

Government Relations Update



by Troy Fore, ABF Director of Government Relations



Troy Fore, ABF Director of Government Relations

In May, ABF Vice President George Hansen and I made a trip to Washington, D.C. I want to give you a bit of the feeling for how those days went.

We started off at the offices of Meyers and Associates, the ABF's Washington representatives, plotting our agenda with Fran Boyd.

While reviewing the schedule of appointments he had set up, we put calls into two more offices. One call was successful; one was not.

Our first stop on Wednesday was at the Department of Labor, a cab ride across town. There we received assurances that work was nearing fruition on one of our issues – moving H2A workers from state-to-state – but we were told that visa difficulties was a State Department issue. Before we left town, we were given the contact information for a person at State.

After lunch, another cab ride to the Agriculture Department to talk about pollinator conservation issues. This visit generated a spate of e-mails that continued into the next day, assuring us that the honey bee would be given its proper due in conservation materials.

Our first Congressional visit was on the Senate side of the Capitol. We had a wait while one of our two “meetees” finished an earlier appointment. Then we waited until an earlier group vacated a conference room. Our discussion there centered on the standard of identity for honey. FDA had assured one Senator that movement on our petition could be expected soon. One of the staffers was in his fourth stint on the Hill. Between those, he had worked at USDA; when we last talked to him, he was at Farm Service Agency.

Next we walked across the Capitol grounds to the House side for a meeting at the office of my congressman,

Jack Kingston, who is chairman of the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee. After a long wait, we met with his staffer for ag issues, but the talk was all about budget issues, the topic that dominated all our meetings other than the one at Labor.

After a review of what we had learned and the next day's agenda, we were done for the day; ready to walk back to the hotel and soak our sore feet.

We began Thursday at the headquarters of USDA's Agriculture Research Service. Money – actually the lack thereof – was again the main topic. It would be hard for the ag men to say much until Congress took some action on the budget. Back on Capitol Hill, we met with four Ag Committee staff members. Again, everything hinged on money.

At noon, another brief money discussion with a staff person from the Ag Appropriations subcommittee.

Lunch, then a walk over to the Senate side to meet with Senate Ag Staffers. After a wait at the committee office in the Russell Building, we were told the meeting would be in the Dirksen Building. There, talk of the next Farm Bill matched the talk of money woes.

Our final meeting of the trip was at the office of George's congressman, Kurt

Schrader. We shared with his staffer what we had gleaned from our two days of visits and emphasized our priorities.

I left for the airport. Taking the last flight out, I would arrive home just after midnight. It was too late for George to head back to Oregon; he had another night in the hotel before his early morning flight on Friday.

We felt like we had a successful visit. We met with staffers who are important to our issues. For some, it was the first face-to-face, an opportunity for us to remind them that behind the phone calls and e-mails there are real, live



(continued on next page)



GOLDEN HERITAGE FOODS, LLC

BUYING HONEY FROM ALL PARTS OF THE U.S.

For a Quote, Call Toll Free: 1-800-530-5827

Send us a sample:

Golden Heritage Foods, LLC
120 Santa Fe Street
Hillsboro, KS 67063

Arlen Penner
VP, Honey Procurement
apenner@ghfillc.com
Phone: (620) 947-3173
Fax: (620) 947-3640



Bob Loewen
Honey Buyer
bloewen@ghfillc.com
Phone: (620) 947-3173
Fax: (620) 947-3640

(continued from page 4)

people out there whose livelihoods depend on what they and their bosses do – or do not do.

You might note that I made no mention of meeting with actual senators or representatives. This was not particularly unusual. In my own case, I see Rep. Kingston occasionally on D.C. trips, but he is regularly in Jesup or a nearby town. With a little investment in time, I could see him back in the district. That is what we need you to do: watch for opportunities to see your congressmen when they are “back home.” Ease these visits by making regular contact with their district offices.

Making political contact is similar to making contact with your apiary site landowners. An occasional face-to-face visit can make all the difference.



The Pollen Substitute for Honey Bee Production.

Available from:

**David Ellingson
of Ellingson's Inc.**

P.O. Box 68
Odessa, MN 56276
Phone: 320-760-6769
Fax: 320-273-2310
dddwax@wat.midco.net

**1947-2011
Celebrating 64 years!**

**Patties
Available!**