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Talks in Madrid Give Agriculture Another Opportunity to Advance Climate Solutions

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Global negotiators have once again gathered to address the growing threat of a changing climate. The annual discussion – conducted under the aegis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – is formally known as the Conference of the Parties (COP). In this year’s COP 25, a key topic is once again the growing need for solutions provided from the land.

Representatives from the [North America Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance](#) (NACSAA), a farmer-led platform for North American agricultural partners facilitated by Solutions from the Land, have been attending and contributing to the global discussions for the last two years. With this seat at the table, NACSAA delegates are promoting policies and actions that can optimize the contributions the world’s farmers can offer in the effort to stem changes to our climate that jeopardize their ability to grow ample, safe and affordable food, feed, fiber and energy.

The [Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture](#) (KJWA) is a policy process adopted by negotiators in 2017 that for the first time fully recognizes the role agricultural interests must play to face climate challenges. The KJWA allows delegates to fully consider the sector’s vulnerability to increasing droughts, floods, violent winds and other harsh consequences of a changing climate, while allowing full exploration of the services that agriculture can offer in stemming further weather destabilization and better assuring food security.

Negotiators set out a road map of work under the KJWA protocol, including six workshops to be held sequentially up until COP 26 next November 2020. Madrid marks the fourth Koronivia workshop, in which delegates are focusing on improved nutrient use and manure management towards sustainable and resilient agricultural systems.

As it has at previous United Nations workshops, NACSAA’s delegation in Madrid is on the ground building support for the alliance [recommendations](#), submitted in late September, on nutrient use and manure management. The NACSAA contingent, which includes Chairman Fred Yoder, steering committee members AG Kawamura and Ray Gaesser, and coordinator Ernie Shea, is participating in a series of agriculture and transport sector meetings and high-level events where climate change will be discussed and debated. Other allies joining to represent and advance the views and positions of North America agriculture include delegates from the U.S. Grains Council, Growth Energy, the Renewable Fuels Association, The Fertilizer Institute, Cornell University, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [C2ES], and other NACSAA partners.

Earlier this week, Yoder, Kawamura and Shea were guests of U.S. Ambassador to Spain Duke Buchan III at a reception he held at his residence for the U.S. congressional delegation in Madrid for COP 25. There, delegation members met and spoke with a number of the U.S. lawmakers in attendance, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Kathy Castor and Michigan Rep. Debbie Dingell, who asked to learn more about ethanol as a climate solution pathway for the transport sector.

Yoder represented NACSAA at the Koronivia workshop Tuesday and Wednesday, while Kawamura spoke at a "Future of the Food System" event just a few short hours ago today. Gaesser and Shea are on the program Saturday at a U.S. Climate Action forum, where they will be discussing climate smart agriculture initiatives at the state and national level.

A common message the contingent is delivering in Madrid is a call for support of the [guiding principles](#) that NACSAA holds the world should follow in crafting agricultural adaptation and mitigation strategies and programs. The principles were developed to ensure that farmers remain at the center of all discussions and decision-making related to agricultural solutions. They also assert that findings must be science-based.

In addition to the ongoing international participation, farmer input on policy is also being emphasized here in the United States. Gaesser, an Iowa farmer and chairman of the American Soybean Association, has been named to lead a NACSAA Enabling Policies Team charged with exploring steps that Congress should adopt to reduce carbon pollution and other greenhouse gas emissions and maximize carbon storage in agriculture. Recommendations are also being sought by the team for policies that help farmers, ranchers, and natural resource managers adapt to the impacts of climate change.

SfL and NACSAA partners are urged to submit recommendations to the team at Info@SfLDialogue.net. Proposals ultimately developed by the team will be submitted to Castor's House climate crisis committee this spring. Like the negotiations going on in Madrid, the House committee's work is offering an opportunity for important contributions from those who best know the steps that can – and must – be taken to stem the growing threat to our food security: those who work the land.