

## **Weed Science Society Presidents DC Fly-in Report May 5 – 9, 2025**

During the week of May 5, the National and Regional Weed Science Society Presidents traveled to Washington DC for Congressional and stakeholder visits. We began the week by attending the National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (NCFAR) Annual Meeting and fly-in. There were about 40 NCFAR members in attendance representing a broad array of agricultural research stakeholders. We had a good discussion about the many issues facing the USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area. Concerns were raised about splitting up the Farm Bill and how that would impact the smaller titles in the Farm Bill such as the Research Title (7). Could a “skinny” Farm Bill get enough votes to pass Congress without the Commodity Title or Nutrition Title?

We also had a good dialogue with the USDA REE Chief of Staff Ricki Schroeder, followed by Congressional Visits in the afternoon and then an evening reception in the House Ag Committee Hearing room and balcony. Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK) joined us at the reception and provided remarks on how to move forward in this political environment. Rep. Lucas is currently Chair of the House Science Committee and is the longest serving member of the House Ag Committee where he served as Chair from 2011 to 2015 and oversaw the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill.

Over the next two days, the Weed Science Society Presidents visited their local Senators and Representatives to discuss funding priorities such as the Crop Protection and Pest Management (CPPM) program, the IR-4 Program and capacity programs such as Hatch and Smith-Lever.

This year, we also delivered a [WSSA Policy Priorities one-pager](#) to offices that the Weed Science Society President’s developed in preparation for the fly-in. A special thanks to Dawn Refsell, Ian Burke and Hilary Sandler for their time and effort in developing this. The Policy Priorities one-pager focuses on four main areas: 1) Extension and Research funding; 2) Enhancing Integrated Weed Management; 3) Ensuring Crop Productivity & American Resources for Generations; and 4) Workforce Competency. In addition, select Congressional offices received a free Weed Bingo! Game (available at the [WSSA Bookstore](#)).

The Weed Science Society Presidents also met with the American Soybean Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and CropLife America for in-depth discussions on their policy priorities and how our organizations can work together for the common good of ensuring a safe, secure, and reliable food and fiber supply.

Overall, we visited 30 Congressional offices. The list is at the end of the report.



From Left to Right: Ian Burke - WSSA President-Elect; Dawn Refsell - WSSA Vice President; Hilary Sandler – WSSA President; Thierry Besancon – NEWSS President; Lee Van Wychen – Executive Director of Science Policy; Eric Palmer – SWSS President; and Carl Coburn – WSWS President



From Left to Right: Ian Burke - WSSA President-Elect; Thierry Besancon – NEWSS President; Hilary Sandler – WSSA President; Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA), Senate Agriculture Committee; Dawn Refsell - WSSA Vice President; Carl Coburn – WSWS President; and Eric Palmer – SWSS President.



From Left to Right: Ian Burke - WSSA President-Elect; Dawn Refsell - WSSA Vice President; Hilary Sandler – WSSA President; Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) Sen. Agriculture Committee Ranking Member; Lee Van Wychen – WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy; Thierry Besancon – NEWSS President; and Rebecca Haynie – Director of Science Policy, CropLife America.



From Left to Right: Hilary Sandler – WSSA President; Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK) Chair of the House Science Committee; Eric Palmer – SWSS President; Thierry Besancon – NEWSS President; Carl Coburn – WSWS President; and Lee Van Wyche – WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy



From Left to Right: Eric Palmer – SWSS President; Lee Van Wyche – WSSA Executive Director of Science Policy; Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chair of the powerful House Rules Committee; and Thierry Besancon – NEWSS President. (This meeting with Rep. Foxx would not have happened without Eric's local connection to the Congresswoman!). In addition, we came to realize that she and her husband Tom established and ran a successful nursery and landscaping business in the High Country for more than three decades, which is now operated by their daughter. She let us know that she was very familiar with glyphosate and how to use it!

## **Congressional Offices Visited on Tuesday:**

### **Hilary Sandler**

Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) Staff Kurtis\_Miller@fetterman.senate.gov  
Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN) Staff Emily.Pliscott@mail.house.gov  
Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA) Staff Julia.Clayton@mail.house.gov  
Rep. April McClain-Delaney (D-MD) Staff Kathleen.Foley@mail.house.gov

### **Ian Burke**

Sen. Boozman (R-AR), Staff: jeremy\_witte@ag.senate.gov, kate\_covington@ag.senate.gov  
Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), Staff: Georgia.Davies@mail.house.gov  
Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Staff: Bennett\_Abrams@slotkin.senate.gov

### **Dawn Refsell**

Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL), Staff: Janey.green@mail.house.gov  
Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI), Staff: Ian.Orr@mail.house.gov  
Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS), Staff: lacy\_pitts@marshall.senate.gov

### **Eric Palmer**

Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)  
Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)  
Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-VA), Staff: FabianaCorsiMendez@mail.house.gov  
Rep. John Rose (R-TN), Scheduler: Reagan.Thompson@mail.house.gov  
Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-VA), (with Lee & Thierry)

### **Carl Coburn**

Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Staff: Liz.Jacobson@mail.house.gov  
Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN), Staff: Emily.Pliscott@mail.house.gov  
Rep. GT Thompson (R-PA), Staff Josephine.Montoney@mail.house.gov (former CLA, NASDA)

### **Thierry Besancon**

Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA), Staff: Kurtis\_Miller@fetterman.senate.gov  
Rep. Rob Bresnahan Jr (R-PA), Staff: Eric.Gebhart@mail.house.gov  
Rep. GT Thompson (R-PA), Staff: Josephine.Montoney@mail.house.gov

### **Lee Van Wychen**

Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-VA), Staff: FabianaCorsiMendez@mail.house.gov  
Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL), Staff: Nadia Cortez  
Rep. Rob Bresnahan Jr (R-PA), Staff: Eric.Gebhart@mail.house.gov

## **Congressional Offices Visited on Wednesday/Thursday**

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) Staff: Trenton Hoekstra  
Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) Staff: Harrison Walker

Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-NE) Staff: Samantha Barnett  
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) Staff: Sidney Kucera  
Sen. Andy Kim (D-NJ) Staff: Marshall Burkhardt  
Sen. Tedd Budd (R-NC) Staff: Ben Easter and Charlie Hobbs  
Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) Staff: Brandon Honeycutt  
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) Staff: Hanganh Vo  
Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE) Staff: Abby Goins  
Rep. Jessica Spielman (D-NJ) Staff: Jessica Spielman  
Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN) Staff: Emily Pliscott  
Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) Staff: Josie McLaurin