federal agencies to follow Executive Order 13514, which requires sustainable acquisition goals and milestones to be reported annually. The Executive Order also requires agencies to ensure that 95 percent of new contracts for products and services advance sustainable acquisition, given that they meet agency performance requirements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) currently includes 64 categories and an estimated 9,000 products on the preferred Federal procurement program; however, fewer than half of the known bio-based products available are currently included in the program.

Therefore the announcement directs Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, to increase the number of categories of bio-based products designated and individual products that are eligible for preferred purchasing by 50 percent within the next year. By increasing the number of products available under the Federal procurement program, the administration hopes to increase overall procurement of bio-based products.

“We are very excited by the announcement coming from D.C. on the Federal BioPreferred program,” said Greg Greving, NSB chairman and soybean farmer from Chapman. “Increasing the amount of products on the list will hopefully encourage further research and development of products that can be made from sustainable resources, such as soybeans. Finding new uses for our agricultural products are a great way to strengthen rural economies while working to lower our dependency on foreign oil used in petroleum-based products.”

For more information on bio-based products, please visit http://www.nebioproducts.org.

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.

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