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Question1: A) The U. S. is now (2005) a net food importer. The Farm Bill needs to encourage import substitution on a local and regional scale. The best way to do this is to develop programs to encourage SMALL, organic farms. (There is much evidence that these products in demand.)

B) Costs of production and distribution are closely linked to costs of energy. USDA has shown tremendous foresight by including programs to help rural farmers, ranchers and businesses develop renewable energy systems. This should continue and expand. We should focus on wind, solar, biofuels, biogas digesters and programs to increase energy efficiency. These energy programs promote energy and food independence, rural economic growth (including small companies that install Renewable Energy systems), community self-reliance, potential cash income to farmers (through land rental and energy sales), and development of clean, leading-edge technologies and capabilities.

C) The Farm Bill should expand and strengthen Farmland Trust programs that help farmers keep the best farmland in production, and not let urban/suburban development force new farmers to increasingly marginal lands. This is ESPECIALLY true in Alaska! We have a limited amount of good farmland!

Question2: Need to encourage import substitution on a local and regional scale.

Need to encourage SMALL, organic farms. Also, increase farmers ability to compete by reducing energy needs and costs through energy efficiency programs and development of widely distributed, renewable energy systems.

Question3: A) I would argue that we should NOT be fair in distributing assistance! Question assumes system has been fair in the past ? it has not. The current system tends to benefit corporate farmers and agribusinesses. Now system must shift to benefit small-scale organic farmers and rural businesses disproportionately, to get us back on track to local and regional food security.

B) In addition, I'd like to see a program that encourages food production in urban and suburban areas ? like community gardens and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) producers.

Question4: A) Both of my parents grew up on farms in Iowa. I should be glad they left, as the well water on both of those farms is no longer safe, and I have lost one uncle and one aunt to cancer. Programs to get farming and food production away from use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides must be expanded.

B) To fulfill these goals, encourage small-scale, widely-distributed, organic food production and discourage suburban and urban development on

valuable farming soils.

To protect human health and water supplies, immediately stop encouraging the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

C) Continue to discourage farming on highly erodible, marginal sites through continuation of the very successful Conservation Reserve Program (which has been great for wildlife and fish).

D) Continue and expand other programs that protect water quality and watersheds (e.g. NRCS programs).

E) In Alaska, tailor programs to our local needs. For example, one national program focuses on "restoration," which is obviously necessary in many places. But, as one local farmer mentioned at the meeting describing this program, where is the assistance to help the farmer NOT get to the point that restoration is necessary? To preserve healthy, functioning systems. Our problem is not necessarily restoration, but AVOIDING THE NEED TO RESTORE.

Question5: Rely on LOCAL STAFF, and allow those folks to set priorities (within a larger framework, of course).

Question6: Encourage small, distributed processing facilities that can supply healthy food to local communities and school lunch programs. Focus on IMPORT SUBSTITUTION first, not export.