

Leadore, Idaho
September 7, 2005

Farm Service Agency
9173 West Barnes
Suite B
Boise, Idaho 83709

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for sending the information on the meeting held in Blackfoot September 6th. This is an extremely busy time for the farm and ranch families and those who don't have hired help and whose income is very limited, cannot attend all of the meetings, we therefore appreciate you giving us the opportunity to write in comments on the six topics being discussed at the meeting.

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

Permanent repeal of the inheritance (death) tax.

2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?

By producing the best and safest food in the world. Implement the Mandatory Country of Origin Law (MCOOL) as written and passed and signed into law with the 2002 Farm Bill giving consumers the right to be able to differentiate between a U.S. born, fed and raised in the U.S. under U.S. standards and regulations, and a foreign import.

Do not import from foreign nations that which the USA is able to produce in quality and quantity.

NAFTA put many cattle producers out of business and has brought into our country a greater risk of disease such as BSE which is known to be fatal to both livestock and humans, and the incubation period is not known and no way is known to disinfect our corrals, pastures and such to kill these prions. With the anticipation of the passage of NAFTA, the Foreign Disease Center in Plum Island, New York was greatly expanded knowing NAFTA would increase the risk of disease in the U.S. We feel the USDA should put the USA first, our nation's sovereignty, our producers and the health and safety of our livestock and consumers above any economic gain by importers or the wants of foreign governments.

3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

We feel most farmers and ranchers prefer to be self reliant and that pride and incentive should be encouraged and protected. We feel too many farm programs encourage government assistance which make it more difficult for the independent farmers and ranchers to compete. Why pay farmers to not grow crops and yet import what can be raised in the U.S.?

4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

The Endangered Species Act has gone far beyond reason or common sense and must be controlled or repealed. It has put farmers and ranchers out of business and has been very costly to the tax payers. Protection of the wolf rather than livestock and wildlife is absurd and has terrorized ranchers, livestock and other animals. It is the most inhumane and cruel way for animal to meet death; to be eaten alive and often to be left to slowly die of infection, thirst or starvation while mothers risk their lives trying to save their little ones. Ranchers should not have to fear penalties or to loose their ranches by protecting their property.

Another example of the waste connected with ESA is the five million for grouse habitat. Ranches and farms have always been wonderful habitat for grouse, quail as well as all wildlife. We had a lot of grouse on our ranch until the 60's when the government did so much spraying and killed so much sage brush and other things. They seem to have been coming back and recently there were grouse in our yard. I could hear the coyotes close by. The next morning the grouse were a pile of feathers. A couple of years ago we enjoyed watching a pair of quail and over a dozen little ones in our yard. When winter came they had burrowed down under the crusted snow on the bank below our garden. It didn't take long for the coyotes to dig them up. We haven't seen any since. The USDA can help by letting and helping us control predators and that would help the conservation and environmental goals. And the cattle haven't hurt the fish population. The Lemhi River used to have salmon and numerous other fish and there were just as many or more cattle before the 60's.

5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?

In our county the ranches are being bought up by developers and the wealthy who want to own a ranch but make their wealth in other ways. Those that have knowledge and experience in the loving care necessary for the land and animals are being put off the land or are serfs for the wealthy. We feel government support of rural development is a detriment to the survival of agriculture. To save our U.S. food producers and a way of life that teaches children the joy and reward of learning responsibility, hard work and the joy of accomplishments is a challenge and we appreciate the concern and help you are giving. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,

C. Whittaker

Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Whittaker

Box 10

Leucore

Idaho 83464

Mr. Calvin J. Whittaker
P.O. Box 10
Leadore, ID 83464
REAGAN RANCH MEMBER



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
SECRETARIAT, USDA

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*Farm Service Agency
9173 West Banner
Suite B
Baird*

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Helena 83709

