Worthington (Minn.) Daily Globe: State ag commissioner visits MnSP

By Erin Trester

Jan. 7, 2014

BREWSTER — Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson made a stop Tuesday morning at Minnesota Soybean Processors (MnSP). Frederickson is touring the state in support of the biofuels industry and the Renewable Fuel Standard.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed 2014 reduction in RFS required volumes would result in an estimated $610 million in losses and more than 1,500 jobs cut from the Minnesota economy and workforce, Frederickson said.

"This industry is very near and dear to my heart," said Michael Zins, a member of the MnSP Board of Directors. "This industry is really expanding. Just here in Brewster, we have started an $8 million rail expansion project that began in the fall of 2013."

The EPA is proposing to set the cellulosic biofuel standard at 17 million gallons, a figure lower than the Clean Air Act target of 1.75 billion gallons. The EPA is also proposing to maintain the biomass-based diesel standard for 2014 and 2015 at the 2013 level of 1.28 billion gallons, according to the EPA's proposed 2014 RFS.

MnSP employs about 84 full-time jobs for the area. It has $4 million in annual payroll, more than $400,000 in employee benefits paid annually and $50,000 in local property taxes paid annually, according to company figures.

MnSP has also spent more than $500 million in production costs paid to farmers, local elevators and businesses.

"The money that we make goes back to the community — it goes back to Main Street," Zins said.

Using the 34 million soybean bushels MnSP produced in 2013, it has manufactured 750,000 tons of soybean meal, more than 350 million pounds of soybean oil and more than 32 million gallons of biodiesel has been produced.

"I know people have developed a little cynicism about sending letters to our state senators and representatives, but I remember when I was in office if I got 10 or 15 letters on an issue, I would pay more attention to it," Frederickson said. "I believe if we stand shoulder to shoulder on this issue, we will win."

Frederickson also made a stop in Lamberton on his tour Tuesday. He is expected to be at Minnesota Soybean, Mankato, next week.