

Eickholt, Brad

From: Bourget, Jake -FSA
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2005 2:54 PM
To: FarmBill
Subject: 2007 Farm Bill Comment

Categories: Farm Bill
Attachments: tmp.htm; LetterToJohanns.doc



tmp.htm (1 KB)



LetterToJohanns.doc (28 KB)

To whom is collecting comments,

Attached you should find a letter on a comment for the 2007 Farm Bill of which I hope will be forwarded to Secretary Johanns. Thank you.

Dear Mr. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns,

I noticed you are taking comments on the thoughts of the content in the 2007 Farm Bill. From reading some of your talks in the past, you appear to me to be more like myself and try to approach things from the common sense view rather than it's good for the politics view of it. And of course you know when you do that, brace yourself because now you're not on a side per say but in the middle of the argument. Before I get into my idea I need to tell you who I am. I'm a small town guy, who was raised on a dairy farm at the end of a gravel dead end road here in WI. I am now a manager for the USDA-Farm Service Agency in Stevens Point and WI Rapids, WI. Yes, I'm in a shared management situation with an office in Portage County and another in Wood County, WI. Point being I think I have one of the largest variety packages of agriculture you will find in the Midwest with thousands of acres of both irrigated and non-irrigated land growing thousands of acres of different vegetable crops, corn, soybeans, hay varieties, and small grains. I can tell you that every year no matter what some have a good crop and some have a bad crop in my area just because of the variety of terrain and crops grown here. My farmers are some of the hardest working and smartest working people in the country, make no mistake on that. So, I ran my "common sense" idea about USDA's grain crop support programs past some of the best farmer "thinkers" as well as let's call them "argumentative" producers we know. The responses I received have impelled me to write you when being pretty much a nobody in central WI I would have never given it a second thought to write you.

At this time in the present Farm Bill we have several programs doing the same thing; guaranteeing the farmer a certain base level price for their product. Let's use corn as the example knowing it's the same for many crops. We have the Direct and Counter-Cyclical programs, Loan Deficiency Programs, Disaster Programs, and Crop Insurance Programs doing all exactly the same thing. They are all guaranteeing the grower a price, or I'd like to better call it, an "income" from their crop whether it's a good growing year or a bad, and the farmer gets nothing but losses. It's costing us millions in several programs to do what one program could do. Simply guarantee the producer a price and a yield based on his area for the acres the producer intends to, from history, and does actually plant. This is exactly what we are doing in several costly programs and it could be done in one. Production control programs went out in the 90's when Freedom To Farm came in so if we are still under that concept then we need to only income base this whole thing under the one program. If prices are low because the corn crop is good, we guaranteed the "support" so we pay like we do now. If prices are high because the crop is bad, once again we guaranteed the "support" so we pay like we do now but without costly Disaster Programs that cover the whole country because of those that can not, will not buy or purchase inefficient crop insurance policies. We can localize the Disaster Programs for the extremes if congress chooses. Crop insurance may still be offered for the producer to purchase if they so choose or to further cover themselves to satisfy operating loans, etc. as a supplement to all of this just like any insurance and you can keep those strong lobbyists happy as you will not defeat them. Crop reporting and yield reporting would still be required by the producer in a similar way as it is now as to not

endanger any statistical ramifications or definitely the fraudulent actions that could occur as it does with any program we will try to administer in USDA.

Mr. Secretary I know I've only touched on this as this concept just grows from here and it will take hundreds of pages to write but doesn't common sense tell you something about the initial idea? I'm out here in the field everyday with the people that feed you and I and they deserve the attention of something that makes sense for a change. All the farmers I've talked to in both my offices told me not to waste my time writing you because this whole idea makes sense so no one will ever listen. I guess that's why I'm writing you. Right now we have agencies within USDA spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in time and materials duplicating the same efforts. We see this in the field, I can only imagine what you see in your seat. It is obvious future budgets will only be slimmer for us to operate under and we are being spread thinner but asked to do more. A change like this is needed and to best use the resources available this taxpayer believes this makes sense. Now of course I would like to wish for the impossible but what an opportunity it would be to sit down for dinner for about a week and talk about this with you and a couple others to throw the concept back and forth. Something time and money will not allow, but I guess I can settle, if I just know you took the 5 minutes to read this and give it some consideration.

Thank you,

Jake Bourget, CED
Portage County FSA
1462 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-1315
jake.bourget@wi.usda.gov