



## **House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson Named Wheat Leader**

*Jan. 25, 2010*

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) was presented Monday with the Wheat Leader of the Year Award, the wheat industry's highest public service award.

As Chairman, Peterson's work touches nearly every aspect of agricultural policy. In the past year, he has worked intensely on climate change, food safety and derivative legislation to ensure bills before the House take into account the unique nature of agriculture and the needs of agricultural producers. He has also spearheaded a bill to enhance agricultural trade with Cuba, which is an important priority of the wheat industry. Peterson was previously selected for the Award in 2007 for his efforts to finalize the 2008 Farm Bill, implementation of which is ongoing.

"Chairman Peterson never fails to go to bat for agriculture when push really comes to shove," said Karl Scronce, NAWG president and a wheat producer from Klamath Falls, Ore. "We are proud to name him our Wheat Leader twice in just three years because he really does embody the agriculture voice on the Hill – and that's a voice that's desperately needed."

He was given the award by Scronce at a joint meeting of the National Association of Wheat Growers and U.S. Wheat Associates Boards of Directors.

"We are proud to give this award to our own representative, and proud that our state has produced one of agriculture's most notable champions," said Erik Younggren, NAWG secretary-treasurer and a wheat producer from Hallock, Minn.

At the meeting, Peterson addressed growers about his efforts to help his fellow Members better understand agriculture when passing food safety legislation and looked ahead to challenges related to the 2012 Farm Bill. Peterson said he plans to start with hearings as early as March or April of this year.

"We need to be looking at how to make this work better, how to have systems that we can explain to our urban colleagues that make sense to them," he said. "That's part of what I want to do over the next year."

The Wheat Leader of the Year Award is given annually by NAWG to one Member of Congress based on his or her demonstrated commitment to the well-being and goals of the wheat industry.

Previous Wheat Leaders include Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) (2008 and 2002); Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-S.D.) (2006); Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.) (2005); Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) (2004); Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) (2003); Rep. Larry Combest (R-Texas) (2001); Rep. George Nethercutt (R-Wash.) (2000); and Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) (1999).

### **National Association of Wheat Growers**

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Representatives from NAWG member-states will distribute other public service awards given by NAWG on behalf of the wheat industry as they visit Hill offices in the coming days.

The Wheat Advocate Award is given annually to Members of Congress who have demonstrated support for the wheat industry above and beyond the norm.

Those receiving the 2009 Wheat Advocate Award include:

- Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
- Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.)
- Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)
- Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.)
- Rep. Walt Minnick (D-Idaho)
- Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)
- Rep. Zack Space (D-Ohio)
- Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.)
- Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.)

The Friend of Wheat Award is also given annually by NAWG for superior action in support of the goals and policies of the wheat industry. This award is given to Congressional and administrative staff members who have demonstrated support for the wheat industry above and beyond the norm.

The 2009 Friend of Wheat Awards were awarded to:

- Aleta Botts, House Agriculture Committee
- Aaron Popelka, Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)
- Melissa Porter, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
- John Drake, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
- Catharine Ransom, Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
- Fitz Elder, Minority Clerk, Senate Appropriations Committee, Agriculture Subcommittee
- Galen Fountain, Senate Appropriations Committee, Agriculture Subcommittee

Recipients of the NAWG awards are approved by the NAWG Board of Directors and the recipient's state wheat association, when applicable.

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