



Wyoming Crop Improvement Association

P.O. Box 983
Powell, WY 82435
307-754-9815
Fax: 307-754-9820

Officers:

Mike Forman,
President

Brian Duyck,
Vice President

Mike Moore,
Secretary/Treasurer

Directors:

Tim Anderson,
Southeast District

Mike Forman,
Northwest District

Fred Hopkin,
Northwest District

Brian Duyck,
Northwest District

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Dear Wyoming bean grower,

To paraphrase the Wyoming Crop Improvement Association bylaws, the group's purpose is to assist agriculture in the development, discovery, and use of new varieties and agronomic practices that benefit seed and crop producers in the state. The association has actively worked toward that purpose, and was recognized as the University of Wyoming Research Partner of the year in 2002. More recently, the WCIA has worked with U.W. to fund and design research in dry beans and grass seed and forage production.

As you know, dry beans, produced as a seed crop or an edible crop, are an important production opportunity for Wyoming producers. According to Wyoming Ag Statistics, Wyoming ranked 4th of the bean producing states in the production of pinto beans in 2012. While Wyoming often leads in pounds of production per acre, many agronomic questions go unanswered due to a lack of funding for research on current production problems. Also, Wyoming's rank could be even higher if dry bean breeding efforts focused on developing varieties for this environment, but none do at this time.

These are some of the reasons the Wyoming Crop Improvement Association voted unanimously at its Annual meeting on February 8th, 2014 to support and encourage the establishment of a Wyoming dry bean checkoff. Checkoff funds, generated by the people who would benefit from them, would provide funding to meet the research needs that cannot be met with current federal granting opportunities. The suggested bean commission makeup of four producers and two industry members will assure that research will target local needs. There is an added advantage that checkoff funds could be leveraged with matching dollars that are available for producer-driven research through U.W.

A draft bill establishing a dry bean checkoff was recently presented to the Joint Interim Ag Committee, and that draft was forwarded to the Legislative Services Office as the next step in the process. One question from the Joint Interim Ag Committee was if there was industry and grower support for a checkoff, and to answer that question, we need to get your opinion. A draft of the bill is available at www.wyseedcert.com. If you don't have time to read the bill, a quick synopsis is on the reverse of this letter, as well as a survey. Your input on the establishment of a dry bean checkoff is very important.

Sincerely,

Mike Forman, President
Wyoming Crop Improvement Association

Bean Checkoff Draft legislation synopsis:

1. A Dry Bean Commission would be formed, with the makeup consisting of 4 producers and 2 receivers/handlers.
 - a. At least one producer would be from Laramie, Platte, or Goshen County.
 - b. Initial commission members would be appointed by the Governor, but subsequent members would be elected by growers and receivers/handlers who paid into the checkoff.
 - c. The commission would make distributions from funds generated by the checkoff for activities benefitting the Wyoming dry bean industry.
2. The checkoff will initially be at a rate of 0.34% of the final settlement for growers, and 0.17% for receivers/handlers.
 - a. There is provision for change to the rate through the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act, with a maximum of 1% of the grower's final settlement.
 - b. The intent is for grower funds to consist of two thirds of the checkoff amount, and receivers/handlers to consist of one third.
3. The checkoff is refundable upon request.
 - a. A grower can receive a refund upon request, but will not be eligible to vote in elections should they do so.
 - b. A receiver/handler can only request refund on beans for which the producer requested refund.

Dry Bean Checkoff Survey

- I support the establishment of a dry bean checkoff. _____
- I do not support the establishment of a dry bean checkoff. _____
- I offer the following comments regarding a dry bean checkoff:

Signature (optional) _____