

Southwest Council of Agribusiness

In September of 2006 – in preparation for upcoming debates on the future of farm legislation in Washington, DC – an organization was formed to bring the collective interests of business and agriculture in Texas and the Southwest together to speak with one voice. That organization became the Southwest Council of Agribusiness

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) . . .

- **Why should I support the SWCA?**

Producer organizations, lenders, community organizations and agribusinesses that support the farmer, and Main Street businesses that are supported by the farmer should all support the Southwest Council because it is working on issues that have a direct impact on their bottom line. Good agricultural policy boosts the economic engine of the area – which in turn supports all segments and the tax base for the economy. Moreover, the SWCA provides a forum for networking and sharing ideas, as well as a potent avenue for increasing understanding of rural issues and speaking with a louder political voice.

- **What makes SWCA different from every other group lobbying or pitching an idea in Washington?**

What makes the SWCA different is the marriage of business, community and farmer interests behind a common goal – that of promoting strong agricultural policy. This kind of coalition is rare, and it makes an immediate and favorable impression on decision-makers who are seeking to do the will of their constituency.

- **How does the SWCA's mission and vision with such a diverse group deliver value?**

Because of the diversity of its members, the SWCA focuses on big picture issues that are of value to the entire membership (consistent with the mission statement). Generally, members of the SWCA will also be a part of another organization which has a more tailored lobbying function (lenders will be part of the ABA, ICBA or FCS; farm groups will be part of their national or regional commodity organization; etc.). The SWCA should not in any way diminish the need or role of these other organizations, but should complement and enhance the work of these organizations as the members build relationships, broaden their perspectives and increase their understanding on issues.

- **Can an individual be a member of the SWCA?**

The SWCA is to serve as an organization where businesses and other agricultural organizations (as opposed to individual producers) can come together. The SWCA does not seek to diminish the role or reputation – in fact we encourage participation in other grassroots organizations – of any other grassroots organization of any kind but, instead, seeks only to act as effectively as possible to further its unique mission.

- **What is the dues structure for the SWCA?**

For the first year, it was agreed that businesses and/or other agricultural groups join in this effort at a minimum of \$100 per month (\$1200 per year), with most contributing \$500 per month. A more formal dues structure has been developed with the goal of having a sustainable organization that is a forceful and effective advocate for the region. Leadership level (having a Board position) is now set at \$6,000 per year. Other levels include the voting level at \$3,000 annually; Associate non-voting level at \$1,200 annually.

- **What are the top 5 reasons why my organization should support the SWCA?**

1. To show support for Agriculture and Producers,
2. To be more informed on issues of importance.
3. To work with experienced and effective leadership.
4. To be part of a united voice for an important cause.
5. To effectively network with key leaders and businesses.

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