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## U.S. urged to lead China into carbon emission cuts

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By K.T. Arasu

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States should take the lead in reducing carbon emissions to be able to enlist China in the global campaign to curb global warming, an expert told an annual USDA conference on Friday.

The United States and China, the world's top two emitters of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels stoking global warming, have often been icy rivals over trade and security.

"China is unlikely to make any reductions until the United States takes action," Tim Profeta, director of the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University told the USDA annual Agricultural Outlook Forum here.

He said the debate in Congress over climate change has become chaotic, but expressed confidence that President Barack Obama would work with Congressional leaders to enact climate change legislation.

Obama, in his first speech to Congress, called on lawmakers to send him legislation that places a market-based cap on U.S. carbon polluting emissions.

In his budget proposal, Obama outlined investments of \$15 billion a year on wind and solar power, advanced biofuels, clean coal and American-built cars and trucks that are more fuel efficient.

Since taking office on January 20, Obama has raised hopes among environmentalists concerned over climate change and critical of the environmental policies of former President George W. Bush.

China, the world's most populous nation, has insisted that rich nations give developing countries cash and technology so they do not have to sacrifice economic growth to tackle global warming, and it has been unhappy with global talks so far.

Mike Walsh from the Chicago Climate Exchange told the session there could be no perfect solution to the problem of curbing carbon emissions. "There has never been a crystal clear, perfect solution," he added.

"We need to get going, we need to get smart and this is where the future lies," he said.

Richard Krause, senior director of congressional relations at the American Farm Bureau Federation, said the U.S. agricultural sector emits 7 percent of total greenhouse gases but could sequester 15 to 20 percent of that.

He said the agricultural sector could participate through offset programs that

could help reduce compliance costs to industry and consumers.

The global carbon market works by putting a cap on greenhouse gases in rich countries. They can exceed these targets only if they pay for corresponding emission cuts -- known as offsets -- in the developing world.

Krause said a climate change policy would result in higher fertilizer and energy costs but added that offsets could defray these costs.

He also said any reduction of carbon emissions in the United States would prove futile if similar action is not taken in other countries, like China and India.

(Editing by David Gregorio)

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