

September 12, 2005

Dear Secretary Johanns,

Thank you so much for coming to Kansas for a Farm Bill listening session. I farm and ranch here in Reno County. Good rural policy will require the consideration of all stakeholders – and all of us whether urban or rural eat and benefit from the bounty of our land.

In the next farm bill, I wish to see a serious effort to transition our safety net programs away from commodity production of a very narrow range of crops. Instead a more sound investment of public dollars would move farm supports into the conservation title. Those funds remain more stable and are more likely to be invested in areas that can have widespread benefits to all our taxpayers: clean air and water, healthy soil, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and recreation opportunities. This means that programs like EQIP and CSP become the templates that will eventually replace our current commodity supports.

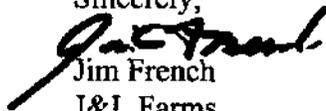
On the other hand, our current commodity support system fuels overproduction, lower market prices, increased U.S. taxpayer support, and damage to rural communities both here and abroad. In short, please support programs that can deliver benefits to more than just a narrow band of special interests.

Second, we need to recognize that a healthy rural America should include opportunities for a broad range of entrepreneurship in both food production and support enterprises. We need those programs that support innovation and new businesses – programs like the Value-Added Producer Grants, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, and programs encouraging farmers' markets and new cooperative development.

Finally, we need a strong and well funded land grant research and education system. This system is currently being leveraged by a narrowing sector of largely corporate funding. Public research should be unbiased and in service to the broad interests and needs of our nation.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this morning. I am a fifth generation member of a Kansas farm family. My children, the sixth generation, hope for opportunities to continue that tradition.

Sincerely,



Jim French

J&L Farms

8016 W. Longview Rd.

Partridge, KS 67566

620-567-2528