



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ABA Band of Bakers March on Washington, D.C.
Announce Action Plan for Wheat Crisis**

Bakers and other allied groups joined forces in Washington, D.C., today to draw attention to record high wheat prices and tight supplies. “It is crucial that the White House, our elected representatives, and the Department of Agriculture hear first-hand how bakers and others wheat users, including consumers, are struggling with current market conditions. Wheat markets – and commodity markets in general – are behaving in ways that we have not seen before. We believe that extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures,” declared Robb MacKie, president and CEO of the American Bakers Association (ABA).

The ABA outlined a plan focusing on three key areas to alleviate the current crisis:

- **Increasing flexibility for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).**
 - ABA estimates that as much as one-third of the farm land idled through the CRP could be returned to production without sacrificing environmental goals.
 - ABA strongly supports a proposal from House Agriculture Committee Chairman Peterson for a seven million acre decrease in the CRP.
 - ABA continues to urge U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to exercise its authority to waive penalties for farmers seeking an early release from CRP contracts.

- **Balancing Food and Fuel Needs.**
 - ABA supports developing energy efficient alternatives and alternative fuel research (cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel); however, these policies must be balanced with the needs of traditional agriculture to ensure a reliable food supply for our nation.
 - ABA supports the requirement in the 2007 energy bill that gives the Environmental Protection Agency, in consultation with USDA and the Energy Department, authority to waive yearly renewable fuel standard requirements if they would “severely harm the economy of a state, region or the US” or if domestic supplies are not adequate to meet the standards.
 - Trading independence from foreign oil for dependence on foreign sources of basic food is **not** in the best security interests of the country.

- **Balancing Domestic and International Customer Needs.**
 - USDA should give priority to the needs of the domestic food industry when supplies of wheat drop below the three-month stocks average.
 - ABA supports instituting a requirement for USDA to periodically evaluate the impact of the renewable fuels program on the nation's commodity supply and recommend adjustments to the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) as necessary.

“There is no single fix for the current crisis, just as there is no quick fix,” stated David Brown, vice president procurement, Sara Lee Corp. and chairman of the ABA Commodity Task Force. “However, we strongly believe that implementation of these actions will send important, positive signals to the marketplace at a time when it is critically needed.”

Other groups represented at the press conference were: Baking Industry Suppliers Association (BEMA), Independent Bakers Association (IBA), Retail Bakers of America (RBA), and Snack Food Association (SFA).

ABA is the Washington, DC-based trade association that has been the voice of the wholesale baking industry since 1897. ABA has a long and dedicated history of representing the interests of the wholesale baking industry before the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, state legislatures and international regulatory authorities. ABA represents approximately 80 percent of the wholesale bakeries in the U.S. and their suppliers.

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