

## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

### USApple Board, Committees Meet in Washington, D.C.

USApple's Board of Trustees and committees met March 25-27, in Washington, D.C., to discuss the association's priorities and agenda for the coming year. Highlights of the meetings follow.

**Public Affairs.** The committee met Jan. 30 to identify the apple industry's 2004 legislative and regulatory priorities. More than 60 industry members met with their respective elected representatives during congressional appointments on March 25.

**Public Relations.** The committee reviewed the results of the association's apple health research initiatives since its last meeting, including the release of a Univer-

sity of Massachusetts Lowell study on how apples and apple products may help memory and brain function (See story, page 2). The group's 2004 activity plan includes investment in nutrition research, publicizing new health benefits, and increasing focus on short-term weight loss benefits of apples and apple products. The committee changed its name to the Education Committee to better reflect the focus of the program on consumer health and nutrition education.

**Industry Information.** The committee endorsed the association's continued dissemination of critical marketing information through *Market News* and the annual Apple  
*See BOARD, page 2*

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

### USApple Works to Prevent Import Threat

The U.S. Apple Association (USApple) recently contacted President Bush, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Ann Veneman and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to urge USDA and other top Administration officials to conduct a comprehensive review of sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) issues concerning Chinese apple imports.

In anticipation of a mid-April meeting between USDA Secretary Ann Veneman and senior Chinese agriculture officials, USApple hand-delivered an emphatic letter to officials urging opposition to any attempts by the Chinese government to negotiate an expedited review of apple imports from China. This USApple action is based on preliminary information suggesting Chinese officials may request an expedited SPS review in exchange for U.S. agricultural export access of other commodities into China.

"USApple is preemptively coordinating with the Administration, USDA and Congress to ensure our orchards remain safe from SPS risks associated with Chinese apple imports," said USApple President and CEO Nancy Foster. "Any Chinese attempt to rush USDA's SPS risk assessment of Chinese apples could wreak havoc with our own domestic industry. USApple is  
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USApple Chairman Larry Olsen, Prosser, Wash., Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and USApple Trustee Kelly Henggeler, Fruitland, Idaho at the USApplePAC reception March 25. Sen. Crapo addressed attendees on the political climate in Washington, D.C. and the current issues before the Senate Agriculture Committee..

# Brain Health Study Reaches Consumers Nationwide

Consumers looking for the latest in keeping their memory and learning skills sharp got great news from the USApple and Apple Products Research and Education

Council (APREC)-funded animal study by the University of Massachusetts-Lowell's (UML) Dr. Thomas Shea.

A March 4 press conference held by UML highlighted the results of Dr. Shea's research to local and national media. USApple and APREC augmented the press conference's outreach by simultaneously releasing UML's print press release to national health and food editors.

Print media results are just starting to arrive at USApple, due to the customary processing delay in receiving clip reports.

APREC's video news release, which targets broadcast news and media opportunities, achieved great results in its first few weeks of release. Thus far, it has aired in 44 of the top 50 U.S. media markets and on CNN, achieving combined media "impressions" of more than 11 million. A USApple-produced audio news release, which was distributed nationwide to radio and news networks, has aired



*UML's brain health study has reached over 15 million consumers with the healthy message that apples and apple products may promote memory and learning.*

1,100 times to date, and achieved combined media impressions of more than 4 million to date. The VNR and ANR have far exceeded the standard results for news

releases in their respective formats.

USApple's Director of Education and Communications Patricia Henderson commented, "Consumers are increasingly interested in healthy foods that taste good too, and with research results such as these, the U.S. apple industry is creating even more interest with consumers in the health and nutrition benefits of apples and apple products."

For more information on USApple's nutrition and health education program, contact Henderson at (800) 781-4443 or (703) 442-8850, or via email at [phenderson@usapple.org](mailto:phenderson@usapple.org). ■



## Board of Trustees Set '04 Priorities

**BOARD (from page 1)**

Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference, to be held Aug. 19-20 in Chicago.

**Membership Services.** The committee reviewed the association's 2004 membership plan and discussed non-dues revenue options for the future of USApple. The committee also discussed assuming new communication responsibilities, which include serving as industry spokespersons for the marketing season. The name of the program was changed to Membership/Communications Committee in order to reflect the expanded responsibilities of the committee.

**National Apple Month.**

Committee members met on Mar. 11 to review last fall's national retail promotion, and lay the groundwork for the 2004 National Apple Month promotion.

**Board of Trustees.** The board maintained state dues assessments at 7 mil per 42-lb. unit for another year in order to allow for industry funding to stabilize in the wake of the legal challenges in Washington state. They also reviewed and adopted the committees' fiscal year 2004 activity plans and budget proposals.

For more information on USApple's leadership opportunities, contact USApple President and CEO Nancy Foster by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via e-mail at [nfoster@usapple.org](mailto:nfoster@usapple.org). ■

## New Crop Insurance Policy Published

For the last two years, USAApple has been working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) to improve the federal apple crop insurance policy. In late March, the new policy moved one step closer to becoming a reality when RMA published it in the *Federal Register* for public comment before final approval.

