



**National  
Barley  
Growers  
Association**

**Happy Holidays!**

# **WELCOME TO**

## **National Barley Growers Association**



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### **NBGA Board Approves Change to Update Associate Member Dues Structure**

The NBGA Board has approved changes to the bylaws to revise the dues structure for Industry Associate Members. The new structure establishes three tiers for Associate Members (non-voting): Tier 1 – companies with more than \$5 million in gross revenues contribute at least \$5,000 annual dues; Tier 2 – companies with \$1 million to \$5 million in gross revenues contribute at least \$2,500 annual dues; Tier 3 – companies with less than \$1 million in gross revenues contribute at least \$500 annual dues.

There are no changes to the existing dues for states or Industry Board Members. Industry Board Members contribute at least \$10,000 in annual dues and have full

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## **NBGA Officers Make a Trip to Washington for Meetings**

NBGA President Greg Kessel and Vice President Chris Engelstad made a trip to Washington, DC in November to meet with industry partners and key congressional offices. The meetings provided an opportunity to renew relationships, discuss mutual interests with industry and reiterate federal policy priorities with congressional offices.

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## **Washington Board Member Kevin Klein Represents NBGA on Tri-State Growers Convention Panel**

The Tri-State Growers held their annual convention November 30<sup>th</sup> through December 3<sup>rd</sup> in Spokane, WA. Kevin Klein, NBGA's Washington Board Member, represented NBGA on a panel discussing national agricultural issues, including drought impacts, upcoming disaster assistance, and the next Farm Bill on the horizon.

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## **USDA Collecting Input on Disaster Assistance**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, NBGA representatives participated in a meeting with USDA FSA regarding implementation of the \$10 billion in disaster assistance enacted by Congress for disaster events in 2020 and 2021. USDA is requesting input on how to implement this disaster assistance, what aspects of the existing WHIP+ structure worked and what needs to be improved going forward.

FSA noted that the last WHIP+ separated production and quality losses and they are open to combining those aspects going forward in an effort to streamline implementation. FSA could not offer an estimate on timing of the disaster assistance, only that it won't get out before the end of this calendar year. The hope is that they can get it out in the first quarter of 2022.

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## **Mexico Approves CP/KCS Merger, Stockholder and U.S. STB Approval Still Pending**

The Canadian Pacific (CP) and Kansas City Southern (KCS) railroads announced that they have received the required regulatory pre-transaction control approvals from the Mexican Federal Economic Competition Commission and the Mexican Federal Telecommunications Institute for their proposed merger.

"This is a significant milestone in creating the first single-line rail network linking the U.S., Mexico and Canada," a spokeswoman for the two companies said. The release also noted, "The transaction remains subject to satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including approval from stockholders of both companies. CP and KCS stockholders are scheduled to vote on the merger on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Review of the merger by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) is not expected to be completed until the fourth quarter of 2022.

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## Section 232, U.S.-EU Steel & Aluminum Tariffs

The U.S. and EU agreed to resolve the ongoing Section 232 steel and aluminum transatlantic tariff dispute. Under the *agreement*, the U.S. will establish a tariff-rate quota system, allowing a certain amount of tariff-free EU steel and aluminum imports. In return the EU agreed to suspend current retaliatory tariffs and a scheduled tariff increase on January 1, 2022, on \$4 billion in U.S. exports.

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## Bonnie Confirmed as Undersecretary for Food Production and Conservation, Biden Appoints RMA Administrator

By a vote of 76 to 19, the Senate confirmed Robert Bonnie as the USDA Undersecretary for Food Production and Conservation, which includes FSA, NRCS, and RMA. Bonnie has served as Secretary Vilsack's deputy chief of staff and senior climate adviser and is expected to play a key role in USDA's climate initiatives. Bonnie previously served as USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the Obama administration.

The Biden administration named Marcia Bunger, owner and operator of a 2000-acre, family-owned farm in South Dakota, as Administrator of the Risk Management Agency, which is in charge of federal crop insurance. Before joining USDA, Bunger served as a county executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) for 18 years in South Dakota.

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## White House Announces Supply Chain Action Plan

The White House unveiled a new plan for addressing supply chain bottlenecks, mostly by accelerating the awarding of grants for ports, waterways and freight networks.

Within 45 days, the administration plans to *launch programs "to modernize ports and marine highways with more than \$240 million in grant funding."* The Transportation Department will award \$230 million in funding for the Port Infrastructure Development Grant program and \$13 million for the Marine Highway Program to support waterborne freight service.

The White House also says it will identify projects for Army Corps of Engineers construction at coastal ports and inland waterways within the next 60 days, providing "a roadmap for more than \$4 billion in funding to repair outdated infrastructure and to deepen harbors for larger cargo ships." In addition, the administration will "prioritize key ports of entry for modernization and expansion within the next 90 days."

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## After Infrastructure Bill Enacted in November, Negotiations Continue on Build Back Better Reconciliation Package

November saw Congress pass the long-awaited infrastructure bill with support of

agricultural groups. The bill provides \$550 billion in additional funding for infrastructure, including \$110 billion for roads and bridges, \$65 billion for broadband, \$17.3 billion for long-standing needs at ports and inland waterways. The measure was passed with bipartisan support by a vote of 69-30 in the Senate and 228-206 in the House.

Meanwhile, Democrats are still working to secure the votes in the Senate to pass the Build Back Better package using the partisan budget reconciliation process.

This package, as passed by the House, includes \$28 billion for agriculture conservation programs, \$2 billion for agricultural research, \$18 billion for USDA biofuels and rural energy programs, and \$27 billion for USDA Forestry programs. Overall, the package would total \$1.75 trillion, mostly for health and climate change related programs.

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### **NBGA Welcomes Lucas Spratling of Idaho to the Board**

Lucas Spratling of American Falls, Idaho is representing Idaho Grain Producers Association on the NBGA Board. He replaces previous IGPA representative Dwight Little. Welcome Lucas!

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