

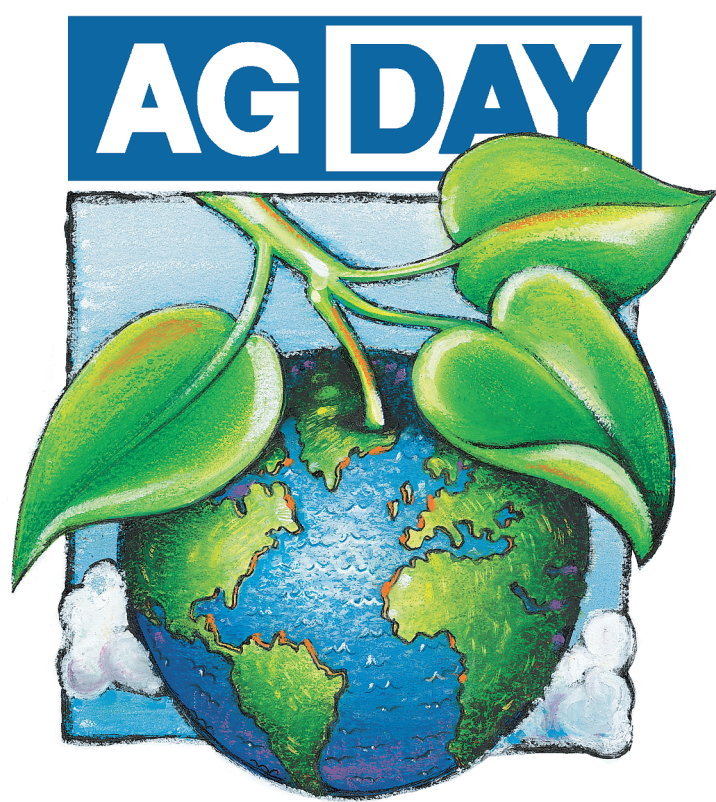
Ag Day focuses on 'convergence of food and fuel'

By Alissa Krinsky
Agriculture Council of America
 Representing more than 22 million people who work in the nation's agriculture industry, hundreds of Americans convened in Washington, D.C. on to celebrate National Agriculture Day 2007.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and Rep. Collin Peterson, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, joined farmers, Congressional leaders, representatives of corporations such as Archer Daniels Midland Company and John Deere, and others to raise awareness of the essential, dynamic role of agriculture in the world economy.

This year's Agriculture Day theme - "Convergence of Food and Fuel" - is designed to highlight the scope of American agriculture, an industry that puts food on our tables and fuel in our cars.

To kick off Ag Day, Secretary Johanns and Rep. Peterson spoke at a luncheon at the National Press Club about how American agriculture is rising to the challenge of producing both food and renewable fuels. Improving technology on the



farm and along the processing chain is helping meet the growing demand for crops used to produce re-

newable biofuels, animal feeds, foods and food ingredients. Orion Samuelson, one of the nation's most

distinguished farm broadcasters, served as master of ceremonies.

The day featured an FFA rally at the USDA's Whitten Building, attracting high school students and dignitaries from across the country. Secretary Johanns will again be on hand to address the crowd, about the future of renewable energy and agriculture in America.

Scheduled to attend were Beau Williamson, FFA National President; Greg Webb, Vice President-ADM Public Affairs and 2006 National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board; and Bob Dinneen, President, Renewable Fuels Association.

National Ag Day kicked off National Agriculture Week (March 18-24), and aims to raise awareness among Americans of the importance of U.S. agriculture in the stability of our economy, and in providing food and fuel to the world.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, each American farmer feeds more than 129 people around the globe. Moreover, in 2006, the U.S. ethanol industry contributed to America's economy by increasing gross domestic output by \$41.1 billion dollars, and support-

ing the creation of more than 160,000 jobs*.

"ADM is honored to salute the American farmer and join in celebrating National Agriculture Day and National Agriculture Week," said Brian Peterson, ADM Senior Vice President-Corporate Affairs. "Farmers are some of ADM's most important partners. Together we bring the renewable bounty of the earth to markets around the world through the production of food, animal feed and biofuels like ethanol and biodiesel.

