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2003 HOUSE AGRICULTURE

HB 1026

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2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1026

House Agriculture Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date 1---16---03

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
ONE	A		29 TO END
TWO	A		0 TO 9.1
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Edward A. Olson</i>			

Minutes:

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS: We will open the hearing on I/B 1026.

JEFF OLSON: Chairman Nicholas and Committee Members. My name is Jeff Olson.

I am the Program Manager at the Department of Agriculture. I am here to provide testimony for Commissioner Johnson on HB 10267. Which would establish a transgenic wheat board.

{{{PLEASE SEE PRINTED ATTACHED TESTIMONY OF JEFF OLSON}}}

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS: Who would like to be next? Anyone else wishing to offer comments in support of HB 1026?

NEIL FISCHER: Good morning Mr Chairman and Committee Members. I am the administrator of North Dakota Wheat Commission. I am here to offer support for HB 1026 in the form of a motion the North Dakota Wheat Commission has on it's book. We support this Bill as an alternative to some of the moratorium discussion that had serviced the

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last session. I have to tell you that the motion also includes a wish for authority in this transgenic wheat board. I should also say that in the United States Wheat Association. The US.Wheat Industry which includes the National Association of Wheat Growers there preamble starts out with Biotechnology holds great promise for the future for the wheat industry and therefore supports it. There are milestones that need to be accomplished. Tolerances in our foreign markets. Research should go forward in order that we solve some persistent problems that we have in the Wheat Industry in a shorter time about the technology. Much has been accomplished since we discussed this in the last session. Protocols have been established and made public at the North Dakota State University..

Thank you Mr. Chairman

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS : Next.

JIM BOB: From Gladstone N.D. We question the value, composition and purpose of the Transgenic Wheat Board created HB 1026. {{{{PLEASE SEE ATTACHED TESTIMONY}}}}.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS : Any more comments in support of this Bill.

Are there questions for anyone that testified in support of this Bill.

REP. BELTER : Question for Jeff Olson. Jeff comments from Commissioner he made statement that ultimately the North Dakota Wheat should be the major player. Why not just make the board then.

JEFF OLSON: Because there are other enemies that have a play in this. Grain Dealers etc. The Commissioners position is that all players in the Wheat Industry should have a say on this board predominately he feels it is more of a marketing issue instead of a scientific issue.

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The marketability of GMO wheat.

REP. ONSTAD : Mr Chairman, this question is for Mr Fischer from the Wheat Commission.

The Grain Dealers Marketability issues.

NEAL FISCHER: As to market concerns. Most of the comments that we have received are millers in the United Kingdom and Japan. This has been going on for some time.. The wheat industry is formulating a position on Biotechnology. That unfortunately has not changed much. In recent years or recent months. We think we are making some progress in Europe on these tolerances, progress in Japan but as you move forward, often it is two steps forward and one backward. We stay in close contact with our customers. The European Union has brought customers to this country and to technology providers and producers about this issue.

It is clear that there are market concerns. Those would be are concerns in this issue.

It is a process. Joint efforts. Milestones to be accomplished. It is a process, not a date to be collected in time. It demonstrates to producers and the important customers of ours that people are planning and doing their best for everyone's interest in this. There is a plan and there are rules.

Canadians, South Dakota etc. Are all watching to see what happens. A Japanese Miller one time advised us not to be first. There is research going on in Australia, Canada and neighboring states. A large percentage of purchasers have concerns.

REP. BELTER : How do we deal with a fence around are state.

NEIL FISCHER: We want to have a national policy. Not just state policy. State could show some leadership.

REP. BELTER : Our congressional delegation. Are they working on it.

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NEIL FISCHER: There is no congressional activity.

There is a National Committee and there is broad membership to that that committee. It protects providers. Etc. The Wheat Committee constructed a committee that involved the Farm Bureau, The Dakota Growers Pasta, The Spring Wheat Growers and two Commissioners on that Committee so that it would have a broad approach. Those real research needs. The thinking of the Wheat Commission is to be a little more inclusive. Monsanto Corporation has recently said it will be three to five years before regulations.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS: Any more testimony in favor of this Bill. We will take opposition.

TERRY WANZEK: I am Terry Wanzek, farmer from Jamestown and a member of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association board. {{{{PLEASE SEE PRINTED TESTIMONY}}}}
I believe strongly that we should be working together and addressing real solutions to this problem. What is realistic. There should not be a moratorium.

MIKE BRANDBURG: On our farm we raise Round Up Ready Soy Beans, corn. Our round up ready corn ran 20 bushels more then conventional corn. Our round up ready Soy Beans ran better then conventional beans. If you look a wheat. The scab problem. With research we may be able to do away with scab. How would a moratorium work.

ERICK OMSTAD: I am a wheat producer from the Devils Lake Area. And I am also President of the North Dakota Farm Bureau. The North Dakota Farm Bureau is fully prepared to come here today and testify in support of this Bill. The policy clearly states the majority of the board is made up of wheat producers we would support a producer driven advisory board. That has not happened yet. That is why I am here in opposition. One of the things that we see

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that has to happen is that we would like to see North Dakota take a lead position. Move down the road and develop this technology. Work cooperatively with producer groups. Public acceptance and market acceptance plan for GM WHEAT. We won't tolerate is any attempt to create an unelected regulatory agency within our state. How can we expect our foreign customers to accept this technology when our own government has not. Lets not be to hasty to put state control on these things when we already have Federal controls.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS: Any other opposition.

RICHARD SCHLOSSER: Mr Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Richard Schlosser. I am Vice President of North Dakota Farmers Union and I am testifying today on their behalf. {{{{{{PLEASE SEE ATTACHED TESTIMONY}}}}}}

BRUCE FREITAG: I am currently service as President of North Dakota Grain Growers. Terry has stated our position so I won't repeat those. We favor Biotech. We have reservations at to the marketability of the crop. Wheat has not kept up with increase in increased yields. We believe the introduction of Biotic wheat is inevitabile. Whether that happens in three years or five year or ten years. Producers would be well served if we were ready for the introduction and testing for tolerances. These issues should be addressed in a scientific manner. NDSU should be given the opportunity to develop answers to biotechnology. Wheat is North Dakota largest crop and we need all the tools needed to be successful. Research is going on around the world. We can't be left out. {{see printed testimony}}

JOHN OLSON: I represent Monsanto in Bismarck., I am passing out a brochure. Round up ready wheat will not available until all regulatory approvals have been made.

Commercialization will not take place until The United States and Canada are ready to

