

Farm to Table: State Challenges for Advocating, Regulating Agriculture

Dr. Barbara P. Glenn

CEO

National Association of State
Departments of Agriculture



Who is NASDA?

- NASDA is a non-profit, non-partisan association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories.

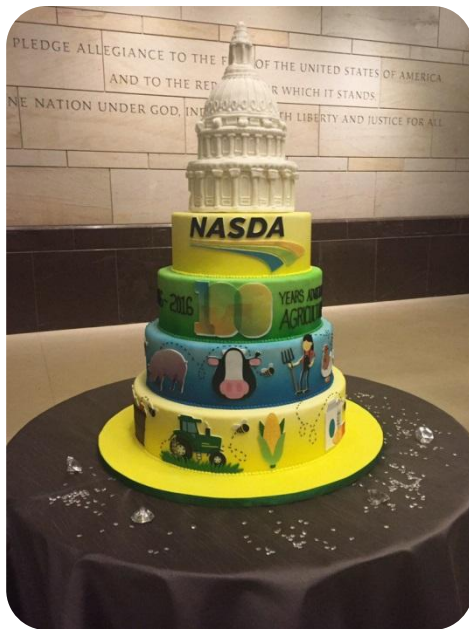


- 12 are elected, all others are appointed



What is our mission?

- Our mission is to grow and enhance agriculture by forging partnerships and creating consensus to achieve sound policy outcomes between state departments of agriculture, the federal government, and stakeholders.



- We have been doing this for 100 years!



How do we set policy positions?

- NASDA Members present Policy Amendments at one of two annual conferences (February or September).
- The policy amendment is discussed and voted on by the full membership.
 - Items are able to be amended through membership discussion.
 - Votes are not weighted. 1 state = 1 vote
- If passed, the policy amendment becomes a permanent fixture in the NASDA Policy Statements.



The Issue: GMO Labeling

- Vermont's mandatory, on-package Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) labeling law will go into effect on July 1.
- Due to lack of Congressional agreement, food companies are complying on a national scale to avoid harsh monetary fines:
 - General Mills, Inc.
 - Campbell Soup Co.
 - Mars Inc.
 - ConAgra Foods Inc.
 - Kellogg Co.



What is NASDA's Policy?


- **NASDA supports the current federal framework** (EPA, FDA, USDA), which regulates agricultural products produced through biotechnology, and delivers timely registrations.
- NASDA does not support state or local initiatives and/or ordinances that would prohibit or restrict plant and/or animal biotechnology.
- As it relates to the **health, safety, and nutrition** of foods, NASDA supports the role and responsibility of FDA to determine appropriate food labeling.
- Any **marketing label** for the purpose of labeling foods containing, or not containing, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) should be developed using a **voluntary, federal system** so as to avoid a patchwork of state-by-state standards.





CONGRESS BLOG

THE HILL'S FORUM FOR LAWMAKERS AND POLICY PROFESSIONALS

Congress Blog 

Congress Blog feed 

March 01, 2016, 07:30 am

State officials call for Roberts GMO labeling bill

By Lorraine Merrill



COMMENTS 19

Promoting agriculture in the public interest, including advocating for agricultural literacy and an understanding of where our food comes from, is a core component of my job as the chief agricultural official in my state. Over the past decade, some consumers have expressed growing interest in how their food is grown, and if it was produced from seeds set up by biotechnology to put their best roots forward. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman **Pat Roberts** (R-Kan.) is attempting to bring forward a common sense solution to consumers through the introduction of a national voluntary labeling system for bioengineered foods.

Unique State Voice -
Advocating for Agriculture



Risks

- Current: Multi-state patchwork of state authorities regulating food labels in inter-state commerce.
 - Some states currently have the authority to deny a food company's "Vermont compliant" food label from entering their commerce.
- Future: A 50-state patchwork of laws regulating GMOs.
- Future: A slippery slope to reformulation of all foods to remove GMO ingredients, ignorance of the latest scientific advances



Challenges

- Legislative Delays
 - Gaining Democratic Senators while keeping Republicans
- GMO Activist Groups
- Marketing vs. Health, Safety
- Real vs. Perceived Consumer Demand
 - Who really wants to know if GMOs are in their food?



Activists protest at a recent NASDA event
Photo Credit: West Hawaii Today



Solutions

- Immediate Federal pre-emption for GMO labeling of food products
- Establish a USDA-led framework for GMO disclosure (SmartLabel, social media, websites, 1-800 numbers, and other means)
 - NASDA joined forces with 750 food and agriculture companies to support a bill that recently failed in the Senate.
- Federalism – include NASDA and other state agency associations early and often.



Thank you!

- Barb Glenn
barb@nasda.org
(202) 296-9680
4350 N. Fairfax Drive
Suite 910
Arlington, VA 22203
Twitter: @NASDANews
Instagram: @NASDANews
www.nasda.org

NASDA

1 9 1 6 - 2 0 1 6



YEARS ADVOCATING
AGRICULTURE

Lincoln, Nebraska Sept. 21-24

