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Question1: No comment.

Question2: One aspect that the U.S. needs to address to remain competitive in global markets is the issue of 'chain of custody' as it relates to food safety and land stewardship. An excellent way for U.S. producers to address these important issues is through the development of Ag Environmental Management Systems (AgEMS). Farm policy should encourage growers to develop AgEMS systems. An AgEMS system provides the development of the chain of custody requirements and also encourages producers to develop or enhance already existing stewardship projects on their farms.

Question3: This problem seems fairly simple to address but politically is very difficult to change from its present form. The best example of the inequity of the current system is the level of support that California producers get compared to the rest of the US. The farmgate value of Fresno County alone is greater than that from most other states but very little monetary support comes to California. Most crops in the state are considered specialty crops so they do not qualify for government support yet California provides more than half of the country's fruit and vegetables. One way to change the system is to reward producers for using best management practices, for conservation projects, and for self-improvement in implementing BMPs rather than base it on what they grow and where they grow it. Growers implementing AgEMS systems will be achieving the above so any program that encourages AgEMS development would have great benefits.

Question4: I completely agree with the paragraph accompanying this question. As I stated in my answer to Question 3, encouraging growers to develop and implement AgEMS would achieve the national conservation and environmental goals. Moreover, AgEMS systems help growers find points in their production systems where efficiency can be enhanced, thereby improving the grower's financial bottom line. AgEMS promotes measurement of all aspects of production and the manufacturing industry learned a long time ago if you can't measure it you can't manage it. AgEMS will help producers better manage their farming processes.

Question5: I think that the American consumer does not appreciate the importance of a healthy agriculture in the future sustainability of the country. One way to enhance rural economic growth would be to educate the public, through K-12 curricula, adult education, and media of the importance of a healthy U.S. agriculture for the future of the country. Support farm-to-school programs. Support buy-local programs, etc. If American consumers come to prefer American-grown food then this will enhance rural economic growth.

Question6: The new farm bill should support value-added programs. I am defining value-added in a broad sense. We need to convince the American consumer that U.S. grown crops have added value compared to imported crops. This could be due to how the crops are grown, improved quality, producers are more sensitive to land stewardship, etc. Therefore the farm bill should support value-added certification programs not only

like organic programs but also the new sustainable farming certification programs being developed around the U.S. that are aimed at main stream Ag, such as Protected Harvest ([www.protectedharvest.org](http://www.protectedharvest.org)). Support could be through farm bill providing the fees from producers to sign up for such programs. Research is a separate topic in my mind. Land Grant Universities are rapidly reaching the point that they cannot meet the needs of producers due to budget cutbacks. The farm bill should support public-private partnerships that match federal dollars with industry dollars for new research such as the National Grape and Wine Initiative ([www.ngwi.org](http://www.ngwi.org)).