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Question1: If government truly wants to maintain the youth on the farm in our area, each tenant must receive at least \$50 per farmed dryland wheat and milo acre in government help to meet the growing expenses out here. And then government would need to build in at least a 2% increase in that payment for each year. The government must look at studies each year; if expenses are increasing at more than a 2% rate, and they probably will, then food producers need more than a 2% increase. These numbers may sound high, but, according to the supporting details I list below, these numbers are only slightly higher than we were receiving before the 2001 farm bill. Somehow, the producers will have to receive about 2.7 times what they are now receiving to stay alive out here. The countercyclical payments just simply will not help us weather all the expenses we are incurring. Countercyclical payments kicked in for the first time this year and we received a very minimal payment in the process; the target price is set at such a low price that these payments will rarely kick into effect, so this results in a lot of paperwork for the FSA Offices and insufficient money for the producers. We professional producers know the government is in debt; however, this is really a food security bill guaranteeing that American producers will continue to live out here and grow the safest crops for American people. If Americans want to be at the mercy of foreign countries controlling our food supply, then guarantee us minimal payments and the youth will give up out here. Therefore, it is imperative that government come up with a farm bill, only call it a food security bill--not a farm bill--for our nation's security and future. This bill has to GUARANTEE farmers payments for producing a steady supply of low cost and safe food; the payments should not be contingent on whether there is wildlife cover out in the fields or whether a farmer is in an endangered species area. Most rural producers love and appreciate wildlife and do everything possible to maintain this gift, but wildlife cover does not guarantee enough food to feed the country.

Supporting Details--

In 1999, when we were just getting by on the family farms and able to expand by buying some nearby acres, the PFC and MLA payments for our farms were approximately \$44.44 for the tillable acres that we actually farmed. That includes both the tenant's and the landlord's share. In 2004, our direct payments amounted to only \$18.77 for the tillable acres we farmed. That again, includes both the tenant's and the landlord's shares. I want to reiterate \$44.44 in 1999 and \$18.77 in 2004; we received 25.67 less per farmed acre with the 2001 farm bill. The 2001 farm bill, with its severe reduction in payments for dryland wheat and milo producers, has been devastating for farms in Kansas.

The 2001 farm bill has done nothing to deter the rising cost of farmland. It has only put fewer dollars into the pockets of tenants and

discouraged them from buying the farmland or keeping it in their families. At the same time, this farm bill has encouraged non-farmers to look at purchasing farmland as an investment or tax write-off, and then these investors charge an inordinate amount of cash rent to their tenants.

When I compare our expenses of 2004 to our expenses of 1999, the expenses have increased by 56%. We cannot survive on our near 1999 income. In fact, we are trying to survive on income that just beats 1917 income. In the years from 1917 to 1920, wheat averaged well above \$2 per bushel. It is no wonder that farmers are going into debt and cannot afford to replace needed equipment. We are using a 1988 model tractor for most of our tillage needs; it will soon be 20 years old and we need to replace it. A tractor of that size will probably cost \$175,000, for a tractor that is 4 years old. Just a month ago, we purchased a small 4x6 inch steel part, and it cost \$700. That took 212 bushels of our wheat, just to buy that small part. In June, we had a day and a half repair on a combine that took \$5000. That took 1479 bushels of wheat. We cannot increase the charge for our grain commodities to cover these costs, as our vendors do to cover their costs. We are at the mercy of the commodity markets.

On our family farm, three of us work more than 12 hours each day. This translates into 216 hours of work each six-day week, and quite often we are working seven days a week. But using the 216 hours, and 40-hour work weeks, we have enough work for over 5 people, instead of 3. Get the income out here, the rural areas will pick up on population, and the many rural and urban businesses that depend on farmers will also show economic improvement. The farmers will be excellent stewards of the dollars sent their way, to both promote the economic situation and provide food security for our nation.

We do realize that the country is short on money; however, we dryland wheat and milo producers said, "Okay, we will wait," to this thought in 2001 and have been waiting anxiously for this next farm bill to provide some help for us. American family farmers take pride in producing the safest food supply in the world, and they do it as economically as possible, but these rural ag professionals are getting tired, both mentally and physically, of working 12 hour days and receiving more debt and more criticism.