American agriculture is the backbone of our nation's economy, and we express our appreciation for all who contribute to the U.S. ag industry."

"John Deere has been committed to the American farmer since 1837," said Doug DeVries, senior vice-president, agricultural marketing at John Deere. "Supporting the Agriculture Council of America and the Ag Day effort is a very effective way to help the public learn more about the important role the American farmer plays in their lives today."

* Ethanol industry data from the

Renewable Fuels Association, "Ethanol Industry Outlook 2007"

National Agriculture Day celebrates the dedication of the men and women in American agriculture and offers an opportunity for Americans to re-discover the role agriculture plays in our everyday lives.

Sponsored by the Agricultural Council of America, it's a day in which farmers, ranchers and other members of the country's agricultural industry are appreciated for producing and supplying food, clothing and other commodities nationwide and globally.

The program encourages every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced, to value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy and to appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

First celebrated in 1973, Ag Day has become a great way for America to recognize and celebrate the contribution of agriculture to our everyday lives.

Agriculture: Reasons to celebrate today

Here are some facts about agriculture today. These points scratch the surface of the advancements being made in agriculture on a daily basis.

Americans are asked to enjoy and admire the wonders of American agriculture as National Agriculture Day is celebrated on Wednesday.

General statistics

- Today's average farm is 441 acres compared to 147 acres in 1900.
- Today's farmer feeds about 144 people in the United States and abroad. In 1960 that number was 46.
- 41 percent of U.S. total land area is farmland.
- U.S. Farmers account for 46 percent of the world's soybean production, 41 percent of the world's corn production, 20.5 percent of the world's cotton production and 13 percent of the world's wheat.
- Almost 99 percent of U.S. farms are operated by individuals or family corporations.
- Nearly 22 million people are employed in farm or farm-related jobs.

- U.S. consumers spend roughly 10 percent of their income on food compared with 22 percent in the United Kingdom, 26 percent in Japan, 28 percent in South Africa and 51 percent in India.
- Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife.

Production Improvements

- Farmers and ranchers are producing meat lower in fat and cholesterol. This has resulted in retail cuts that are 15 percent leaner, giving consumers better value for their dollar. For example, a pork tenderloin now has only one more gram of fat than a skinless chicken breast, one of the true fat "lightweights." Much leaner beef cuts are being produced than 20 years ago, resulting in 27 percent less fat reaching the retail case than in 1985.
- Biotechnology has resulted in better tasting fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are naturally resistant to insects.
- Plant breeding has resulted in

crops better able to handle the environmental affects of drought and disease and insect infestations resulting in higher yields at harvest and lower costs to the consumer.

Technology/Equipment Advancements

- As the amount of mechanization and horsepower in farm machinery has increased, the time needed to complete tasks has decreased. Combines, huge machines used to harvest grains such as corn, soybeans and wheat, have dramatically changed agriculture. In the 1930s, before the machines were available, a farmer could harvest an average of 100 bushels of corn by hand in a nine-hour day. Today's combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour—or 100 bushels of corn in under seven minutes!
- Precision farming using satellite maps and computer models enables farmers to use less production inputs to produce a higher quality, higher yielding crop.
- Technology products improve

farm efficiency, reduce operator fatigue and help keep the cost of food down for U.S. consumers.

- A growing number of farmers and ranchers are using computers and modern technology; 90.7 percent use a computer, 87.4 percent own a cellular telephone, 51.3 percent communicate by fax, 72.2 percent have access to the Internet and 24.5 percent make online purchases using e-commerce.

