



September 6, 2005

Mr. Mark Rey  
Under Secretary  
USDA  
Natural Resources & Environment

Dear Mr. Rey:

On behalf of the US and Idaho dry bean industries, the Idaho Bean Commission requests funding for the following programs in the 2007 Farm Bill:

#### **SPECIALTY CROP GRANTS**

Commodity crops such as beans have limited funds to develop markets for their products. Without Specialty Crop Grant money the Idaho Bean Commission would not have been able to initiate development of a market for the state's dry bean seed in Mexico or promote the increased use of beans in school and university foodservice.

#### **FMD & MAP**

This funding is essential if efforts to open new markets or maintain existing overseas markets for beans is to continue. We strongly support continued funding for these valuable programs at the current level of \$200 million for MAP and \$34.5 million for FMD.

#### **BEAN/COWPEA CRSP**

This program is one of the few sources of federal money dedicated to long-term bean research. Without this funding source universities will be unable to maintain faculty research positions in plant breeding, plant pathology, conservation agriculture, food science, and nutrition, etc. These research programs require sustained, long-term financial commitments for up to 10 years.

#### **ARS**

The bean industry has seen a steady erosion of bean research positions, both within ARS and cooperatively, and ARS funding has also been reduced overall. The Idaho dry bean industry supports maintaining and increasing both ARS general funding and specific earmarking of funding for bean research positions.

**IN-KIND FOOD DONATIONS FOR BOTH EMERGENCY & NON-EMERGENCY  
FOOD AID**

The Idaho Bean Commission supports donations of food for US foreign aid programs versus "cash only" donations supported by the WTO and EU. The bean industry believes that the current food aid program is a high effective and humanitarian program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana L. Caldwell".

Diana L. Caldwell  
Administrator

Cc: Wayne L. Hammon

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARY, USDA

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**Recommendations for USDA 2007 Farm Bill  
Listening Session, Blackfoot, Idaho, September 6, 2005**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the changes that as an Extension Educator teaching nutrition for limited income families, I feel need to be addressed in the new farm bill. Several changes that I see need to be made to the Farm Bill to benefit the nation's farmers, ranchers and consumers include:

- Subsidizing farmers that grow fruits and vegetables. The new USDA MyPyramid recommends that people increase total fruit and vegetable consumption and that we need a large variety of fruits and vegetables for good health. In order to have the fruits and vegetables we need for good health we need to subsidize farmers to produce the products that we need.
- Subsidize small farmers that are willing to produce different varieties of fruits and vegetables that are sold locally. This would increase the variety and nutrition of fruits and vegetables in the diet of Americans. It would also decrease the cost of food and our dependence on oil to carry products far from where they are produced.
- Decrease subsidies for foods that are undermining the health of the nation. An example is corn. Because corn is so cheap, many foods are made with large amounts of high fructose corn syrup, especially sweetened drinks. In the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (January 12, 2005), we are encouraged to decrease our consumption of sweetened beverages. An estimated 119 million Americans, or 64.5 percent, of adults are either overweight or obese and the rate has been rising steadily every year. The percentage of obese adults rose from 23.7 percent in 2003 to 24.5 percent in 2004 (U.S. Obesity Report, Trust for American's Health, Reuters Health, August 24, 2005). I find it interesting that the increase in obesity levels and the increase in diabetes in the U.S. population approximately mirrors the increase in high fructose corn syrup in the food supply. I realize obesity is a complex issue but I agree with Shelley Hearne, executive director for the Trust for American's Health who stated, "We have a crisis of poor nutrition and physical inactivity in the U.S. and it's time we dealt with it." We need to look at decreasing other subsidized commodities that are used to excess in the food industry because it is cheap food. These kinds of subsidies are keeping people from following the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Audrey Liddil, MS  
State EFNEP Coordinator  
University of Idaho Extension  
130 N. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Pocatello, Idaho 83201

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