"We are excited to see a new proposed federal apple crop insurance policy that responds to growers' needs and allows them to more effectively manage their own risk," said USAApple Vice President Jim Cranney. "This new apple crop insurance policy was developed as a partnership between USDA and USAApple, and we are pleased with the majority of the changes incorporated by RMA in the final proposed policy."

The simplified policy enables growers to insure all apples at U.S. No. 1 Processing, up from Cider Grade or better, for all weather-related perils. There is a buy-up option available for fresh production.

It also includes an extension of the coverage period until Nov. 20 for all states except California. RMA also modified the Actual Production History (APH) guidelines. Under the new policy, RMA places a "10 percent cup" that ensures an orchard's APH will not fall 10 percent below the previous year's APH even when a grower collects on insurance.

A few of USAApple's proposed improvements were not accepted by RMA in the published policy. RMA did not amend the closing date of the sales period, which coincides with the harvest season. All perennial policies utilize the

## Chinese Apple Imports May Pose SPS Threat

### CHINA (from page 1)

urging the Administration to remain diligent in analyzing the over 300 pests of concern already identified in the assessment process."

China has asked the U.S. government for access to the fresh apple market. Per the Plant Protection Act, apples must be certified to be free of damaging pest and plant diseases before imported into the United States. This is to prevent introduction of potentially devastating pest and plant diseases to our domestic industry. This SPS mandate is designed to protect public health, safety and domestic production, and is recognized and accepted under the World Trade Organiza-

tion (WTO).  
 same closing date, and RMA rejected this change arguing it would also have to change other crops' insurance policies. RMA also did not amend the policy to reflect the use of discernable breaks, such as public right-of-ways, to divide orchards into units. Although the policy writers were willing to consider utilizing right-of-ways to separate contiguous blocks, RMA's Board of Directors rejected this change in the final review process due to possible conflicts with other perennial crops.

"We will continue to work with RMA and the Administration to find a solution to the discernable breaks issue," said Foster. "In apple orchards, public right-of-ways, irrigation canals and other boundaries are an obvious separation of contiguous blocks. We hope RMA will adjust this before issuing the final policy later this year."

tion (WTO).

APHIS' initial assessment identified over 300 pests and plant diseases of concern present in Chinese production. The Agency sent this list to the quarantine inspection agency of the Chinese government in Dec. 2003. To date, no official reply has been received.

USAApple staff is also working with Congress to ensure USDA's full attention to our industry's concerns. The association will continue to work with our industry partners and allies to prevent the premature entry of Chinese imports of fresh apples into the United States.

For more information on the SPS risks posed by Chinese apple imports, visit us online at [www.usapple.org](http://www.usapple.org) or contact Foster or USAApple Vice President Jim Cranney by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via email at [nfoster@usapple.org](mailto:nfoster@usapple.org) or [jcranney@usapple.org](mailto:jcranney@usapple.org), respectively. ■

USAApple's Risk Management Task Force will meet in the coming weeks to review the draft policy and develop recommendations to respond to RMA's request for comments.

To view the proposed federal apple crop insurance policy, visit [www.usapple.org/industry/legislative](http://www.usapple.org/industry/legislative).

For more information, contact USAApple Vice President Jim Cranney via telephone at (800) 781-4443 or via email at [jcranney@usapple.org](mailto:jcranney@usapple.org). ■



## USApple Welcomes Diane Coates, Director of Public Affairs

USApple recently welcomed Diane Coates as its new Director of Public Affairs. In this position, Coates will be an integral part of the association's public affairs efforts, and will be responsible for communications with members of Congress, federal agencies and the Administration. She will also manage USApple-PAC, grow USApple's grassroots member activity and work in agriculture coalitions in Washington, D.C.

"We are pleased to welcome Diane to the USApple team in such a vital role," said USApple President and CEO Nancy Foster. "Her strong background in agriculture legislation and policy work with Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes her a strong asset to the association and the industry we serve. Diane has hit the ground running in her first few weeks at USApple, and we look forward to even more of her efforts on behalf of the apple



*Diane Coates joined USApple's staff as Director of Public Affairs.*

industry in the future. "

Coates joins USApple from the American Peanut Council, where she served as director of international programs, overseeing all public relations efforts to expand the Canadian market for U.S. peanut imports. She also monitored and managed all food safety

issues in coordination with USDA and international stakeholders.

Prior to this, Coates was a confidential assistant in the USDA Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, where she advised the Under Secretary on food safety policy developments. Her work included authoring policy briefings, white papers, articles, speeches and communications from the Under Secretary, and representing the Office in policy meetings and interagency projects.

Coates has also served as government affairs specialist and media coordinator for the American School Food Service Association, where she managed state legislative initiatives for the 65,000 member association and administered the PAC. She has also served as legislative staff assistant for Ranking Democrat Senator Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

Coates has a bachelor of arts in political science and history from the University of Vermont, and resides in Arlington, Va. She can be reached at USApple's offices at (800) 781-4443 or via email at [dcoates@usapple.org](mailto:dcoates@usapple.org). ■

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8233 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200  
Vienna, Virginia 22182-3816 USA