



I.D.E.A. Industry Update - March 4, 2005

*****I.D.E.A. Member Conference Call**

The first in a series of member conference calls will be held Tuesday March 8, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. Saskatchewan/Manitoba time (9:00 a.m. in Alberta and portions of B.C.). Mike Jubinville of Pro Farmer Canada will be on hand to provide the latest market information and forecasts. If you would like to participate in the call, contact the I.D.E.A. office at 306-933-4904.

***** I.D.E.A. Member Networking Weekend**

As a follow-up to our successful Member Networking Weekend, held in November 2004, we're planning another getaway from Thursday November 17 to Sunday November 20, 2005. Possible locations include Las Vegas, Victoria, Palm Springs, Minneapolis, Texas. Where would you like to go? Call the I.D.E.A. office at 306-933-4904 or email us at office@independentdealers.com with your ideas for locations and meeting topics for the 205 Member Networking Weekend.

*****CAAR Events**

the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) is hosting Module 2 of its Retail Program of Management on March 15 & 16, 2005 in Saskatoon. Topics include corporate culture, group dynamics, methods of communication and barriers to effective communication, resolving conflict, enabling change and action planning. In addition, CAAR is planning an Emergency Response Training Seminar on March 14 in Guelph, March 16 in Brandon, March 17 in Saskatoon and March 18 in Red Deer. A series of courses on the Transportation of Dangerous Goods and the Safe Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia are also being planned for the end of March / beginning of April in various locations. Contact CAAR at 204-989-9300 for details or visit www.caar.org.

*****EU Commission to Thrash out GMO Policy on March 22**

Officials were cited as saying on Thursday that European Commission policymakers will try later this month to thrash out where they stand on biotech crops and foods, removing a policy vacuum that has existed since they took office. The 25-strong group of EU commissioners, which initiates and shapes policy for the bloc's member states, has apparently scheduled a debate on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for March 22. Apart from guarded comments from some members of the new EU executive, little of substance has been said on where the EU might head next with its GMO policy. This will be the Commission's first full-scale debate on GMOs since January 2004. (Source: Agnet)

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*****Corn Demand in Developing Countries to Surpass Wheat and Rice Needs**

By 2020, demand for corn in all developing countries will be greater than its demand for other cereal crops like wheat and rice, with Asia accounting for over half of this need. Increasing demand for animal feeds as well as the growing number of households will make this situation a reality. This prediction of the International Food Policy Research Institute encouraged teams from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to promote food security for upland farmers in Asia who depend on the crop. The teams worked with farmers in the uplands of China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam to discover ways in which corn technologies could improve livelihoods. An insight in Vietnam, for example, was the need to help farmers apply sustainable practices to avoid degrading natural resources-particularly in fragile, marginal settings-as the demand intensifies. CIMMYT has made available, on its website, publications on the results of its farm visits and participatory rural appraisals. It gives details on the sociological, agro-economical, environmental, and technological aspects of corn production on a per country basis. Read the full reports at www.cimmyt.org. (Source: Agnet)

*****Re-evaluation of Older Pesticides**

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has completed an evaluation of 2,4-D for lawn and turf use and concluded it does not entail an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment. 2,4-D, (2,4 Dichlorophenoxy) is one of the most common broadleaf herbicides. In addition to its use on a wide variety of crops, it is also commonly used to control weeds on lawn and turf. It has been re-approved, with suggestions to add buffer zones in commercial operations and changes to labelling.

The agency stated it determined, based on the available scientific information, that 2,4-D can be used safely on lawns and turf when label directions are followed. In the re-evaluation document, PMRA said buffer zones should be included when the product is used commercially and applied by tractor-pulled sprayers, to protect surrounding broadleaf vegetation. Labelling should be updated to include current standards, PMRA said. The re-approval isn't final. A comment period is open until April 22, 2005.

PMRA is currently reviewing 401 active pesticide ingredients found in about 7,000 products already registered. In these cases, registration was before 1995 and, the agency stated, were "considered acceptable . . . according to the scientific standards of the day." But science has changed, said the agency. "As scientific knowledge evolves and new information becomes available, the PMRA requires that registered pesticides be re-evaluated according to modern risk assessment approaches."

According to Peter Burgess, the integrated pest management co-ordinator with the agriculture consulting company Agra-Point, chemicals with brand names like Prowl, Goal, Sinbar, Blazer and Sencor are included. (Source: by Allison Finnermore; Reprinted in part from the AgExpert Express newsletter by permission of AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada.)