

August 15, 2005

Mr. Mike Johanns  
Secretary of Agriculture  
Dept. Of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Your Iowa roots and Nebraska career gives comfort to agricultural people of the Midwest.

Sorry I couldn't make your current Farm Bill hearings here in Iowa. Having been farm-raised and 50 years closely associated with farming, I won't guarantee it, but should have something to offer.

From witnessing the Great Depression I have always supported a "safety net" concept in farm programs. I know it is not easy to craft a farm bill to provide protection to farm income even though we have had over 70 years experience at it. Under the circumstances Henry Wallace didn't do too bad with his AAA (triple A'- Agric. Adm. Act.)

There are a couple of things I feel pretty strong about and I'm quite sure that most people of Iowa - including farmers(!) agree.

- Recent farm programs look too much like Welfare programs, generously handing out large payment with little relation to farm income reality. Farmers have told me privately that some years they were embarrassed by taking the handout.
- A safety net is one thing but providing "golden parachutes" to the very wealthy is absurd. All sensibility says we should re-implement the payment caps to individual farmers or a given farming operation. Recalling the Louisiana "Christmas trees" of 10 years ago, or more, tells us that because of politics, this too will not be easy. But it is right. It should be done.

Good luck. Keep up the good (hard!) work.

Sincerely,

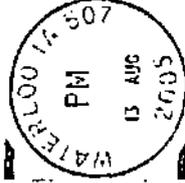


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