



CORNERSTONE

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Best Practices and Federal Overview

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About the Process

Farm Bill



Farm Bill Process

- House and Senate Agriculture Committees hold hearings and call witnesses
- Each committee begins drafting its version of the farm bill
- Some differences are reconciled immediately
- Once each chamber passes a bill, conference negotiations begin
- Current Farm Bill expires September 30, 2018
- That's how it usually works...



Farm Bill Process

- Testify at House/Senate Ag hearings to prepare for the farm bill
- Update and reauthorize the Wool Marketing Loan (LDP)
- Sheep Center – re-up the \$1.5 million?
- NRSP-7
- FMD Vaccine Bank
- Wool Trust Fund Extension



2017 POTUS and CONGRESS

- Personnel—WOTUS—Guest Workers—Tax Reform—Reg Relief—ACA—Infrastructure—Trade
- Bighorn language and regulatory relief from new Administration—top short term priority
- FY17 and 18 Approps
 - New position(s) and funding for USSES
 - BHS language
 - Small ruminant funding
 - Strengthen WS livestock protection



Best Practices for Successful Engagement

Use it or LOSE it!



Face-to-Face Meetings

- Personal meetings are the most effective way to communicate with a Member of Congress and staff.
- Members receive dozens of requests everyday – you must convince the scheduler and Member that an appointment with you is worthwhile.
- Face-to Face meetings with Members are rare – don't be disappointed to meet with staff.
- Pass along the same message. There is more opportunity to follow-up on your issue if you meet with staff.



Face-to-Face Meetings

- Do** make an appointment for you and a small group.
- Don't** show up to the office without an appointment.
- Do** be flexible; schedules change rapidly.
- Don't** show up too early or too late.
- Do** meet with staff when given the opportunity.
- Don't** spend a lot of time on chit-chat. Begin your meeting with substance.
- Do** prepare your pitch before your meeting. You will have 15-25 minutes in total to make your case. Make sure your substance is succinct.



Email

- Members and staff have a strong preference for email – especially for follow-up.
- However, they suffer from extreme overload.
- Impetorative to engage without being a pest.



Telephone

- Congressional offices have one published phone number with one or more Staff Assistants and/or interns answering.
- If you are placing a call to a specific staff member, go through the main line, unless otherwise directed.
- On the phone: 1) identify yourself, 2) get straight to the point, 3) be patient and polite, and 4) always say thank you.



Postal Mail

- Mail to Congress is decontaminated – a process that significantly delays delivery.
- This communication method is almost completely useless, unless you are directed by staff to do so.
- If so, send to State/District office staff as they can send directly to DC minus irradiation.



Fax

What is this?



Personal Messages Matter

- Personal communication from actual constituents is the most **EFFECTIVE** way to influence. **BREAK IT DOWN!**
- Explaining how a particular regulation or law affects your operation is the winning message.
- Form letters or emails do not make a big difference.



Phone calls matter when...

- Member's office receives a high volume of calls on a specific subject from constituents=ATTENTION.
- But it's only effective if EVERYONE PARTICIPATES.
- You will be notified by ASI when there is a CALL TO ACTION. Answer that call with engagement.



Hill and Home Again



Prepare for Fly-In

- Before going to Washington, you should touch base with the staff that you know, and the staff that you intend to meet with.
- A simple and short email saying
 - You look forward to seeing them (again)
 - You look forward to discussing _____ issues
 - Thank them for all of their work and support



After the Fly-In

- **STAY ENGAGED!!!**
- Send a Thank You email, or letter.
 - Offer to be an industry resource if they have questions.
- If you agree to follow up with more information..... **DO IT!**
- If they agree to follow up with you, send gentle reminders.



About the Process

Appropriations



Budget/Appropriations 101

- Two-step process:
 - President “proposes”
 - Congress “disposes”
- President’s Budget Request – by Feb??
- Congressional Budget Resolution
- Congressional Appropriations



President's Budget Request

- Developed over several years
- Usually release in early February
- Details how funds will be spent
- Just a starting point – Congress has “power of the purse”



Congressional Appropriations

- Main focus at subcommittee-level
 - 12 subcommittees (including Ag and Interior)
 - Each gets spending ceiling and writes own bill
- Process: House > Senate > Conference
 - Bill are supposed to be complete by Oct. 1
 - Rarely happens



Current Landscape

- Still operating under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015
- FY 2017 appropriations still not complete
 - Continuing appropriations through April 28, 2017. After that... will they pass a new bill? or just continue?
- Meanwhile, FY 2018 process will start with President's Budget Request... maybe in February? Nah. March, Maybe? April or May, go to the pay window?



Why do we care?

- Domestic and Bighorn Sheep grazing
- U.S. Sheep Experiment Station funding
- Wildlife Services funding
- APHIS Scrapie eradication funding



What ASI Will Provide

- Email for state executives to request congressional meetings
- Provide the hotlink to the ASI legislative action center in newsletter and calls to action to remind folks it is there to assist them
- Issues book
- Excellent service



Smokey Bear and Uncle Sam



Questions?

