

From: "bharmon@tctelco.net%inter2" <bharmon@tctelco.net>
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Email: bharmon@tctelco.net
FirstName: Bill
LastName: Harmon
Address1: RR 1
Address2:
City: Lincolnvillle
State: Kansas
zipcode: 66858
Question1: Mr Secretary:

As a 51 year old individual who has had a vested interest in agriculture my entire life both with experience as a producer of crops and CRP and as a career employee with the USDA, I am compelled to provide you my opinions on the developing of the next 2007 Farm Bill, specifically directed to the question of how farm policy should address unintended consequences and ensure new and next generation farmers are not discouraged from entering production agriculture.

First, federal farm programs have been arranged with too much complexity. Producers, I believe, have been disappointed in past years by feeling obligated to sign program documents they do not understand due to excessive legal jargon. Many producers were confused and frustrated during the 2002 farm program signup process with 5 complicated participation option choices and a 7 page appendix of regulations to comprehend. Since program participants tend in age from 18 to their 80s, the forms and documents that producers certify under the next program need simplicity and to be concise. To best contribute an ease of understanding in this area, the structure of the program should be developed as a one base or normal crop acre concept per farm as was employed in the 1970s. The terms of a program should be brief enough to be included on a single page contract. If multiple year participation is possible, producers should not be required to annually enroll. In addition, associated eligibility forms such as farm operating plans, erodible land & income certifications should be combined on a single form that satisfies legal standards.

My second suggestion would be to raise the cap on National CRP enrollment to allow up to 45 million acres (the initial intention of the program in 1985) to be under contract. The CRP has been the most beneficial federal program in conserving and protecting our natural resources in our nation's history and has much public support to expand its reach. With the inclusion over the years of the continuous CRP, CREP, and other special targeted initiatives, an increase in the CRP acreage limit is necessary to help meet these varied conservation needs. In addition, the Conservation Security Program or CSP should be expanded to allow enrollment and participation among farmers who have critical conservation needs that are outside of watershed areas.

Thank you for the opportunity provided in this forum to express these views.

Question2:
Question3:
Question4:
Question5:
Question6:

