When your peers and leaders of the Illinois Corn Growers Association met with almost every member of the Illinois Congressional Delegation last week, they had your profitability in mind. The top three priorities that farmers shared with your elected officials were the need for lock and dam funding, the importance of trade and new international market opportunities for corn, and the support required for a bill that would extend a Reid vapor pressure waiver to E15, allowing it to be sold in the summer months.

Each of these will have a very big impact on selling more corn and provided a much needed bump to your corn prices.

In some meetings, especially those with members of the House Ag Committee, farmers began to discuss the upcoming Farm Bill negotiations! Your comments about the importance of crop insurance were carried to Washington, D.C. and heard loud and clear.

Another important priority was guiding the future leaders of your industry! IL Corn hosted Illinois FFA leadership to give them a taste of how much their farm and agricultural knowledge is needed in Washington, D.C.

Illinois corn farmers got to connect with some of the IL congressional delegation at the Capitol Cornfest on Wednesday night, July 19th. Despite a vote called at the last minute, Illinois hosted four congressmen that evening and was pleased with the attendance. The event was a good time to connect with elected officials, getting to know them better in a relaxed environment, sharing concerns, and hearing what issues were most important to them.

Thanks to Congressman Bill Foster, Congressman Adam Kinzinger, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Congressman Randy Hultgren for taking the time to make a connection with IL Corn.
Illinois Delegation in support of RVP Bill

Senate Bill 517, also known as the Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act, would make higher blends of ethanol more accessible to those selling the fuel and to those buying the fuel. The bill makes it easier for retailers to carry fuels with concentrations of ethanol above E10 in the summer months. By reducing the limits on ethanol, there are increased opportunities to integrate it into gas stations throughout the U.S. The bill was introduced into the Environment and Public Works Committee in early March, and the goal is to make it out of committee without any additional amendments.

The Illinois Corn Growers Association hopes that the bill will pass out of committee as soon as possible.

Both Illinois Senators, Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, are Co-Sponsors of the bill.

ICGA has been pleased to work with Senator Duckworth and see her become an outspoken supporter of S. 517.

In the House, Co-Sponsors from Illinois include Congressman Bost, Congresswoman Bustos, Congressman Rodney Davis, Congresswoman Kelly, Congressman Kinzinger, Congresswoman Krishnamoorthi, and Congressman LaHood.

Illinois has such a large involvement with this bill because of its positive effects on agriculture.

There are 4 Republican cosponsors and 3 Democrat cosponsors on the bill. We hope that with Illinois leadership, the bill can be passed and higher blends of ethanol can be an option for consumers. Moving E15 into the marketplace means more corn demand and gives buoyancy to corn prices.
Waterways and Infrastructure

**Locks and Dams are in bad shape. Could Trump’s Infrastructure Package help?**

During President Trump’s speech in Cincinnati, Ohio on Infrastructure, he called attention to locks and dams. Having adequate locks and dams are an essential part of the ability of American grain to be exported. Part of what gives America such an advantage are the waterways, especially the Mississippi River, which connects the grain-producing Midwest to the Gulf of Mexico. Although we have the product, the workers, and the waterways to successfully export, waterway infrastructure is very outdated. Most of America’s locks and dams were built in the 1920’s and the 1930’s. The U.S. needs updated locks and dams in order to remain globally competitive. Today, 60 percent of the nation’s export-bound grain is transported through the inland waterways. Infrastructure is the physical structure needed for the operation of a society. In his address, President Trump named multiple examples of locks that were failing, leaving people out of work and delaying trade. In some occasions, the condition of waterways are putting people in danger. Illinois Corn Growers Association President stated in a press release that Trump is the “first president in quite some time to acknowledge the need to upgrade our inland waterways infrastructure.” As a result, IL Corn would like to see programs to modernize locks funded. Either way, it is nice to see some attention given to America’s waterways.

**ETHANOL LANGUAGE INCLUDED IN ILLINOIS BUDGET**

ICGA scored a significant win for farmers in the recent Illinois budget legislation. Moving 15 percent ethanol blends into the Illinois marketplace was more difficult due to a sales tax incentive on 10 percent blends. Under the old law, E10 had a sales tax incentive, while E85 and biodiesel enjoyed a sales tax exemption. All three of these incentives were scheduled to expire on December 31, 2018. The new law included in the budget ends the E10 incentive on July 1, 2017. Although this may seem like bad law on the surface, removing the tax incentive from E10 will actually help move E15 into the marketplace. The sales tax incentive on E10 made it cheaper for customers filling up at the pump – as long as the retailer didn’t keep that savings for themselves. The incentive put E10 and E15 on an uneven playing field which did not help retailers make a decision to sell E15. But now, with both fuel blends equal, E15 will be cheaper for consumers and retailers will want to sell it if consumers want to buy it. We hope to see E15 market growth in the near term that will help demand and your market prices. The total sales tax exemption on biodiesel and E85 was extended through the end of 2023 in the new law.
YOU’RE INVITED!

Please consider attending IL Corn’s annual November Political Action Committee (PAC) Auction on November 20th, 2017. The auction is taking place in Bloomington IL where there will be a raffle and items auctioned off. Auction items have not yet been confirmed, but examples from last year are: a gift card from Bloomington Meats, gift card from Farm & Fleet, ammunition box, a grill, and more.

The proceeds from the auction will be used to fund the Illinois Corn Growers Association PAC, which contributes to candidate and elected official campaigns. The funds are disbursed to Illinois politicians who support legislation that represent our farmers and their interests at the discretion of the PAC Board of Directors.

This auction is an event to get farmers together, and to raise money to support efforts in Springfield and Washington.

DONATE

Donating to the ICGA PAC is easy!

Simply complete your personal check and fill out the form below.

Name: ______________________
Address: ____________________
                                           ______________________
                                           ______________________
Amount: ____________________

PAC contributions are not tax deductible and cannot be treated as a business expense. For ICGA’s PAC Policies and Guidelines, contact the ICGA office at 309-557-3257.

Check out our updated website!