



American Bakers Association

The Voice of the Baking Industry Since 1897

ABA'S TOP ISSUES

www.americanbakers.org

- 1 Employee Free Choice Act or “Card Check”** – Allows unions to organize employees by filling out union authorization cards, otherwise known as “Card Check,” instead of holding secret ballot elections. It also forces federal mediation of first contracts if agreement is not reached within 90-days. ABA is actively engaged in an aggressive campaign against EFCA.
- 2 Imported and Domestic Food Safety** – Recent high profile food contamination incidents have raised concerns about the effectiveness of laws, regulations and implementation by government agencies regulating the U.S. food supply. Congress has proposed numerous solutions to address this issue, including implementing import and facility registration fees, mandating country of origin labeling and traceability standards. ABA's FTRAC is working with Congress and the administration to address key food safety concerns for bakers while mitigating new regulatory schemes that would be of questionable benefit toward improving human health and ultimately consumers.
- 3 Health Care Reform** – Congress, the Obama Administration and multiple interest groups are actively engaged in the raging health care debate. Congress and the administration want to include a public option that may increase health care costs to all bakers. Congress has also proposed plans that would erode the ERISA preemption for self-insured employers, as well as change the tax status of Flexible Spending Accounts and Health Savings Accounts, making it more difficult for bakers to offer these benefits to employees. ABA is closely monitoring the debate and will be an active part of the process moving forward.
- 4 Nutrition & Labeling Policy** – Federal government and state legislatures are focused on ensuring healthy options for school children and consumers. New state and local initiatives include trans fat reduction, sodium reduction and high fructose corn syrup elimination in school foods. On a federal level, Congress is reviewing legislation to reauthorize the child nutrition act and the Administration is working on federal policy regarding school food standards and choices in tandem with the review of the pending changes of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines and Food Guide Pyramid. ABA's FTRAC is aggressively promoting nutrition policies based on sound science that promote the benefits of both whole grains and enriched grains.
- 5 Commodity Futures Market Stability** – Volatility continues to be an issue within the commodities markets. Traditional price discovery tools for food producers are insufficient in dealing in today's markets. Congress and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) are currently discussing proposals to decrease market volatility. ABA's Commodity & Agricultural Policy Committee (CAPC) is working with Congress and the administration to create viable market regulations that secure future participation from traditional market participants.



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- 6** **Sustainability** – Sustainable development remains a high priority for the baking industry. Regulators and legislators are evaluating issues including carbon emissions, water conservation, and energy efficiency. There is an increased emphasis on being a good corporate citizen while operating more efficiently. ABA's Energy & Environmental Health Committee has developed bakery-specific sustainability guidance for the baking industry.
- 7** **Climate Change** – Renewable energy goals, climate change and ethanol issues gain momentum in Congress and EPA. EPA finalized the first mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting rule. EPA proposed a GHG permit rule for large facilities being constructed or undergoing changes and a GHG proposal for tailpipe emissions. Recently the Senate has introduced the "Clean Energy Jobs and American Powers Act." ABA is determining the impact of these proposals and legislation on bakeries.
- 8** **Butter Flavoring ~ Diacetyl** – Legislation on diacetyl has pressured OSHA's regulatory process. ABA participated in OSHA's assessment on regulatory impacts to small businesses. OSHA is moving forward on issuing a proposed regulation in 2010. The State of California should have a diacetyl proposal before this year.
- 9** **Combustible Dust** – Recent dust explosions have raised the profile of dust issues. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is set to release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking before the end of 2009. The US Chemical Safety & Hazard Investigation Board also recommended that ABA continue promoting improvements in combustible dust hazard awareness and control throughout the wholesale baking industry. ABA's Safety Committee is actively engaged on these issues.
- 10** **Wheat Research Funding** – Adequate funding for USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) wheat quality laboratories is a critical issue where ABA can make a difference. The ARS labs fund extremely important efforts to increase wheat yields, wheat quality and disease resistance. Federal funds for wheat research have declined dramatically and fall far short of research for other basic commodities. ABA is actively educating members of Congress regarding the importance of wheat research dollars for both bakers and consumers. ABA is also closely monitoring biotech wheat research activities.