

North Dakota Corn Growers Association

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Testimony
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Good afternoon. My name is Jocie Iszler and I am the Executive Director of the ND Corn Council and Grower's Association. Secretary Johannes, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak for the ND Corn Growers regarding their suggestions for the upcoming farm bill. ND corn production has doubled in the last five years. The 2003 harvest produced a record 134 million bushels of corn. One 50 million gallon ethanol plant broke ground this month. Another 50 million gallon plant is slated for ground breaking next month. While ND corn producers benefit from many aspects of the farm bill, there are three areas that are of primary interest.

First of all, the development of the bio-fuels industry is of major interest to ND corn growers.

Integrating producers and rural communities into the development of the bio-fuels industry and a bio-based economy addresses many of the challenges of the next Farm Bill. Agriculture must move beyond food and fiber and add fuel as the third arm of its production portfolio.

Shifting a substantial portion of corn and soybean production toward the creation of bio-fuels and bio-based product reduces the downward price pressure created by increased production and leaves less corn available for export.

Producers who are investors in value added businesses such as ethanol and bio-diesel plants, livestock or other value added ag enterprises reap the value added potential of their commodity. This increased and diversified income contributes to rural economic development.

More research is needed on increased efficiency of bio-fuels, the development of bio-based products and effective ways to integrate producers and rural communities in the development of bio-based businesses.

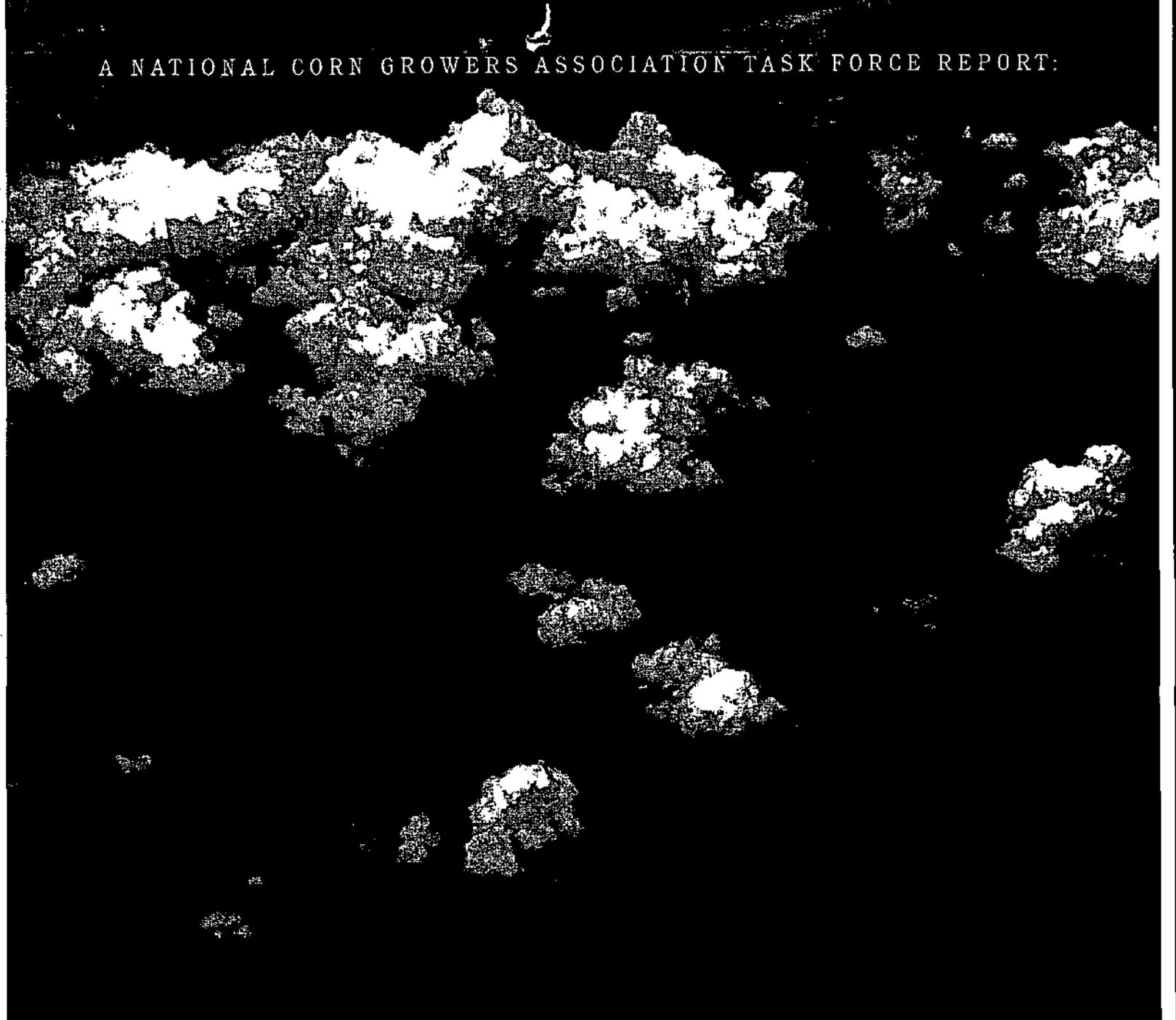
Continued authorization and full funding of Section 9000 of the Energy Title of the Farm Bill is needed to accomplish many of the above goals.

Secondly, ND corn producers see the value of good conservation practices and recommend full funding of the conservation title and programs such as EQUIP. Producers perceive a missing link between conservation research, existing conservation programs and technical assistance and education for producers. Programs need to be funded to the extent that providers of technical assistance such as Extension and Soil Conservation staff receive adequate training themselves and are adequately staffed to provide technical assistance to producers.

Thirdly, the development of ethanol plants in the western part of the state creates a need that grain for corn be eligible for crop insurance. Currently, corn for grain can only be insured under written agreement in 33 out of North Dakota's 53 counties. A crop insurance program that provides risk management and revenue protection to the producer, value to the American taxpayer, and that also falls within WTO blue box is an important part of any farm bill.

In summary, the areas that ND corn growers feel should be most developed in the farm bill in order to address the six questions presented in the listening session are increased growth of the biofuels industry with producers as investors, full funding of the conservation title and more technical assistance to producers in the conservation area, and broader crop insurance coverage for grain as corn in ND in order to meet the growing needs of the ethanol industry.

A NATIONAL CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION TASK FORCE REPORT:



TAKING OWNERSHIP
of GRAIN BELT AGRICULTURE

HOW PRODUCER SELF-RELIANCE IS TRANSFORMING RURAL AMERICA