



**National  
Barley  
Growers  
Association**

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# WELCOME TO

## National Barley Growers Association



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### NBGA Winter Meeting to be VIRTUAL ONLY

The NBGA Board Meeting will be virtual only via Zoom on Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 12:00 Eastern/9:00 Pacific.

We encourage states to schedule virtual meetings with congressional offices on February 9<sup>th</sup> or any date after to update them on the NBGA priorities for 2022 (as approved during the board meeting). If you would like NBGA staff to join you in any of those meetings, you can let us know as those are scheduled and we will be glad to join.

We plan to keep the Zoom Board meeting to 2 or 3 hours on February 8<sup>th</sup> (one day only). If needed, additional board sessions may be scheduled between the February meeting and the June summer meeting. We fully expect to hold the June meeting in-person at a location outside of Washington, DC as we typically do. The tentative dates for the June meeting are June 20-22 and exact dates and the location will be discussed and hopefully finalized during the February 8<sup>th</sup> virtual board meeting.

## USDA Preparing Disaster Assistance Payments

In public comments in late January, Sec. Vilsack indicated USDA intends to begin issuing disaster assistance payments this Spring to producers impacted by drought, wildfires, hurricanes and other natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. In September of last year Congress provided \$10 billion for ag disaster assistance to be implemented by USDA similar to the WHIP+ payments for 2018 and 2019. Sec. Vilsack indicated the payments could be split into two tranches, the first using information already on-hand through RMA crop insurance records and the second tranche would be used to fill-in gaps and address quality losses. The USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) will be coordinating with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to facilitate the payments.

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## NBGA and Ag Groups Reiterate Importance of Federal Support for Crop Insurance

NBGA joined other agricultural groups on letters to the Administration and Congressional Budget and Appropriations Committees to urge no cuts to crop insurance in the budget and appropriations process this year.

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## NBGA Opposes Efforts to Upend Science-Based Pesticide Standards

NBGA joined a letter to Congress expressing opposition to legislation (S. 3283), to replace the science-based standards that are used to determine the availability of safe and effective pesticides to produce America's food, fiber, and biofuel. The legislation would repeal decades of federal regulation and scientific progress jeopardizing the availability and innovation of pesticide products by imposing an unscientific process that could unnecessarily remove pest control options from those who need them to safely grow crops.

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## USDA Announces Appointments to Key Positions

In January, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the following appointments at USDA:

- Scott Marlow, deputy administrator for farm programs in the Farm Service Agency
- Tim Gannon, chief of staff for Agriculture Farm Production and Conservation Undersecretary Robert Bonnie
- Andrea Delgado, chief of staff for the Natural Resources and Environment undersecretary – a position for which Homer Wilkes has been nominated
- Sara Bleich, director of nutrition security and health equity for the Food and Nutrition Service

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## US and UK Open Formal Talks on Steel and Aluminum Tariffs

U.S. and UK trade officials indicated discussions are underway to address steel and aluminum tariffs and help preserve metals manufacturers in both markets. The U.S. reached a deal that went into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> with the EU to remove border taxes on European metals shipments and has also started negotiations on the issue with Japan.

Under the Trump administration, the U.S. imposed a 25% duty on foreign steel and 15% tax on foreign aluminum, setting off retaliation, including by the UK, who imposed tariffs on some U.S. goods, such as whiskey. The U.S. has since lifted some of the measures, which were supported by many domestic steel producers.

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