Three Trends Will Influence the Debate in Washington Over the Coming Year
1. The Twilight of the Administration

2008 2015
2. A New Speaker of the House
3. The Presidential Campaign Season
Voter Dissatisfaction with Government Institutions Continues to Grow

- Congressional job approval: 15.3% of Americans approve, 75% disapprove
- President Obama’s job approval: 44% approve, 52% disapprove
- 29% of Americans believe country is on right track; 63% on wrong track

All numbers taken from RealClearPolitics.com August 28th average of national polls
Implications for Ag of a Divided, Dissatisfied Public

• The past doesn’t necessarily predict the future—witness the drama of the last farm bill
• The balance of power can be shifted by a small number of voters in the middle
• If producers and other leaders in ag aren’t talking to policy makers about the issues, our opponents will be
• Different sectors of ag no longer have the luxury of going their own ways—a divided agriculture community is a defeated agriculture community
Major Issues to Watch

- GMO Labeling
- Repeal/Modifications
- Trade
- Cybersecurity/Data Breaches
- Tax Reform
- Highway Bill Funding
- Minimum Wage
- Export-Import Bank
- Iran/Middle East Relations
- Financial Regulation
- GHG Emissions Regulations
- Immigration Reform
- EPA Regulations
- Food and Nutrition policy
- Waters of the U.S.
- Health Law
GMO Labeling

PRO GMO

MIDDLE GROUND

NO GMO

John Pritchet/Civil Beat
Negative Consumer Perceptions
Key Factors of the Debate

• Nearly 2,000 independent, peer-reviewed scientific studies conclude GMOs are safe

• Biotechnology is responsible for decreasing the environmental impact of pesticides by nearly 20 percent
  – The technology has reduced green house gas emissions by an equivalent of removing nearly 12 million cars from our roads.

• In a 2014 study from the International Food Information Council, only 4 percent of total respondents said that labels should carry information about genetic engineering or related terms
  – Only 2 percent of total respondents say they avoid biotechnology derived food ingredients in their diet.
Coalition for Safe & Affordable Food

- Brings together broad range of stakeholders from across food & ag value chain
- Co-chaired by GMA & NCFC, includes National Milk, AFBF, and others on steering committee
- Focused on a national solution to the state-by-state GMO labeling initiatives
Our Key Message to Congress:
A 50 state patchwork of GMO labeling rules benefits no one. It would mislead consumers, raise food prices and hold back technology development and adoption.
Where the Debate is Headed

• Voluntary labeling system
• Mandatory review by FDA and USDA of new traits
• National standard for labeling products containing GMO ingredients
Trans Pacific Partnership—What will it take to get passed?
Trade Promotion Authority

215-214

Passed
WHAT IS TPP

TRANSCPACIFICPARTNERSHIP

CANADA
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
PERU
CHILE
VIETNAM
SINGAPORE
JAPAN
BRUNEI
MALAYSIA
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
Agriculture will play a vital role in supporting TPP in the coming debate—but don’t assume that the formations from the old playbook will work.
TAX REFORM
OUR TAX CODE Too Complex Too Confusing Too Costly
Tax Reform & Co-ops
Farmer Co-op & Producer Tax Priorities

- Patronage Dividend Deduction (Sub T)
- Section 199 Domestic Production Activities Deduction
- Deduction for Interest on Debt
- Estate Taxes
- Depreciation
"Tax reform means, ‘Don’t tax you, don’t tax me. Tax that fellow behind the tree.’”
- Russell B. Long
Will the farm bill survive in its current form until reauthorization in 2018?
Budget agreement already changing the terms

- $3 billion in sequestration relief comes from cuts to federal crop insurance
- This is on top of savings achieved in the last farm bill and previous budget cuts
- Expect more pressure to reduce spending across all titles of the bill
- The disunity in agriculture that we saw in the last go around is a luxury we no longer can afford
Thank you.