

Testimony for House Ag Committee

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Salina, KS

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I would like to begin my remarks by thanking the Committee for allowing me to testify this morning and for listening to the direct views of farmers and ranchers about the farm bill.

I am not coming before you today to plead for more federal money for farmers and ranchers. I, and I believe most ag producers, would much prefer to receive my income from the value of the products that I produce. Unfortunately in today's farm economy that income is not consistently reliable enough to maintain financially sound farms without federal support. The past ten years of farming has been very challenging as far as Kansas is concerned. With low grain prices, exploding expenses, and difficult weather it has been difficult to find the income to support a family. This exposes the need for some kind of farm income stabilization so that we have a reliable source of food and fiber for our country.

Has the current farm bill been sufficient? Yes, it has been okay, especially the counter cyclical support concept. Whether that is left in place or we move to more of a savings account idea, it is necessary to have a method in place to stabilize income in difficult years.

The recent increase in grain prices has at least provided an optimistic view of the future, provided we have some product to sell. The support of crop insurance policies needs to continue. We have the expanded use of ethanol to thank for this current jump in corn prices. Our country needs to become increasingly reliant upon ourselves for our energy, and federal support needs to continue in this area. I believe most Americans would rather fill up their vehicle knowing they are supporting mid-west farmer instead of a middle east terrorist. Please continue to support the growth of the ethanol industry.

I hope that our country can move away from direct support of farm programs. But we do need crop insurance products and income stability support to maintain a reliable and healthy ag economy.