



# News & Views

*A Monthly Publication Dedicated to the Feed, Seed, Grain and Farm Supply Industries of Wisconsin*

## What WASA Does ■

A member asked the other day in what issues the association was involved. Our reply was there were many, and we gave several examples to the member. He stated he had no idea all that the association did and was involved as he had really only paid attention to his little corner of Wisconsin agribusiness. He stated it would be helpful to the membership to share our conversation with you.

The main function that WASA performs is legislative and regulatory leadership and representation. This work involves a lot of time and effort to build and develop relationships of trust that extend both ways between WASA staff and legislators and regulatory staff. We believe we have that on the state level. WASA staff is the "go to" industry voice on a wide variety of agribusiness topics. Just in the past year, WASA staff has been involved in the drafting and writing of new state laws regulating the seed industry. Our goal, along with our industry members, was the development of a simplified compliance system while providing a level regulatory playing field for the industry and one that would also maintain protections for the seed-buying public. We, along with our seed industry members that worked with us, believe we achieved that. Our efforts will be presented to the Legislature next session.

As was the case with the rewrite of the seed law, WASA policy is driven by the membership. Members of the various industry committees discuss issues and present their opinions to the Board of Directors, which then decides on a course of action for the staff to execute and implement. This is not one member or one faction directing policy, but the membership as a whole as represented by the committees and the Board.

One of those member initiatives and a major legislative success this past year was the passage of a calendar-based harvest overweight truck bill. Instead of the system in the past of the Ag secretary having to declare an emergency and then have the Transportation secretary allow for the harvest exemption, WASA brought the idea to the forefront and along with a handful of producer groups we worked to get it passed and signed. That wasn't done in a day and WASA staff worked with members of both houses of the legislature and the Governor's office to get the bill past. Today, the harvest overweight exemption is automatic every September 1, because WASA first brought the idea forward.

Today, we are working with the DNR and DATCP on the development of a new invasive species rule. While you may think the only invasive species are zebra mussels and lake weeds, there are invasive weeds that if they get started in our state could have a devastating impact on our agricultural economy. WASA and the landscape and nursery association are the only two ag groups proactively working on this issue to protect Wisconsin ag lands, while maintaining access to legitimate forage crops.

Much work is done primarily on the state-level, but a fair amount of time is also done on federal issues that will impact Wisconsin agribusinesses' operations and profitability. To this end, WASA staff was the first association to be represented on the Board of Directors of the National Grain & Feed Association (in their 106-year history) and is currently the only association represented on the American Feed Industry Association Board of Directors. In both of these positions, WASA is involved in national policy issues that impact your business. In addition, WASA was the only Wisconsin ag business association to be involved in both the recent Congressional bill passage of the

upper Mississippi River lock and dam revitalization bill (and recognized as so in the Congressional Record) and the recent railroad rate and service hearings conducted by DATCP and the Public Service Commission.

As a side benefit, the development of relationships in those positions provides an opportunity to bring back information and speakers to Wisconsin for the benefit of the membership. An example of this is having the national director of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Teresa Lasseter speak at our annual convention. No other *state* ag organization convention nationwide has her as a speaker.

While many members consider the legislative and regulatory representation the most important activity of WASA, that isn't all we do by far. A second activity that is probably the most visible to the membership is our member services. These are the services such as the educational and industry networking opportunities, as well as our nationally recognized safety program. WASA provides grain grading and grain merchandising instruction opportunities for your employees that are recognized as the best in the state. Your association works with the University of Wisconsin –Madison, as well as other regional land grant universities, to present among the highest quality academic feed and nutrition conferences in the country. In just the past year, WASA, along with these universities produced the dairy beef conference and the dairy nutrition conferences. In the coming year, we will again present the dairy nutrition conference, as well as a dairy forage conference.

The WASA convention, held in conjunction with the state corn, soybean and pork producer groups, is viewed as the one of the premier shows nationwide, because of the attendance, format, speaker lineup, and networking opportunities. It is truly a national quality show in your backyard and it doesn't simply come together and run smoothly on its own. WASA staff is literally planning the next year's event before the current one is over.

