



Changes to Your Check-off Program

Why Increase the Check-off to 2 cents per bushel?

History

In 1997, wheat producers in Texas voted to limit the assessment on wheat to 2 cents per bushel. Since that time, however, the Texas Wheat Producers Board (TWPB) has chosen to set the rate at a lower level of 1½ cents per bushel.

Budgetary Challenges

In four of the last five years, the TWPB has operated a deficit budget. Facing the prospect of historically-low crop production in 2006, the TWPB drastically reduced funding for local, state and national programs. This greatly impacted the producers that established the TWPB and benefit from its annual efforts focused on research, market development and education. Commitments to foreign market development were reduced by 90%, while domestic promotion, education and research all received 80% less funding. Again this year, the TWPB passed a reduced budget that will only allow it to touch the surface of the issues at hand.

Competitiveness Issues

Currently, the wheat industry is facing critical competitiveness issues that must be addressed. Wheat acres are on a downward trend, and over the past 20 years, wheat has lost 30% of its dedicated acres to other crops. Two of the factors impacting this trend include the lack of biotechnology and reduced research investment.

Need for Change

Like many other states, Texas has experienced a decrease in state and industry support for wheat breeding efforts. The commercialization of biotechnology was shelved by several companies due to lack of industry support and foreign market acceptance. With money flowing away from the wheat industry, the TWPB leadership felt it was time to make the changes necessary to ensure the future of Texas' research, market development and educational capabilities.

Commitment to Producers

The Texas Wheat Producers Board has made a long-term commitment to ensuring wheat production challenges are addressed and the industry remains viable. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to address these challenges with the current resources available.

Research

With increased funding from the assessment rate change, the TWPB will be able to properly address wheat's competitiveness issues. Wheat producers must have access to the best technology available in order to compete with other crops. Biotechnology has allowed other crops to make strides in the areas of increased yield, herbicide tolerance, insect and disease resistance, and drought tolerance. With new research funding, biotechnology, as well as traditional wheat breeding, can be enhanced to new levels. The TWPB also plans to expand the research and development efforts of cellulosic ethanol and biofuels.

Market Development

Additionally, new funds would be dedicated to export enhancement activities through both foreign market development and regional, quality-based marketing efforts to increase Texas' wheat market share overseas.

Education

Consumer awareness is another challenge the wheat industry must continue to address. The average consumer is unaware that our nation's safe, affordable food supply begins at the farm. One goal of the TWPB is to amplify the farm-to-table message and build widespread consumer awareness about wheat and agriculture in its entirety. The TWPB understands the challenges faced on the farm each day and works diligently to effectively address these challenges. We hope you will embrace this change in the assessment rate and work with us to build a stronger future for your farm.

Please refer questions to your locally-elected representative to the Texas Wheat Producers Board, listed below.

Bob Beakley, Ennis

Jody Bellah, Throckmorton

David Cleavinger, Wildorado

Ken Davis, Grandview

Fred Dwyer, Wichita Falls

Foy Gibson, Bend

Cagle Kendrick, Stratford

Ron Kuehler, Groom

Scott McGarraugh, Perryton

David Moore, Dumas

Gary Murphy, Dawson

Jack Norman, Howe

Ben Scholz, Wylie

Ralph Sides, Childress

Tommy Womack, Tulia