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2012 Farm Bill moves forward without sugar reform discussion

NCA, sugar-using industry and House members disappointed

Washington, DC – The House Agriculture Committee Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities & Risk Management finished two days of Farm Bill hearings today with no mention of the outdated and costly U.S. sugar program. The National Confectioners Association and its members are concerned that the House will follow the Senate Agriculture Committee and pass the bill out of committee leaving the current U.S. sugar program in place. The program greatly favors U.S. sugar growers while costing consumers $3.5 billion a year.

NCA President Larry Graham, who chairs the Coalition for Sugar Reform, issued written testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture on behalf of the sugar-using industry. “We are disappointed that the Agriculture Committee denied our request to testify at either of the commodity hearings,” Graham said. “If Congress is truly concerned about jobs, why would it deny an open debate on a sugar program that is negatively impacting the interests of the 600,000 Americans employed by the sugar-using sector?”

The testimony summarizes the adverse effects of the U.S. Sugar Program, including the severe restraints on domestic production imports and the lack of competition, noting the average price of refined sugar in neighboring Canada is signification lower than in the U.S. In addition, high domestic sugar prices provide a huge incentive to relocate U.S. food processing jobs overseas; in fact the U.S. Department of Commerce reported that 125,000 sugar-using industry jobs were lost between 1997 and 2010.

“A federal sugar program designed exclusively for sugar growers and processors to the detriment of the rest of the U.S. economy has very real consequences, including sugar supply shortages, excessively high sugar prices, consumer costs, lost jobs, inhibition of new export opportunities and relocation of manufacturing facilities overseas,” Graham concludes in his testimony.

For more information about U.S. sugar policy and why reform is long overdue to protect the nation’s consumers, food manufacturers, and small businesses, visit www.SugarReform.org.

About the National Confectioners Association (NCA)
The National Confectioners Association fosters industry growth by advancing the interests of the confectionery industry and its customers. Serving as the voice of the industry, the Association advocates for the needs of the industry before government bodies, helps the industry understand and implement food safety and other regulations, provides information to help members strengthen business in today’s competitive environment and creates relationships between all sectors of the industry including manufacturers, brokers, trade customers, suppliers to the industry and our consumers.

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