

Ag secretary has a daunting task list

WHAT would you do as Secretary of Agriculture for a month? Working with a co-sponsor, CountryMark, we asked young people that question. Find their responses on Page 4. Now we're asking you. For details, also see Page 4.

Meanwhile, it seems fitting that we take a stab at this question ourselves.

Naturally, I would like to change the world in 30 days. Slice off a gazillion tons of red tape, simplify farm program language, make soil conservation programs understandable again, start debates about land use and future food production, and thoroughly review how to streamline each of USDA's 19 major agencies — all in 30 days. During this time, I'd attend a few Cabinet meetings and keep promoting the importance of supporting alternative energy sources.

And along the way, I'd throw in a couple of trips overseas. I want a shot at convincing Europeans that it's in their best interest to accept GMOs, since the next round could lead to healthier, nutrient-enhanced foods.

Reality check

OK, so I'd stop at the North Pole and see Santa Claus, too. We need healthier snacks in kids' stockings next year.

The reality is that 30 days is a blink of the eye inside the Washington, D.C., Beltway. I would be lucky to have a one-on-one meeting with half the heads of those 19 agencies, let alone understand how they work.

I would likely figure out that slashing red tape isn't as simple as saying it should be so. Actions have unintended consequences. Planning for the Natural Resources Conservation Service to chuck tons of rule books might run amuck when the rancher in Wyoming and the farmer near Muncie try to fit the exact same practice to their land.

Truth is, there'd probably be more glad-handing and ceremonial appearances than substantive work in the first 30 days. And all the while I'm trying to wrap my mind around a debt-warping budget.

A different direction

So if I were Secretary of Agriculture for 30 days, I would try to convince the President and Congress that this is far too big a job for any one person. In fact, the agency is too big and diverse to operate efficiently. Ask 100 people on the street in New York City if they know what USDA is, and they're likely to say it's the government agency that hands out money to rich farmers. The truth is that 63% of the '09 USDA budget is devoted to "nutrition assistance," with more than \$40 billion going to food



**Indiana
Prairie
Farmer
Says**

By **TOM BECHMAN**

stamps alone in '09 — up some \$5 billion just since '07. Dollars diverted to farm support pale in comparison.

It's time Americans learn what USDA does, and where the money goes. It's time the huge agency be split apart. If that sounds like more bureaucracy, so be it. In the end, it would force more honest discussions about what farmers need,

and what welfare recipients should get. The time for getting a grip on this green-eyed monster is overdue. So I would try to promote myself out of a job by dissolving USDA and starting over.

Don't worry. Washington doesn't even know where I live. And besides, it would take far more than 30 days to unravel seven decades of bureaucracy.

ADVERTISEMENT

FARMERS SHOW ENTHUSIASM FOR THE NEW GENUITY™ BRAND FAMILY OF TRAITS



Farmers across the country were recently introduced to Genuity™, Monsanto's new family of traits designed to simplify farmers' trait selection to best meet the needs of their farms.

Many farmers are already expressing excitement for the brand. "With so many technologies on the market, it can become mind-boggling at times," says fourth-generation Brownton, Minnesota, farmer Joe Griebie, who has been growing corn and soybeans for 35 years. "I would imagine that the new system with Genuity™ will make it easier for me to identify the right traits for my farm."

Shirley, Illinois, farmer Mike Olson agrees. "The biotechnology traits that we look at must be of economic value to us," he says. "Any traits that help us economically or are less labor-intensive are traits that we are going to look at, and it sounds as though Genuity™ will help us to identify those traits."

Helping Farmers Do What They Do Best...Even Better

Genuity™ will encompass Monsanto's latest corn, soybean, cotton and specialty crop traits, as well as future trait technologies in Monsanto's research and development pipeline.

"Monsanto's science is only as good as the solutions and the value our seeds provide to farmers," says Ernesto Fajardo, Monsanto Vice President-U.S. Commercial. "That is why we felt we needed a new system of Genuity™ traits, to simplify and more clearly connect our traits with the farmers who value them. Genuity™ will help farmers make the connection between the traits they know and trust and the new trait technologies that will be introduced in the future."

