

For Immediate Release

Contact: Dave Warner

(202) 347-3600

Cell: (202) 641-7559

Lawmakers Ask EPA For Waiver Of Corn-Ethanol Mandate

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 2, 2012 – The National Pork Producers Council today praised a group of congressional lawmakers for asking the U.S. Environmental Protection agency to waive the federal mandate for the production of corn ethanol to help livestock and poultry producers weather the worst drought in more than 50 years.

Led by Reps. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., Steve Womack, R-Ark., and Mike McIntyre, D-N.C., 156 members of the House today asked EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to waive the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) for the rest of the year to “help ease corn supply concerns and protect American consumers, livestock producers, and the economy.”

The lawmakers’ request follows the filing Monday by a coalition of livestock and poultry organizations, including NPPC, of a petition asking EPA to grant in whole or in part a waiver of the RFS for the remainder of 2012 and for part of 2013.

The RFS requires 13.2 billion gallons of corn-based ethanol to be produced in 2012 and 13.8 billion gallons in 2013, amounts that will see the ethanol industry use about 4.7 billion and 4.9 billion bushels, respectively, of the nation’s corn.

The drought affecting most of the Corn Belt – the worst since 1956 – is expected to significantly reduce yields of grain crops, including corn. Some agricultural forecasters now are estimating that just 11.8 billion bushels of corn will be harvested this year – about 13 billion were harvested in 2011 – meaning corn-ethanol production will use about four of every 10 bushels.

“NPPC appreciates the congressional leadership being shown on this issue,” said NPPC President-elect Randy Spronk, a pork producer from Edgerton, Minn. “These lawmakers recognize that the expected low crop yields we’ll have because of the severe drought coupled with pressures on corn usage from federal energy policy will devastate livestock and poultry producers. We are pleased that these members of Congress are joining livestock and poultry organizations in formally petitioning EPA to grant an RFS waiver, a tool put in the law to address situations such as this drought.”

The members of Congress asked EPA to consider a “fair and meaningful nationwide adjustment” in the RFS. They said prompt action could help ease short corn supply concerns and “literally save jobs across many U.S. industries and keep families fed.”

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NPPC is the global voice for the U.S. pork industry, protecting the livelihoods of America's 67,000 pork producers, who abide by ethical principles in caring for their animals, in protecting the environment and public health and in providing safe, wholesome, nutritious pork products to consumers worldwide. For more information, visit www.nppc.org.