Your government offices have collected data on what parity prices should be; government needs to look at this NASS data. Look at Extension Office data on custom farming rates. The information is there and simple math explains why the youth are not returning to the farm. They want to be here, the work is here, but the income is just not here. In the future, biodiesel and ethanol, if made from our commodities, may have a significant impact on the farming economy, but we cannot wait that long for relief. We need help now.

Question2: First of all, we need to limit imports of agricultural products as much as possible. We have safe food and Americans should benefit from this safe food.

Perhaps if we begin using more of our commodities to produce fuel, we will compensate for some of the lagging export market. Government should do everything possible to encourage the use of ethanol and biodiesel. I have heard that government officials will be expected to use these fuels in their vehicles and that Americans will be offered a tax credit for using these products--both excellent means to encourage a guaranteed fuel supply for our nation!

Question3: Program incentives do not lead to increased production; improved varieties and the need to increase income out here lead to increased production. Producers are just simply trying to get everything possible out of their land to help meet growing expenses.

Study the NASS reports on parity and provide producers who actually live on the ag land the payments to help them meet growing expenses. Each producer signs a form indicating whether 50% or more comes from an off-farm occupation. Perhaps the government needs to look at these answers a little closer. If the off-farm owners are charging an inordinate amount of rent to their tenants, they are discouraging rural economic development.

The crop insurance program definitely needs revamping. Most insurance programs, such as health or home insurance, reimburse the insured for most of the costs associated with a tragedy. Crop insurance, in no way, provides this insurance, and this became very evident with our continued drought here in north central Kansas. Even with the crop disaster programs, farmers are suffering badly from the drought years out here. I agree there can be abuse of crop insurance programs. Officials need to investigate when only a few from a county continually claim losses. Question4: CRP is one of the best programs to take highly erodible land out of production, preserve wildlife, provide filters for our water, and reduce chemicals.

In the past few years, it has been very difficult to get acres from our area accepted for CRP. Please let producers enroll their acres if they want to take them out of production! It is consistent with WTO obligations and would benefit our country in all the areas listed above. I have been hearing that there will be a bid process again, forcing farmers to sit beside their CRP coordinator at the FSA Office, with both the CRP coordinators and the producers trying hard to outguess just what the government will be looking for in enhancements.

Please understand that if producers plant only the recommended tall grass out there, as originally was required for CRP, they are significantly enhancing our environment, as well as decreasing the problem of overproduction of commodities. Please do not make the producer sit there and guess what it takes to get admitted, taking up time for both the producer and the FSA staff; tell him what you require and let him decide if he wants to enroll.

Keep the payments at the current levels or higher and producers will help preserve our environment.

No till farming is not the answer to protecting our environment. Many, many more chemicals are introduced into both the air and the water with no till, and even with filter strips and careful control, these additional chemicals cannot be good for our environment.

Question5: If each dryland wheat and milo farmer in our area were to receive a \$50 per tillable acre food security payment for 2007 and an automatic increase each year, both the rural areas and the urban areas would see significant economic improvement. We hear all the time that we need jobs available in the rural areas and we need industries and rural development out here. Government studies this issue and universities study this issue. It is really so simple; the farming industry has plenty of jobs available out here--just not the money to support those jobs. Get the money into the hands of the producers, not more professionals studying the issue or more professionals driving around in new pickups or buying new office furniture. The three of us

on our farm would jump at the chance to hire another person and turn the stress of our 12+ hour day into a more acceptable 9 hour day. And we know of young men and women who are waiting eagerly to come back to work on farms in the rural area. Just today, a 50-year-old man down at the elevator told me, "I need two of me for the next number of months."

Don't let us down out here; the people are tiring out fast and the numbers of people under the age of 35 are thinning out fast.

Question6: Get the biodiesel and ethanol production going strong.

Require all government employees to use biodiesel and ethanol. Provide the tax credit for individuals using it. Support land grant universities so that still more research can be done. Either provide a tax credit for high cost liability insurance for agritourism operators and value-added enterprises, or provide them with low-cost liability insurance.