New Uses

- Ethanol accounts for the largest industrial use of any commodity crop.
 - With a record production of 2.81 billion gallons of ethanol in 2003, 1 billion bushels of corn and 12 percent of the grain sorghum crop were used to produce fuel for our vehicles.
 - Biodiesel made from soybeans is one of many renewable fuels.
 - Corn also is used in place of certain petroleum-based products in industrial applications.
- (From the Agriculture Council of America, www.agday.org)

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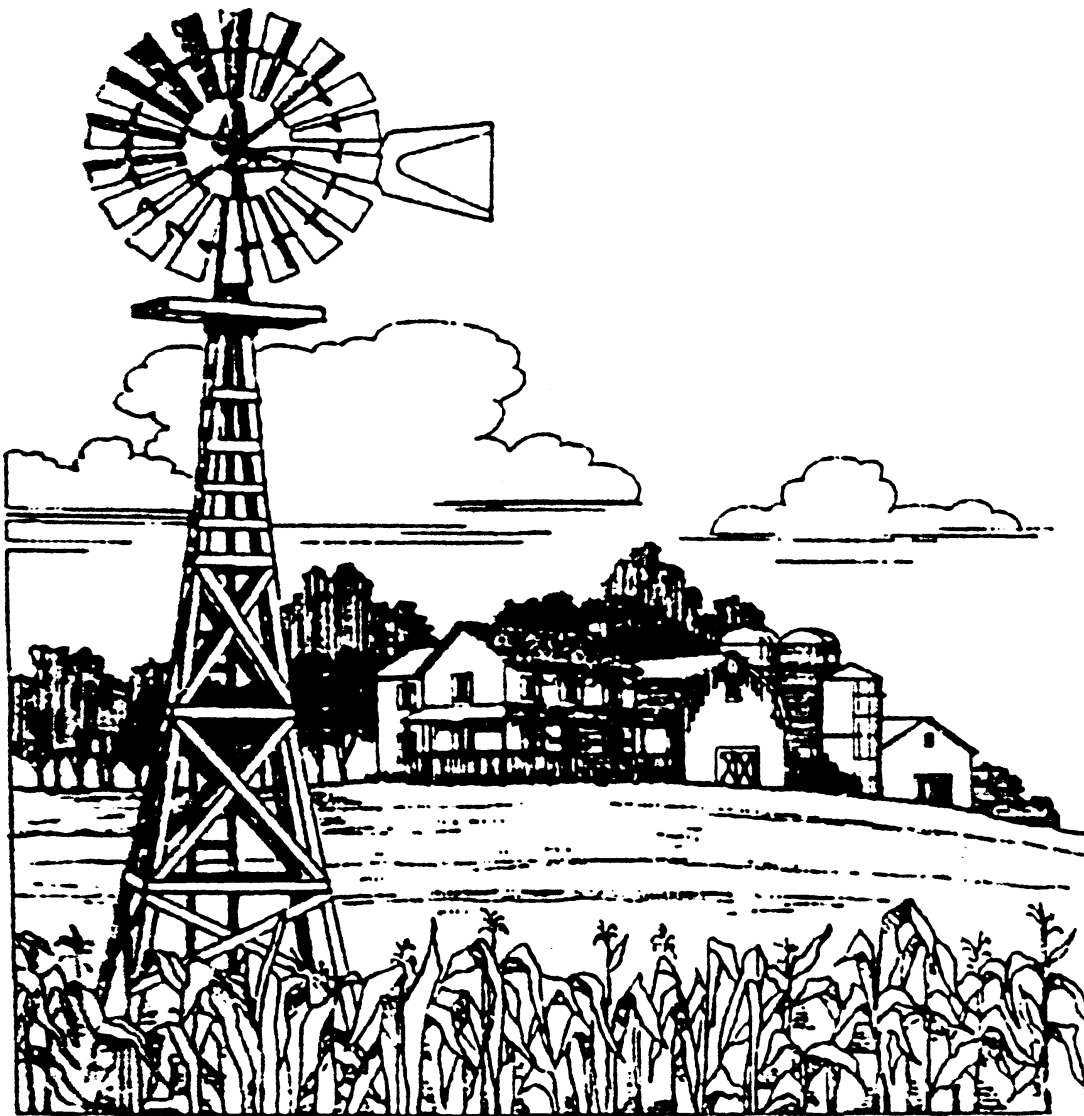
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