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Question1: I believe that higher land prices are determined by the benefits that the land can offer, which includes conservation programs and subsidy payments. Future outlook, interest rates and the general economy also play a large role. While, new farmers hope for low land prices, those selling rarely sell their land to a young farmer below market. In my opinion, those that complain about "unintended consequences" usually fail to change their farming practices to take advantage of new opportunities to maximize their farm income.

Question2:

Question3: I feel that the federal crop insurance program is well designed and a huge benefit to producers although I also feel that it is underutilized and often misunderstood by many producers. The farm subsidy and LDP are ok but I would support changes that apply these funds more to conservation efforts because a decrease in commodity supply should improve prices as well as improve the environment.

At least in South Dakota, the changes in the farm economy started in the 60's when the chickens left the family farm for larger operations. Then the hogs and dairy cows followed. Many farmers now let someone from town spray their crops during the summer and combine their crops in the fall. Farming has changed dramatically, leaving the concept of the "family farm" in the past. Therefore I don't feel that farm policy should be designed to prolong a way of life that is becoming obsolete but rather we should look to the future so that the new programs will make us more competitive in the global marketplace, improve the environment, and prepare producers for change.

Question4: Some conservation and environmental efforts are mandatory, such as those for hog or cattle operation while some are voluntary, such as Riparian Buffers or wetland restoration. I feel that we should be more aggressive in providing incentives to improve water quality, soil erosion and farming practices that help the environment. I strongly support most existing conservation programs such as the CP30, CP22, CP27/28, CP23, CP18, CP2 and others. These are fine programs and should be expanded and improved.

Given some personal experiences with the Conservation District, I feel that we need to establish a formal appeals process to protect landowners and operators from improper decisions. Currently there are appeal avenues for NRCS and FSA decisions but none for decisions made by the Conservation Districts.

We should also foster more cooperation between the Conservation Districts and the FSA, NRCS, GF&P, US fish and Wildlife, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and related organizations in developing conservation programs.

Question5: I feel that farming has changed dramatically over the years

and will continue to do so. Therefore it is in our best interests to look forward rather than try to hold on to the past. At least in the midwest, technology has made the family farm obsolete. For the most part, "new farmers" simply are trying to prolong the farming practices of their parents. Rarely, if ever, does a new farmer build from scratch because it isn't possible economically to do so. It is generally more economical for a young farmer to purchase land, rent equipment or hire others to plant, control weeds and harvest than it is to purchase equipment in order to farm the traditional way.

Question6: This is a complex question but I feel that we should embrace change, look for and invest in new opportunities and encourage research to help improve agriculture in the US.