A member service of which we are particularly proud is our Loss Control program. This OSHA

compliance and safety program came about by requests from the membership for real hands-on help in this area. The program was designed to provide management an affordable, turn-key solution to this vitally important issue. It was decided early on, we would not go in the direction of simply providing forms for you to fill out and leaving you to your best efforts. Instead, we went with an in-house safety professional that would help every member in the program develop and maintain a working, viable and correct program. The inquiries we receive from other states' associations asking, "How did you folks do it?" is proof enough ours is the model others are copying.

Lastly, where the areas of legislative/regulatory expertise and member services come together are the confidential, individual discussions WASA staff has with membership on a daily basis. This is the area in which we spend the majority of our time; that is, simply helping members. Everyday we speak with members calling the office, asking questions, seeking clarification on something ranging from grain accounting to where they might purchase a mechanical part for their facility and everything in between. If we don't know the answer, we find out from a reputable authority and get back ASAP. Outside of operational questions, we receive calls from members wanting to know what's happening with the industry in the state; lately those questions tend to focus on the ethanol industry. The two "Ethanol Updates" that appeared earlier this year in the newsletter were in direct response to member inquiries about what the impact would be on our industry, which the individual members upon receiving the information felt the membership in general should also see.

For many members this service provides the only trusted and knowledgeable "sounding board" they have with which to share and discuss ideas or make plans for their business. In addition, WASA staff has spoken innumerable times at the request of facility management to boards or senior management teams regarding regulatory environment and business planning to aid in the decision making process.

As the November election draws near, most political analysts believe which ever party wins the majority in Washington, deadlock will ensue at the national level. As the old joke goes, that would be a good thing. However, the serious implication of that deadlocked situation is that many issues (and the regulation of them) will either be shifted back to the states or aggressively taken by the states. Either way, agribusiness needs to be “at the table” presenting our case. Now, more than ever, you need effective and respected representation before the legislature and regulators. And that voice is WASA.

## **WASA Convention■**

**P**lanning for the upcoming convention program is in full swing and we have some great sessions and speakers. On the afternoon of the first day, we have a three hour session consisting of the nation’s greatest academic authorities on the feeding and nutrition of distiller’s grains in the country. The three speakers will cover the species on which they are most proficient, which will include dairy, beef and swine. If you’re a nutritionist and/or a feed mill operator this is a program you can not afford to miss. If you don’t think this applies to you, as a feed man, we would point out that Wisconsin ethanol plants will be producing about 90 million bushel equivalent of DDG’s by harvest of ’08. You are going to be literally surrounded by the stuff, so learn about it now from the best.

We are finalizing the lineup for the first morning and are awaiting confirmation from several nationally known speakers (whose names you will instantly recognize). We don’t want the names out until we confirm them, but if we get what we’re working on, you’ll want to be there.

And add a finale that will please everyone, UW Marching Band Director, Mike Leckrone, back by popular demand, along with members of the UW Band to perform a mini-“Fifth Quarter.”

Mark your calendars for Feb. 1 & 2, because those are the dates you will want to be in the Dells. And also remember Safety Day, held on January 31, also at the Kalahari.

## **Security Disclosures■**

**W**e continue to get questions regarding the security disclosures the state requires to be distributed to your customers. For 99.9% of licensed Wisconsin grain buyers and warehouses (the exception is the very largest), the required disclosures are listed on the accompanying insert in this newsletter.

We have recommended in the past these disclosures simply be printed on the reverse side of the customer copy of the scale ticket. For some members, this is not practical. An alternative is copying the disclosures (and inserting your business name in the appropriate spot) multiple times on a single sheet of paper, and then cut those disclosures out in strips and staple the disclosure to the customer scale ticket. Potentially messy, but effective. And yes, the disclosures have to be the exact words listed.

## **Farmers Elevator■**

**A** quick tip of the hat to WASA member Farmers Elevator of Waupun. Earlier this year, the company celebrated 100 years of operation. In the same location, and under the same ownership model, for 100 years is a pretty impressive achievement given the change that has occurred in American, let alone, Wisconsin agriculture.

Congratulations to all the crew at Farmers and here’s to another 100 years.

## **Looking Down The Road■**

**Dec 12 - 14** **Feed Industry Profitability Workshop**, by Kansas State and Texas A&M faculty – co-sponsored by AFIA, National Renders Assn., and NGFA  
**Omaha, NE**

**Jan. 31** **WASA Annual Safety Day**  
**Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells**

**Feb 1 & 2** **WASA Annual Convention & Trade Show**, held in conjunction with the Wisconsin Corn/Soy Expo  
**Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells**