

Whittling away at ag's welcome



Advocates for ag

By TROY HADRICK

Key Points

- European regulators ignore food security and hunger.
- East and West Coast states pass more ag rules.
- The regulations whittle away at where ag is welcome.

As my wife and I travel around the country speaking to agricultural groups, we are frequently asked what regulations might be imposed on agriculture in the United States in the future.

Just look across the pond at Europe.

This week, German Agriculture Minister Ilse Aigner announced that the only genetically modified crop variety currently allowed in their country was going to be banned.

The strain in question was highly resistant to European and Southwestern corn borers. The minister apparently concluded, on her own, that it was dangerous to the environment. Five other European Union countries have banned the crop even though the European Food Safety Authority says it's safe to use and has actively tried to overturn the bans.

EU critics worry that biotech crops could be damaging the environment and human health in ways we don't understand yet. And remember, they live on a continent that just 40 short years ago could grow enough food for its citizens. Today Europe can only raise about 60% of it.

I understand the need to be cautious. However, I think it's also pretty easy to argue that hunger can be hazardous to human health as well.

Unless or until sound science can prove irreparable harm to the environment or human health, it is critical that agriculture be allowed to use technology such as genetic engineering to increase food production for a growing world population.

U.S. coasts

The other place to look for future agricultural regulations is on the East and West coasts of the U.S. Recently New Jersey livestock producers were hit with a very burdensome new law. If they have

more than seven animals that weigh 1,000 pounds or more, they will be required to have a comprehensive waste management plan.

Developing a nutrient management plan can be time-consuming and expensive. To force this onto someone who is only running a handful of cows is basically telling them to get out of the business.

Proponents of the law claim it is necessary to stop the pollution of their waterways and bays. They see these small producers as the cause of nonpoint source pollution. To me, it looks like New Jersey is just another place where agriculture is no longer welcome.

Food security

The best way to stop this type of regulation from affecting you is to be active, both politically and socially, in your community and state. The importance of a homegrown food supply has been forgotten by many people. It's up to us to remind them.

Hadrack writes from Vale, S.D. He and his wife, Stacy, created a company called Advocates For Ag. Their mission is to inspire farmers and ranchers to speak up for agriculture. They do presentations about advocating for agriculture and write a blog about the topic. For more information, contact Troy Hadrack at 605-347-9128 or see the Hadricks' Web site, www.advocatesforag.com.



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