

From: "info@agriwellness.org%inter2" <info@agriwellness.org>
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Email: info@agriwellness.org

FirstName: Michael

LastName: Rosmann

Address1: AgriWellness, Inc.

Address2: 1210 7th Street, Suite C

City: Harlan

State: Iowa

zipcode: 51537

Question1: Commodity price supports have created an artificially high price for farm land and have encouraged some producers to "farm for the government." Reducing or completely eliminating federal price supports would bring land costs closer in line with the true capacity of the land to pay for itself through its useful production.

Question2: Reduction/elimination of federal commodity subsidies will enhance credibility of United States' positions in World Trade Organization negotiations in an effort to open up markets in countries that have resisted importation of U.S. farm products because persons from these countries feel that the U.S. has an unfair advantage by subsidizing the production of certain commodities. Commodity price supports in the form of deficiency payments have not rewarded all producers equally. Very large producers have benefitted the most and many farmers (approximately 60% currently) do not receive any price supports for their products.

Question3: Savings from the reduction of federal price supports should be put into activities that help farmers and their families improve their health, such as cost shares for agricultural health screenings, health insurance and emergency behavioral health treatments for mental health and addiction problems. Putting funds into making farmers healthier and safer increases the likelihood of maintaining viable producers of U.S. food, fiber and renewable energy such as ethanol. Putting funds into these efforts to make farming healthier and safer will not jeopardize U.S. trade negotiation positions.

Question4: Some of the federal price support savings should be redirected into farming activities that make farming safer and healthier, such as cost shares for practices that reduce soil run-off (e.g., enhance conservation practices, filter strips), cost shares for equipment rollover protection devices, cost shares to minimize such farm hazards as overhead electrical wires, improving manure storage lagunes and water purification through marshes that utilize grasses and algae to clean up wastes. These cost shares will not jeopardize U.S. trade negotiation positions.

Question5: Many farmers will need to make transitions in their farming practices (e.g., farm more efficiently, plant different crops, undertake different uses of their land to bring in income through such activities as hunting/fishing businesses, shift to organic production, etc) and financial assistance to make these transitions could be necessary in many cases or these farmers will not be able to survive economically. Some farm operations will probably not be able to survive economically and these farmers will need to make transitions in their farming operations or their employment. Educational programs are needed to retrain these farmers and crisis counseling assistance is needed to help them through the emotional turmoil of making these farming transitions. It is known that economic strife is the primary cause of suicide and violence if not addressed through educational programs and psychological support programs.

Question6: Some of the cost savings from the reduction of federal price supports should be put into a National Center for Agricultural Behavioral Health. The U.S. has 11 agricultural safety and health centers throughout the country but none that focus on behavioral health. Behavioral health is the most neglected but the most important component of agricultural safety and health. Helping farmers manage their behavior increases the likelihood of having viable producers of food, fiber and renewable energy. The National Center will provide training to professional healthcare providers about agricultural behavioral health, will help serve as a catalyst for research in this arena and will provide technical assistance to healthcare organizations that improve the behavioral health of the agricultural population. The National Center will build a behavioral health system of supports that insures the positive behavioral health of the agricultural population. Having healthy food producers and a sufficient supply of domestically produced food is a matter of national security.