

The Association of Nebraska Ethanol Producers (ANEEP) isn't waiting for the dust to settle before the 2012 harvest concludes to begin planning for next year's corn crop.

Even as this year's early harvest progresses in the wake of one of the most severe droughts in recent memory, members of ANEEP are planning a series of meetings with their local corn farmers, agribusiness interests and state agricultural organizations including livestock interests to begin what they hope is a constructive dialogue for preparing for a successful 2013 crop year.

"As severe as this year's drought has been, 2012 US corn harvest estimates are more optimistic than the numbers released by the agricultural department during the August crop report and corn prices have somewhat eased on the futures market," according to ANEEP Executive Director Loran Schmit. "Instead of overreacting to the drought of 2012 and the run-up in commodity prices, the agricultural industry needs to work together now and to plan for the 2013 crop year when the effects of tight commodity supplies will be better understood."

For instance, Schmit said we may need to consider an emergency, penalty free early contract release from the Conservation Reserve Program (CPR) of the least environmentally sensitive land which has been estimated at 18 million of the total 32 million acres enrolled.

Regardless of this year's situation, we are going to need a large crop next year to satisfy our domestic and export demands. Now is the time to begin planning for a successful 2013 corn crop.

Schmit said ANEEP members are starting the 2013 crop discussion at the local level first, reaching out to corn farm customers and livestock feeding operations, offering ethanol plant tours and coffee shop forums where opinions can be shared openly.

Next, ANEEP plans to take what they have heard and any consensus to the state grower and commodity groups for their consideration.

Hopefully, according to Schmit, issues in planning for the next crop such as easing restrictions on early release for CRP acres will be ready for broader discussion and eventual approval from the major state commodity organizations at the Dec. 11-13, Nebraska Ag Classic.