

Wheat growers look for more input on policy options

By Sara Wyant

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Anaheim, March 4. With the House Agriculture Committee likely to start farm bill hearings next month and the potential for budget cuts on everyone's radar screen, commodity groups are scrambling to figure out how to prioritize their "wish list" for the 2012 Farm Bill. Members of the National Association of Wheat Growers' key policy committees met Wednesday during Commodity Classic to try and figure out their options.

"Crop insurance is an important part of our safety net and it is one reason we are watching the negotiations over the Standard Reinsurance Agreement so closely," says Jeff Newton, Chair of Domestic and Trade Policy planning committee. "But we need to prioritize what is most important for our members with direct payments, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program, and conservation programs."

To gather input and help their leaders establish priorities, NAWG plans to formulate a survey within the next couple of weeks and send it to each of their member states. They hope to have feedback by mid-April and develop a strategy for the full board by October.

"If we are going to be proactive, we have to gather input and prioritize. There is going to be a lot of work that goes into developing recommendations," adds Newton.

On Wednesday, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) said that his staff is currently "going into the details to identify what is being spent by each commodity..... and identifying how much of the baseline is going to corn, how much to wheat, barley and so forth. And we are telling folks, this is where we start. This is how much we are currently spending.... Take a look at what we are spending on your crop and you decide if this is the best way to do this or is there a better way?" For more on Peterson's comments, listen to the Agri-Pulse overview from Commodity Classic for [Thursday](#):

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Helix, OR. Wheat grower
Jeff Newton Chairs NAWG's
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