"Genuity™ gives us the opportunity to position our traits as a family of innovative products that will enable farmers to do what they do best, even better," Fajardo adds.

"With all the new products available today, I'm hoping that this new system will simplify things a little bit," says Jeff Hosted of Albion, Indiana. "It can be challenging at times to decipher all the different traits and keep straight what they do for us. It sounds like Genuity™ will make this simpler and remove some of the guesswork."

"This new system will become even more helpful going forward, as Monsanto has a robust pipeline with many innovations currently in development," says Dion McBay, Monsanto U.S. Traits Marketing Lead. "Genuity™ allows us to bring together these technologies under one consistent brand."

In addition, Genuity™ seed bags will feature easy-to-read icons representing herbicide tolerance, insect protection, weather protection and increased productivity to illustrate clearly the benefits the traits offer. The Genuity™ icon system will help farmers match traits with the specific needs of their farm.

Beginning with the 2010 growing season, farmers will be able to order Genuity™ with the following traits:

- Genuity™ VT Triple PRO™
- Genuity™ Roundup Ready 2 Yield™
- Genuity™ Bollgard II®
- Genuity™ Roundup Ready® Flex Cotton
- Genuity™ Bollgard II® with Roundup Ready® Flex Cotton
- Genuity™ specialty crops, including Genuity™ Roundup Ready® Canola and Genuity™ Roundup Ready® Sugarbeets
- Genuity™ SmartStax™ (Scheduled for introduction in 2010, pending successful conclusion of the regulatory process)

For more information, farmers are invited to visit www.Genuity.com.



Monsanto Company is a member of BIO's Excellence Through Stewardship™ (ETS) Initiative. This product has been commercialized in compliance with the ETS and Monsanto Product Launch Stewardship policies, after meeting applicable regulatory requirements in key export markets with functioning regulatory systems. Any crop or material produced from this product can only be exported to, or used, processed or sold in countries where all necessary regulatory approvals have been granted. It is a violation of national and international law to move material containing biotech traits across boundaries into nations where import is not permitted. Monsanto encourages growers to talk to their grain handler to confirm their buying position for this product. Excellence Through Stewardship™ is a service mark of Biotechnology Industry Organization. Cottonseed containing Monsanto traits may not be exported for the purpose of planting without a license from Monsanto.

Growers may utilize the natural refuge option for varieties containing the Bollgard II® trait in the following states: AL, AR, FL, GA, KS, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, OK, SC, TN, VA and most of Texas (excluding the Texas counties of Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Val Verde, Ward and Winkler). The natural refuge option does not apply to Bollgard II® Cotton grown in areas where pink bollworm is a pest, including CA, AZ, NM and the above-listed Texas counties. It also remains the case that Bollgard® and Bollgard II® Cotton cannot be planted south of Highway 60 in Florida and that Bollgard® Cotton cannot be planted in certain other counties in the Texas panhandle. Refer to the Technology Use Guide and IRM Guide for additional information regarding Bollgard II® Bollgard® natural refuge and EPA-mandated geographical restrictions on the planting of Bt Cotton. ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW PESTICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS. Roundup Ready® crops contain genes that confer tolerance to glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup® agricultural herbicides. Roundup® agricultural herbicides will kill crops that are not tolerant to glyphosate. SmartStax™ commercialization is dependent on many factors, including successful conclusion of regulatory process. SmartStax™ has not been registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is a violation of federal law to promote or sell an unregistered pesticide. Bollgard®, Bollgard II®, Genuity™, Roundup®, Roundup Ready®, Roundup Ready 2 Yield™, VT Triple PRO™ and SmartStax™ are trademarks of Monsanto Technology LLC. Liberty Link and the Water Droplet Design® is a registered trademark of Bayer CropScience AG. ©2009 Monsanto Company.

We want to hear from you!

Would you like to respond to an *Indiana Prairie Farmer* article, or share comments on a topic related to ag?

Send an e-mail to tbechman@farmprogress.com, call 317-738-0565 or write to P.O. Box 247, Franklin, IN 46131.