

## NEWSLETTERS

# Planting The Seed 2017 Shines Light On Emerging Trends And Opportunities In The Ag And Food Industries

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Industry leaders from across the U.S. recently gathered at Barnes & Thornburg in Indianapolis to share their perspectives on developments in the agriculture and food realm. Here are some highlights from this year's annual Food and Ag conference, Planting the Seed 2017, organized by the firm's Agriculture and Food Practice Group.

## CropLife CEO, Jay Vroom, Talks Beltway Business

Jay Vroom has seen just about everything in his nearly 30 years at the helm of CropLife America, one of the nation's most influential agricultural trade associations. And yet, this year brings a lot of new political tension at a time of potential for the ag sector.

"There are great opportunities in front of us for American farmers to grow profitability and help position agriculture as an engine to restore economic growth," he said to attendees. "I'm exceedingly optimistic, guardedly at times, that ag is in a very good place and poised to reach the next position of growth for all of us engaged in the sector."



Vroom acknowledged that becoming familiar with the new administration is key, but he expects the administration to listen to leaders in the industry and adjust accordingly.

Vroom pointed to several issues of heightened interest for his CropLife members, including passage of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Extension Act (PRIA). Additionally, he hopes to see the Trump administration and Congress make some positive changes to the Endangered Species Act for the benefit of the ag industry.

## Food for Thought From Karin Moore of Grocery Manufacturers Association

As the single largest U.S. manufacturing employment sector, with 2.1 million jobs, the food, beverage and consumer products industry has several issues being debated in Washington, D.C., this year. Karin Moore, senior vice president and general counsel of the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), returned to the annual seminar to give an update on the priorities of the food industry.

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Moore said that the new president has surrounded himself with “a lot of smart people who know what they are doing,” including FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, among others.

There are several issues likely to affect the “farm-to-fork coalition” of agriculture, processing, manufacturing and retailing groups. One of the biggest issues involves regulation under the Food Safety Modernization Act, which Moore’s association fully supports being implemented if they are backed by science and risk-based standards. The current budget suggests cuts to food safety efforts and GMA will continue to lobby for their full funding.

Other issues GMA is watching, according to Moore, include nutrition fact labeling, the Biotechnology Disclosure Law harmonization efforts, and digital disclosure through SmartLabel, a new industry transparency initiative, among others.

## **Gajaria Encourages Seminar Attendees to Speak Up for Agriculture**

Food safety, genetically modified organisms (GMO) and crop protection are just a few of the topics that are discussed in the food industry on a daily basis. Industry leaders like Rajan Gajaria, Dow AgroSciences’ global leader for Latin America and North America, believe the ag industry must take pride in starting conversations to advocate for itself with consumers and to provide education.

During his Planting the Seed conference presentation, “Growing the Conversation through ‘AgVocacy,’” Gajaria introduced attendees to a new Dow AgroSciences website that serves as a resource for these important issues by “growing the conversation.”

The website, a compilation of resources and tools, provides visitors with answers to commonly asked questions about GMOs, agricultural principles and practices, and nutrition and food safety, as well as conversations about crop protection. He emphasized the need for people in the ag industry to speak with “pride, passion and power” when they discuss modern agriculture and to connect with consumers about their food and the farmers who bring it to them.

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