

**From:** "howell@bentonrea.com%inter2" <howell@bentonrea.com>  
**Subject:** Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 11/23/2005 10:05 AM CST  
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Question1:

Question2: Dear Secretary Johanns,

Thank you for coming to Washington State to listen to agricultural concerns this month. It was then that I told you the story about the hitchhiking Iowa farm boy. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to both fully explain the need for programs that we value and to capture your imagination to support those visions in the two minute time frame allowed at the forum. Thus, I did feel very fortunate to mention the hitchhiking story during the intermission. If you remember the story, I think you'll understand what I mean when saying that we really need you to help us push the proposed National Clean Plant Network into existence. Besides my presentation that day, three other petitions for this network were submitted in your ?Comment Basket.? I hope that you or your staff had time to examine those requests and will help bring this program to life. In case you don't remember the story, it went like this:

This happened just outside of Dunn Center, a little town in the back country of North Dakota.

This farm boy from Iowa was on the side of the road, hitchhiking on a real dark evening in the middle of a thunderstorm. Time passed slowly and no cars went by.

It was raining so hard he could hardly see his hand in front of his face. Suddenly he saw a car moving slowly, approaching and appearing ghostlike in the rain. It slowly and silently crept toward him and stopped. Wanting a ride real bad the guy jumped in the car and closed the door; only then did he realize that there was nobody behind the wheel, and no sound of an engine to be heard over the rain.

Again the car crept slowly forward and the guy was terrified, too scared to think of jumping out and running. The guy saw that the car was approaching a sharp curve and, still too scared to jump out, he started to pray and began begging for his life; he was sure the ghost car would go off the road and into a nearby lake (Ilo) and he would surely drown! But just before the curve a shadowy figure appeared at the driver's window and a hand reached in and turned the steering wheel, guiding the car safely around the bend. Then, just as silently, the hand disappeared through the window and the hitchhiker was alone again!

Paralyzed with fear, the guy watched the hand reappear every time they reached a curve. Finally the guy, scared to near death, had all he could take and jumped out of the car and ran and ran, into town, into Dunn Center.

Wet and in shock, he went into a bar and voice quavering, ordered two shots of whiskey, then told everybody about his supernatural experience. A silence enveloped and everybody got goose bumps when they realized the guy was telling the truth (and was not just some drunk).

About half an hour later two guys walked into the bar and one says to

the other, "Look Ole, ders dat idiot that rode in our car when we wuz pushin it in the rain."

Please don't consider my request frivolous and get out and help us get the National Clean Plant Network started. It will be good for our industry, good for protecting our natural resources from exotic pests, good for international trade, good for rural communities, and good for our food supply. If you need more information about the proposed clean plant network, information can be gathered from the NRSP5 website (<http://www.nrsp5.prosser.wsu.edu/National%20Clean%20Stock%20Program/CLEAN%20STOCK%20Jan05-2.pdf> ) and from the letters of petition submitted to the ?Comments Basket? at your Cheney, WA, Forum. Also, of course, feel free to contact me. Pathogen-tested planting stock is considered a high priority in the National Grape and Wine Initiative, the Tree Fruit Technology Roadmap, and the National Berry Crop Initiative. Please work to establish and secure funds for this proposal. Millions of dollars of trade and potential pest outbreaks lie in the balance.

Our contact person in the Department of Agriculture for this effort is Tom Bewick, National Program Leader, Horticulture, USDA-CSREES.

Have a great Thanksgiving,

Sincerely,

Bill Howell  
Executive Director and Manager  
Northwest Nursery Improvement Institute  
2340 Lee Road  
Prosser, WA 99350

Question3:

Question4:

Question5:

Question6: