



TRANSCRIPT

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1 FARM BILL HEALTHIER US NUTRITION FORUM

2 PORTLAND, OREGON; OCTOBER 25, 2005

3

4 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR NG: Good afternoon,
5 everyone. We're ready to begin. Thank you all
6 for coming to the USDA forum. As you know,
7 reauthorization next year of the Farm Bill and
8 food stamp program, along with a number of other
9 smaller programs, are going to be reauthorized by
10 Congress.

11 First, I'd like to thank the Department --
12 the Oregon Department of Human Resources for
13 working with us to find this facility. It's a
14 great facility and thank you very much, Brian
15 Johnson and his staff.

16 Ground rules for the forum: Please turn
17 off all cell phones and pagers. For those of
18 you who are speaking, please remember when
19 your turn is. We have two podiums: One over
20 there and one over here. Let's start off with
21 the odd numbers here and even numbers over
22 there.

23 As people -- as the number one speaker is
24 finished, the number two speaker should be
25 ready to make a presentation. And obviously,

1 the number three speaker should be ready to
2 step up here when number two is speaking.
3 Please announce your number and your name at
4 the beginning of each presentation. That
5 makes it easy for us -- for the transcriber to
6 record your testimony. Please keep your
7 comments to three or four minutes, and please
8 do not talk when the others are presenting.

9 At this point, let me turn it over to
10 Jason from Senator Smith's office.

11 JASON: Good afternoon. Thank you very much
12 for coming today, and I wanted to thank Under
13 Secretary Bost for flying all the way out here to
14 join us for this event. As many of you know,
15 Under Secretary Bost has been director of the
16 Food and Nutrition Services since 2001, and he,
17 before that, was working with President Bush in
18 Texas, so he goes way back with the president.
19 And he's one of the few under secretaries in the
20 Department of Agriculture who actually stuck
21 around with the president, so that says a lot --
22 or it might say a lot about Under Secretary Bost.

23 But anyway, we're happy to have him here.
24 Senator Smith is sorry he can not make it, but
25 he's back in D.C. today.

1 a little while." And it's hard for me to say no
2 to her. I love her a lot. She's a great person.

3 I'm really pleased to be here. I left my
4 house this morning at 4 a.m., and it's 4 p.m.
5 Eastern time.

6 (Laughter.)

7 But I'm awake. And I will pay attention.
8 And that, in and of itself, is significant.

9 This is an opportunity for you to share
10 with us your ideas about the six titles that
11 we will talk about and look at making
12 recommendations a part of the overall package
13 that the Department and the Administration
14 will put together in preparation for
15 reauthorization of the Farm Bill of 2007.

16 One of the things that the president and I
17 have talked about over the course of the last
18 several years is ensuring that we afford
19 people in this country the opportunity to
20 share with us their ideas about programs that
21 affect them, and that's why we're here. We
22 did this with Child Nutrition reauthorization.
23 We did this when we talked in terms of looking
24 at putting in place initiatives regarding
25 addressing the issues of obesity.

1 The president has a saying that people in
2 D.C. think they know everything, but that's
3 not the case. We need to come out and listen
4 to you. This is an opportunity for you to
5 share your thoughts, ideas, suggestions,
6 recommendations about what we do well, what we
7 don't do well, what you would like to see done
8 differently.

9 But in terms of some parameters that I
10 want to give you, some things that are very
11 important to me in terms of putting our
12 package together that has been consistent with
13 the leadership that I've attempted to provide
14 to the organization since I've been under
15 secretary is a couple of things: One, we're
16 interested in ensuring that all eligible
17 people that are interested in participating in
18 our programs have the opportunity to do so,
19 and that it's easy for them to access, and
20 it's also easy for our partners to implement
21 our programs.

22 But the last piece is also -- this is
23 important -- that we maintain a high level of
24 integrity in our program. I'm always on the
25 lookout for those three pieces to be present

1 in terms of changes that we have made in any
2 of our programs.

3 We have had the most comprehensive
4 outreach efforts in the initiatives as a part
5 of our program than any administration has had
6 in probably the last 50 years in terms of
7 saying, if you are eligible, we want you to
8 participate. Because our programs are not
9 welfare. They are nutrition programs. They
10 are there to meet the nutritional needs of
11 people that need to feed their families and
12 their children.

13 If you look at the largest of our
14 nutrition programs that I manage -- the Food
15 Stamp program, serving approximately
16 26 million Americans every month -- over
17 50 percent of those are children. And a large
18 percentage of adults that participate in this
19 program are working. The FSP program, a large
20 percentage of the people that are enrolled in
21 the program are seniors.

22 It's not a welfare program. It's a
23 program that provides food. If we look at our
24 ability to respond to the devastation caused
25 by Katrina and now even Wilma, our folks were

1 on the ground providing people with food and
2 with access to food stamps within one day so
3 that they could feed their families. And
4 people who never ever dreamed or imagined in
5 their wildest imagination that they would be
6 taking an EBT card to go buy food, were happy
7 to stand in line to get that card to go feed
8 their families. Those same people who said,
9 "Oh, that's a welfare program."

10 Ah, no it's not. Not when your children
11 are hungry and their stomachs are empty.

12 So we're very proud of what we've been
13 able to accomplish over the course of the last
14 several years, and we're always looking
15 forward to doing things better and more
16 efficiently, more effectively, but also
17 maintaining that high level of integrity in
18 our programs, because that is equally as
19 important to me as the other things that I
20 talked about.

21 This is your time. There will be
22 instances where I'll probably ask a question
23 or seek some clarification, but this is not a
24 dialogue. This is not for you to say, "Well,
25 we want you to answer."

1 if nothing else, it should be entertaining.

2 So anyway, I'm really pleased and happy to be
3 here. I think we can go ahead and get started.

4 At the end, I'll probably make a couple of
5 comments about things that folks have said and
6 tell you what we're going to do in the future.

7 Okay?

8 Who's up first?

9 The other thing is, do we have a timekeeper?

10 TIMEKEEPER: Yes, we do.

11 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: They're nice. They're
12 going to put up the little things, and put up the
13 other thing. And then if you keep talking, I'm
14 going to say, "It's time for you to sit down."

15 (Laughter.)

16 So you don't want me to embarrass you. I
17 will do that. If you don't want to get
18 embarrassed, be nice and follow the timekeeper.

19 I have been known to say, "Sit down," and the
20 reason is because you're cutting into someone
21 else's time, and I don't think that's nice nor do
22 I think it's professional. And last, but not
23 least, you probably did say everything you're
24 going to say, so you're just talking to hear
25 yourself talk. So she's keeping time.

1 How much time did we give folks?

2 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR NG: Three minutes,
3 four minutes.

4 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Four minutes or so.

5 And so I think the other thing we'll
6 encourage you to do is if you have written
7 comments, please let us know that you have
8 written comments that you're just going to read
9 for the Record, and the transcriber, her fingers
10 won't get tired. There's no need for her to type
11 what you're going to read about. If you're going
12 to paraphrase it, then of course, we want to get
13 that down. But if you have written comments,
14 please say that also, so that we can make sure
15 she won't get so tired. Okay?

16 Who's number one? Let's go for it.

17 CHANNAH PASTORIUS: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Channah Pastorius and I am on social
19 security/disability because of worsening multiple
20 sclerosis, and a food stamp recipient. I
21 currently receive \$85 a month in food stamps.
22 That is not enough to buy sufficient healthy food
23 for even a half a month let alone an entire
24 month. There's no money left from my monthly
25 social security/disability check after paying for

1 rent, utilities, phone and other necessities, and
2 I don't have enough left to be buying additional
3 food.

4 I don't have cable. I don't have satellite.
5 I don't take vacations. I don't own many
6 clothes, and I don't have a cell phone. I don't
7 have enough money to cover all of my medical
8 expenses, and I don't have enough to eat. Not
9 having enough good healthy food has a direct
10 negative impact on my health. If I can't keep up
11 my basic decent health care -- eating the right
12 types of food -- my health is directly impacted
13 causing my MS to progress more quickly than it
14 would otherwise.

15 My basics I have -- by "basics" I mean having
16 the ability to buy enough things like fresh
17 fruit, vegetables, milk, bread, cereal, meat, and
18 fish and eggs and butter for an entire month. It
19 is a struggle to make my food stamps last me the
20 entire month. The only way I can stretch my food
21 stamps is to skip meals and go hungry
22 periodically each month.

23 I am not someone who is not working by choice
24 but by unfortune circumstances brought on by an
25 incurable disease. I'm not someone looking for a

1 way to buy high-priced cuts of beef and lobster
2 tails. All I want is enough basic food to
3 maintain a healthy diet.

4 The food stamps I now receive would have been
5 plenty in 1975, but this is 2005, 30 years later,
6 and the cost of food has constantly been on the
7 rise. I doubt very much that we will see a
8 decline in the cost of food. Those who depend on
9 food stamps as their source for buying food the
10 most -- the children, the sick, the disabled, the
11 elderly -- are the ones that suffer the greatest
12 and have very few options, if any, to increase
13 their ability to buy more food.

14 Something must be done, and I urge you to
15 take my testimony into consideration when you
16 make future decisions on how food stamps are to
17 be funded.

18 Thank you.

19 HAROLD T. NYGREN: I'm No. 2. My name is
20 Harold Nygren. I live south of Hillsboro,
21 Oregon. My wife and I are family forestland
22 owners. We're also members of American Tree Farm
23 System, so I believe we speak for many of the
24 10 million family forestland owners in this
25 country who own and manage 42 percent of the

1 nation's forestlands.

2 Family forestlands are an important component
3 of the natural landscape of the United States.
4 They provide clean water, wildlife and fish
5 habitat, clear air, recreational opportunities,
6 scenic vistas, and wood; and these benefits are
7 all enjoyed by both rural and urban populations.
8 Helping family forestland owners improve and
9 maintain these forests is in everybody's
10 interest.

11 The Farm Bill is an opportunity to strengthen
12 support for family forestlands. Current and past
13 farm bills have contained provisions for cost
14 share activities to improve watershed values,
15 wildlife habitat, and other environmental values.
16 Future farm bills should continue these
17 opportunities, but not be limited by them.

18 Family farmlands face a number of threats:
19 Increasing development pressures, loss of
20 forestlands. From 1963 to 2002, 13 acres of
21 forestlands were converted to nonforest use.
22 It's projected that an additional 44 million
23 acres are going to be lost by the year 2030.

24 There is the shrinking size of these
25 acerages. The average age of forestland owners

1 is 60 years of age. As they pass on, those lands
2 tend to become partitioned and we lose the
3 sizeable units of forestland that are needed to
4 survive to the next generation.

5 Minimal forest and land management planning.
6 Only 3 percent of forestland owners have a
7 written plan which is a vital step in maintaining
8 good stewardship.

9 Harvesting without professional advice. Only
10 22 percent of owners seek professional advice and
11 thereby run the risk of bad practices or not
12 capturing all the values that they could from
13 their forestland.

14 Declining forest health and ecological
15 values. There are many threats facing forests:
16 Fire, insects and disease, and invasive species
17 right now are probably the primary ones.

18 Reduced income opportunities is the final
19 threat that I'm going to describe. Without
20 adequate income, forestland owners are less
21 likely to practice good management and resist
22 development pressures. Forestland owners need
23 help in identifying a diverse set of forest
24 products and managing their lands to produce them
25 and marketing them for their highest value.

1 The Farm Bill can help, through some of the
2 investments that are made such as targeting
3 educational, technical, and financial assistance;
4 looking at the broader landscape and targeting
5 benefits to where they're needed; integrating
6 assistance with local program priorities;
7 market-based approaches that help forestland
8 owners succeed in the marketplace; research to
9 help improve stewardship; and economic benefits;
10 and monitoring and evaluation to make sure that
11 what we want to work is working.

12 I thank you for the opportunity to share my
13 thoughts.

14 NANCY OBERSCHMIDT: Hello. I'm Nancy
15 Oberschmidt and I'm No. 3, and I have written
16 testimony.

17 I'm a registered dietician in Portland,
18 Oregon, and a member of the American Dietetic
19 Association.

20 The public needs uncompromising commitment
21 from their government to advance nutrition
22 knowledge and to help people apply that knowledge
23 to maintain and improve their health. Millions
24 of Americans benefit from USDA programs, and at
25 the same time we see hunger in the United States.

1 In fact, overweight/obesity is the largest
2 manifestation of malnutrition in the United
3 States today.

4 The next farm bill needs to address four key
5 areas: USDA's food assistance programs must be
6 adequately funded to be available to those who
7 need them; improving the nutritional status of
8 Americans needs to rise in priority in both food
9 assistance programs, other food programs, and for
10 all Americans; increased investment in nutrition
11 education and nutrition research is necessary and
12 must be sustained; up-to-date knowledge of the
13 nutrient composition of the food supply is
14 essential for those work in food, nutrition, and
15 health.

16 If we expect consumers to take personal
17 responsibility for making healthy choices, we
18 need to make sure that they are adequately
19 prepared. The government must invest in
20 nutrition research and nutrition education
21 necessary to give Americans the knowledge and
22 abilities to make their own nutrition decisions.

23 These nutrition recommendations and programs
24 in the public -- for the public must be based on
25 sound science. Only the federal government has

1 the public mandate and resources to carry out
2 research on human nutrition needs and to develop
3 dietary guidance that forms the basis of all
4 federal nutrition programs.

5 We believe federal research exploring the
6 relationships between diet -- particularly diet
7 patterns -- and health is of utmost importance.

8 In summary, adequately fund food assistance
9 programs; invest in nutrition education as part
10 of all programs; current nutrient composition
11 data is essential; and sound science, meaning
12 nutrition research, should be the basis of all
13 programs.

14 Thank you.

15 SUSAN ENGELS: Good afternoon. I'm No. 4,
16 and my name is Susan Engels, and I'm a program
17 manager in Washington State for the Senior
18 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

19 The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
20 is a much-loved program in Washington State. It
21 is such a win-win program benefitting both
22 seniors' health and hunger issues and supporting
23 community agriculture. Seniors will -- have been
24 shown to develop new habits. They're exposed to
25 new products that they may not have seen before

1 by going to the farmers' markets and the habits
2 can continue after the money provided by the
3 program have run out that they may continue in
4 what -- to keep on getting the additional fresh
5 fruits and vegetables into their diets. And in
6 addition to those seniors, often family
7 caregivers come with them and may be exposed to
8 the Farmers' Market as a place to shop.

9 So since its inception in Washington State in
10 2001, it has expanded annually and will serve
11 just under 15,000 eligible seniors in 2005, and
12 the program has increased marketing potential and
13 revenue for 550 local farmers. Forty-five of
14 surveyed farmers in 2003 said that they would
15 increase their production based on participation
16 in this program.

17 Unfortunately, there is only funding to serve
18 approximately 25 percent of the stated 60,000
19 eligible seniors in Washington. It would take an
20 estimated \$1,967,000 per year to serve all
21 eligible seniors in Washington. The funds
22 received from USDA -- \$112,686 -- serve less than
23 six percent of those eligible and account for
24 about 23 percent of the total Senior Farmers'
25 Market dollars spent in Washington State

1 annually. Our state legislature committed
2 \$682,000 over the 2006-2007 biennium to make up
3 for the depleted local grant fund source, but
4 there's no guarantee that those state funds will
5 be available beyond 2007.

6 An increase in the USDA grant for the Senior
7 Farmers Market Nutrition Program would allow us
8 to serve additional low-income seniors now on
9 waiting lists. And nationwide there is far more
10 demand for this very popular program than what
11 the current farm bill supports, and we would
12 encourage expansion of the Senior Farmers' Market
13 Nutrition Program.

14 And also, now that this program has gone past
15 a pilot stage and is a permanent program, we
16 would encourage the USDA to consider how the
17 funds are distributed between the states. Right
18 now we are attempting to serve 60,000 people with
19 \$112,000. Oregon attempts to serve -- Excuse me.
20 We attempt to serve 60,000; Oregon attempts to
21 serve 40,000 and they are doing that with over
22 \$600,000 compared to our \$100,000; so just to
23 look at that equity.

24 And in closing, the one thing that I would
25 look at policy-wise and the new standards that

1 are coming out is that new regulation will
2 require people to prove their financial
3 eligibility. Right now in Washington State, we
4 allow them to self-attest and that adds to their
5 dignity, and seniors who might not access the
6 program do it because it doesn't feel like
7 welfare. We take their word for it that they are
8 needing the program and they are eligible and
9 they get the benefit. It's very small, but to
10 add that administrative burden would not be in
11 direct relationship to the \$30 a year that they
12 receive from this program.

13 And I thank you again for having the
14 foresight to have this program. It's a great
15 program, and we look forward to continuing it.

16 Thank you.

17 RACHEL BRISTOL: Under Secretary Bost and
18 members of the committee, it's a pleasure to be
19 here with you today to offer testimony regarding
20 the 2007 Farm Bill. And Under Secretary, I've
21 had the pleasure of your involvement with the
22 American Second Harvest National Network over
23 recent years and appreciate your support
24 throughout that.

25 My name is Rachel Bristol. I'm the executive

1 director of Oregon Food Bank, and I also
2 currently serve as the co-chair of the
3 Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council.

4 Oregon Food Bank is the hub of a statewide
5 network made up of 20 regional food banks working
6 with 870 nonprofit hunger relief agencies
7 throughout every county in Oregon as well as
8 Clark County, Washington.

9 In addition to recovering food from farms,
10 processors, wholesalers and retailers, Oregon
11 Food Bank also serves as the state coordinating
12 agency for the USDA TEFAP program for Oregon.

13 In addition to addressing the immediate needs
14 of filling some of the gaps left by the food
15 stamp program, which we all know is the first
16 line of defense and the best defense we have
17 against hunger in this country, Oregon Food Bank
18 is working on the underlying causes of hunger,
19 and we see the food stamp program as really the
20 key program that will help us to diminish the
21 hunger program and hopefully end the hunger
22 problem in this nation over time.

23 It is so very important, particularly to this
24 state which has been plagued with very high
25 unemployment. It contributes to the economy, and

1 through outreach efforts as part of our food
2 security efforts and advocacy work, we've seen
3 significant growth; in fact, the highest level of
4 growth nationally in participation with now
5 420,000 Oregonians receiving food stamps.

6 As others have already mentioned from
7 personal experience, many of those folks are
8 still showing up at the emergency food box
9 providers due to the fact that food stamp benefit
10 levels are running out within the first two to
11 three weeks of the month.

12 We believe that the expansion of the food
13 stamp program is really the critical piece that
14 has enabled Oregon to move out of the number one,
15 worst in the country for food insecurity with
16 hunger. We're now at eight, and unfortunately
17 part of that is some states have gotten worse.
18 But really the fact that we have increased
19 participation in the food stamp program by
20 70 percent we believe is the primary reason for
21 that.

22 One of the key pieces -- benefits of the food
23 stamp program is that it is getting to families
24 who, despite working, are not making enough money
25 to provide for their basic needs. We would

1 recommend policies aimed at simplifying and
2 streamlining the application process as well as
3 changes in asset and income standards that help
4 more people gain access to the food they need.

5 Research into the -- research into the
6 factors behind our high hunger rate conducted by
7 Oregon State University last year revealed that
8 in Oregon, significantly higher risk is occurring
9 in three categories of households that don't seem
10 to be as much at risk in other states. Those are
11 households with two adults working in them,
12 households without any unemployed adults, and
13 households with two parents and children.

14 For many of these families, food stamps are
15 the primary assistance available to help them
16 fill the gap between income and expenses. There
17 are still too many in our state and in our nation
18 who remain hungry and food insecure. The demand
19 for emergency food assistance continues to grow
20 as the cost of the housing, utilities, child care
21 and health care stretch limited family budgets
22 even further. Over the last decade we have seen
23 the number of people seeking emergency food
24 assistance double.

25 (Timekeeper calls time.)

1 You're going to make me sit down?

2 (Laughter.)

3 So here's my testimony that gives you all the
4 recommendations.

5 I knew I couldn't do it in three minutes.

6 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: You had four going on
7 five.

8 SUSAN ENGELS: I have a lot to say.

9 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: We know.

10 SUSAN ENGELS: Thank you.

11 KEVIN MOFFITT: I'm No. 6, and I have
12 submitted written comments.

13 Good afternoon, Under Secretary Bost,
14 Department Administrator Carter, Regional
15 Administrator Ng, and forum participants. I am
16 president and CEO of Pear Bureau Northwest and
17 also manager of the Fresh Pear Committee. These
18 organizations were established in the 1930s to
19 help research, promote, and market fresh pears
20 grown in Oregon and Washington. These two states
21 produce 84 percent of our nation's fresh pears;
22 in fact, the legislature in Oregon just declared
23 the pear as the state fruit. We would have done
24 it in Washington, but they already had the apple.

25 (Laughter.)

1 The Pear Bureau represents 1600 farmers in
2 Oregon and Washington out of our office located
3 in Milwaukie, Oregon.

4 I am also a Produce for Better Health board
5 member and part of the Oregon five-a-day steering
6 committee. In addition, I have just completed my
7 second term as an adviser to the USDA serving on
8 the Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for
9 Fruit and Vegetables.

10 I'm here to make comments about the
11 importance of nutrition components in the
12 upcoming farm bill.

13 The 2007 Farm Bill provides an excellent
14 opportunity to bring agricultural policy in line
15 with federal health and nutrition
16 recommendations. A strong fruit and vegetable
17 agricultural policy will benefit both the produce
18 industry while at the same time making it easier
19 for Americans to benefit from consuming a diet
20 rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables. This
21 diet recommendation has been shown to reduce
22 heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, as well as
23 helping people maintain a healthy weight.

24 The 2005 Dietary Guidelines, issued jointly
25 by USDA and the Department of Health and Human

1 Services, recommend that all Americans eat five
2 to 13 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.
3 These guidelines are the strongest statement ever
4 about the need to increase consumption of fruits
5 and vegetables, recommending that Americans
6 double their consumption of produce.

7 For children, making fruits and vegetables
8 more accessible and more readily available where
9 kids spend a lot of their time, such as in
10 schools, is one of the most effective means of
11 increasing their consumption of produce. I
12 believe that the upcoming farm bill should
13 include language to expand the successful fresh
14 fruit and vegetable snack program to all 50
15 states, including Oregon, and to double funding
16 for the Department of Defense's Fresh Fruit
17 program for schools.

18 You have no doubt read and heard about the
19 positive benefits cited for expansion of the
20 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to all 50
21 states, such as the increase in overall
22 consumption by the kids and the immediate
23 behavior change, but I would like to offer you
24 some firsthand experience about how the pilot
25 program benefitted the children but also added to

1 the health of an industry.

2 Several years ago when the Fresh Fruit and
3 Vegetable pilot program was introduced, the Pear
4 Bureau saw it as an excellent opportunity to
5 expose more children to fresh pears and other
6 produce. We actively contacted the schools
7 involved offering them materials, such as handy
8 displays for holding a box of pears in the
9 hallway or classroom, and ideas how the schools
10 get more kids to snack on nutritious fruits and
11 vegetables.

12 It turned out, based on the USDA's review of
13 the program, that pears were the fourth most
14 popular fruit purchased by the schools following
15 apples, bananas, and citrus.

16 Another interesting fact from the evaluation
17 was that pears were the most popular
18 "never-before-tried" fruit. It exposes kids to
19 new varieties of produce that they may never have
20 seen or heard of and had an opportunity to try
21 before. It's important for kids to eat a variety
22 of fruits and vegetables.

23 So expanding the snack program to all 50
24 states, including Oregon, would go a long way to
25 promoting the health of the nation's school

1 children as well as improving the health of the
2 nation's fruit and vegetable farmers.

3 Moving on to the second and related point
4 that I would like to make, increasing the funding
5 for the Department of Defense would be a
6 cost-effective and efficient way to get
7 high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables in the
8 school programs.

9 Lastly, increasing the DSP program, Defense
10 Supply purchasing network, is always of interest
11 to us.

12 Thank you.

13 NANCY WEED: Good afternoon. I am No. 7. My
14 name is Nancy Weed with Oregon Hunger Relief Task
15 Force and coordinator of the Food Stamp Outreach
16 program.

17 We did submit written testimony, but I have a
18 few extra comments I'd like to make. Also I'd
19 like to point out we submitted written testimony
20 for our partners at OSU which is reviewing
21 nutrition education, also testimony from some of
22 our partners at Farmers Markets. And it's
23 interesting hearing some of that information over
24 the last testimony, we have new research that she
25 is now putting together that talks about some of

1 the food purchasing habits of people using food
2 stamps. So we're looking forward to sharing that
3 too.

4 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Should I count that
5 introduction against your time?

6 (Laughter.)

7 NANCY WEED: That's why I wrote down
8 everything I wanted to say and decided to get in
9 a couple more up here.

10 We appreciate your taking the time to come to
11 Portland. We appreciate the fact that you've
12 been advocating with Congress on a federal level
13 for this very important program. So what I'd
14 like to offer you today is some things you can
15 take with you next time you go to Congress. I
16 think Oregon has become this great successful
17 model. Three separate pieces they think you
18 could actually use next time you go visit with
19 your buddies at Congress.

20 We have been using categorical eligibility
21 since 1991 so we have been able to offer food
22 stamps to people regardless of the value of their
23 homes, the value of their cars. They don't have
24 to go through their life savings and they can
25 still get food stamps when life gets tough.

1 Expanding it -- having categorical
2 eligibility means we're also using 185 percent of
3 the federal poverty level. That means it's the
4 same eligibility limit for child nutrition
5 programs like school meals or WIC. So having
6 that higher eligibility threshold, we're
7 essentially maximizing our outreach dollars by
8 reaching these same families by combining our
9 best efforts and reaching all families that could
10 be helped by this program. That's huge.

11 Our outreach project that we've been using
12 since 2000, as Rachel mentioned -- thank you so
13 much -- it's been fantastic, and thanks to
14 categorical eligibility, we've got good news. So
15 we've been out there putting out materials,
16 letting people know about the changes. And as
17 Rachel mentioned, we've seen participation
18 increase over 70 percent since 1990. It's huge,
19 huge.

20 Part of what's making us so successful in our
21 outreach is we have been identifying barriers for
22 participation and then we've been working
23 collaboratively with our partners in the state to
24 try to resolve some of those. And I think that
25 that has become an unexpected bonus for us, and

1 that's my third point.

2 We, in Oregon -- you know, I can speak for
3 myself on a personal level because when I started
4 doing outreach, I was -- I'm a former welfare
5 mom. I used food stamps all the way through
6 graduate school, and I was an ardent welfare
7 rights activist in the community. So when I
8 started doing outreach, we had some of this going
9 on and it was difficult at first.

10 I learned from sitting down collaboratively
11 with our partners that we can come up with some
12 really collectively wonderful solutions. We've
13 got a document, "Strategies of Accountability"
14 where we're looking at issues of access and
15 customer service as well as accuracy in a really
16 balanced proportion way. I'm not saying
17 everything is perfect in Oregon, but we've done a
18 great job of pulling together all our best
19 resources and I think that would be strong for
20 you to take back to Congress.

21 We have lots of recommendations written, so
22 I'm sure you'll read those too. If I had to just
23 pick a couple in my last 15 seconds, as a former
24 student I'd say let's get rid of the work
25 requirements for students. They're going to

1 school full-time and that's enough, in and of
2 itself.

3 And also, you know, you'll hear a lot more
4 about this, but if we could get the best of
5 categorical -- the eligibility nationwide, that's
6 got to be the biggest bang for our buck.

7 Glad to follow up with you on any of this.

8 Thank you.

9 MIKE BARSOTTI: Under Secretary Bost, my name
10 is Mike Barsotti with the Department of Forestry,
11 and I really appreciate and thank you for coming
12 all the way across the country to listen to us
13 landowners and partners, and thank you for the
14 opportunity to allow people with other programs
15 in the USDA, the Farm Bill, to have this type of
16 chance to speak.

17 I'd like to talk a little bit about
18 background, about the forest in Oregon -- what it
19 is -- a little bit about the history of the
20 partnership with USDA and the Farm Bill, and then
21 about what the 2007 Farm Bill can do for us.

22 Forests are a lot about what makes Oregon,
23 Oregon. About 45 percent of the state is in
24 trees. A little over a third of that is in
25 private forestland. Family forest landowners own

1 a little over 40 percent of the private
2 forestland. The Farm Bill focuses mainly on
3 those family forestlands.

4 Oregon has long been the number one producer
5 of the forest products in the nation. Back when
6 the federal partners also harvested, we produced
7 20 percent of the softwood supplied in the
8 country.

9 But forest, as we know, provides a lot more
10 than just these economic values, and the Farm
11 Bill has been working very well at addressing
12 those ecological and social values.

13 We have over a 60-year partnership with USDA
14 agencies. It's been a very well-developed and
15 mature partnership. We've got a lot done. It
16 probably was never better as far as support for
17 family forestland owners than during the 1990
18 farm bill when we went from single resource
19 management to multiple resource management,
20 started dealing with having programs to help
21 landowners improve wildlife, water quality, and
22 other values.

23 During that time through the farm bill, we
24 were providing land owners with over \$2 million
25 annually of support in payments for cost-share

1 practices that they worked on.

2 I'd have to say now, it's never been worse.

3 In a ten-year period, we're less than 10 percent
4 of what we were back ten years ago. It's kind of
5 ironic too because when we were working on
6 economic projects like timber production, there's
7 some future gain for the land owner. What we're
8 asking, in Oregon our land owners to do now is
9 work on water quality, wildlife habitat, help
10 restore our salmon. These provide little to no
11 value to the land owner. So as we ask them to
12 take on projects that benefit society and not
13 them personally, we're backing away from helping
14 them do so. It doesn't make much sense.

15 In the current farm bill through the Forest
16 Stewardship Program, states are using GIS to
17 prioritize and find out where they could be most
18 effective. For 2007, we would hope that we
19 continue the strong support for that Stewardship
20 Incentive Program -- Forestry Incentives Program,
21 and then fund the forestland Enhancement Program.
22 It was a program that was developed and then the
23 funding disappeared during the current
24 administration.

25 So in conclusion, I hope you don't have to go

1 back right away. Our trees make a lot of what
2 makes Oregon great. I hope you have time to see
3 some of it. If you don't, come back another
4 time. I would personally walk you through the
5 woods.

6 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: I would enjoy that.
7 When I come back and let Rachel finish talking to
8 me, I'll try to come out there too.

9 (Laughter.)

10 CHERYL HUMMON: Hi. I'm No. 9.

11 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: How can I find you
12 when I come back?

13 MIKE BARSOTTI: State Forestry in Salem.

14 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Okay.

15 CHERYL HUMMON: My name is Cheryl Hummon, and
16 I work for Defenders of Wildlife, and I'm in our
17 Oregon office. We're a national organization
18 with a small office in Oregon.

19 Before I start, I'd like to give a ditto on
20 our previous two people who talked about the
21 forest programs. I'm not really here to talk
22 about forest programs, but we like those just as
23 much as farm programs.

24 In my position I work with incentive programs
25 for private land owners to encourage them to do

1 habitat conservation on their property. So
2 Defenders of Wildlife will be submitting some
3 formal written comments from our national office.
4 I don't have those here. I'm speaking more as a
5 person who works in Oregon and deals with issues
6 in Oregon.

7 Defenders of Wildlife would support a 2007
8 farm bill that rewards farmers and ranchers and
9 foresters who are for farm stewardship that
10 produces ecosystems services such as clean and
11 abundant water, healthy soil, and wildlife
12 habitat. Agricultural landscapes play a key role
13 in providing habitat for diverse and wildlife
14 species including many threatened, endangered,
15 and at-risk species.

16 The commodity support programs of the 2002
17 and previous farm bill programs tend to support
18 the opposite approach to what I just described.
19 They reward agribusinesses for large-scale
20 over-production of a narrow list of commodity
21 crops while sacrificing other public values such
22 as wildlife habitat, clean water, and soil
23 health.

24 Most of Oregon's diverse and specialized
25 agricultural products, such as fruits and

1 vegetables and pears and filberts and peppermint,
2 currently have no commodity support. The
3 conservation security program, on the other hand,
4 which rewards farmers and ranchers for how they
5 farm, not what they farm, has been tremendously
6 popular and successful in Oregon where most
7 farmers and ranchers do not benefit from the
8 regular commodity support payments.

9 Programs linked to the conservation security
10 program need to be greatly expanded in the 2007
11 farm bill while the traditional commodities at
12 work programs need to be phased out. This change
13 will help level the playing field for farmers and
14 ranchers across the United States. It will also
15 ensure that American products have access to
16 international markets which are coming to demand
17 ecosystem services along with agricultural
18 production.

19 Thank you very much.

20 BARRY BUSHUE: Thank you, Under Secretary
21 Bost. My name is Barry Bushue. I'm No. 10. I'm
22 representing Oregon Farm Bureau Federation. I'm
23 a full-time farmer about 10 miles east of here,
24 and I was pleased to hear about the legislature
25 making the pear the state fruit. I can only say

1 that mixed up with cane berries and strawberries
2 it makes it even better.

3 (Laughter.)

4 The Oregon Farm Bureau and the American Farm
5 Bureau are fully supportive of a farm bill
6 patterned after the 2002 farm bill. We believe
7 that a multisector, multititle approach is
8 critical to a nation that recognizes the cheapest
9 food, the most available and the safest food in
10 the world -- much of which the farmer does at
11 their own cost.

12 We're all aware of the price of farm goods
13 primarily remaining where they have been since
14 1950 or 1960 without a lot of benefit or increase
15 and still operating in 2005 prices currently.

16 We do believe and we do support commodity
17 payments for a number of commodity programs and
18 support the program title as it is and hope it's
19 fully funded and makes it to the next round.
20 That creates a basis for an infrastructure
21 necessary for the development and enhancement of
22 agriculture in terms of farm credit, in terms of
23 production of an infrastructure for development
24 of tractors and development of fertilizers, crop
25 protection, all the other things required. So

1 that's a critical piece of it.

2 However in the state of Oregon, not many of
3 our farmers directly benefit from program
4 payments. There are some, and we're glad that
5 they're able to do so. However, I believe our
6 priority as a farm bureau are firstly with our
7 universities in extension and research. We
8 believe that basic and general research for the
9 agricultural industry and our land grant
10 institutions and private institutions including
11 biotech, biofarming, alternative energy sources,
12 food quality and quantity, food processing and
13 value added for individual farmers.

14 Many of these value-added initiatives are
15 beneficial to a state which promises over 250
16 commodities and also looks for value added to
17 make it more profitable on the farm. The more
18 profitable on the farm, the more farms you have.
19 We recognize agriculture as a key component to
20 both the nation's security and the state of
21 Oregon's economy and the nation's economy.
22 Without agriculture, you have nothing.

23 It's interesting, in Australia, they refer to
24 farmers as primary producers because we are the
25 creators of wealth. Most of the rest of the

1 wealth is just transferred from hand to hand. We
2 like to take a lot of pride that we produce the
3 wealth of the nation.

4 Conservation is a big part of Oregon. Oregon
5 agriculture has made a commitment in partnership
6 with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the
7 public in developing water quality management
8 plans for agriculture in every water basin in the
9 state. That has all been done on a voluntary
10 basis by agriculture and individual farmers at
11 their expense. And we believe that conservation
12 programs such as CSPE, EQIP, forest enhancement,
13 wildlife enhancement are all critical pieces of
14 this conservation puzzle.

15 It's interesting in the state, the public
16 owns 53 percent of the land in the state and
17 agriculture and private land owners provide 75 of
18 the food and habitat for the State's wildlife at
19 no -- all costs being born by the landowner. So
20 any conservation programs are welcome.

21 We are supporters of trade promotion and
22 believe that trade and market access are critical
23 to Oregon's farmers. Over 85 percent of all the
24 products raised in Oregon are exported someplace;
25 some in the US, some to other countries. And

1 market access as a tradeoff for subsidization, we
2 believe, is a critical component of that.

3 So we encourage you to continue your funding.
4 We encourage a fully-funded farm bill, and
5 appreciate you coming to Oregon. Hope you have
6 another opportunity -- we'll show you some pears
7 and berries. You can see lots of forest from the
8 plane.

9 (Laughter.)

10 DENA SPEER: I'm No. 11. Under Secretary
11 Bost, members of the committee, I'd like to thank
12 you for the opportunity to present my testimony
13 regarding the 2007 Farm Bill and the
14 authorization and the role of the federal
15 nutrition programs.

16 My name is Dena Speer, and I am a concerned
17 member as well as a present food stamp recipient.
18 I'm also a senior citizen, full-time student, and
19 a diabetic. My goal in going back to school is
20 to increase my earning potential until retirement
21 and to be self-sustaining.

22 I receive \$143 a month in food stamps which,
23 as many have testified, is not nearly enough to
24 subsist on. My husband is also a diabetic, and
25 together we live on his income which is far below

1 the national standard. We have no health
2 insurance. The cost of diabetes supplies comes
3 from our own pockets. Medications do come from
4 the pharmaceutical low-income programs. Some are
5 free, but some are at a nominal charge; again,
6 out of our pockets. As diabetics we are required
7 to adhere to a special diet. Unfortunately we
8 cannot do that, and buying food with our own
9 money becomes a challenge when faced with
10 necessary medical needs.

11 So the question then becomes what is the most
12 important priority? Do we sacrifice our health?
13 Rent? Medications? Food? Perhaps life-saving
14 medical supplies or maybe living in darkness
15 because the electric bill is the lowest on our
16 list of priorities? Extras such as hygiene
17 needs, cleaning products, telephone are not
18 priorities. So when faced with these choices,
19 what would you choose?

20 Food stamp programs aid those who cannot be
21 self-supporting and those who are working to be
22 self-sustaining. Students, single parents,
23 low-income, medically challenged, homeless, and
24 senior citizens. And unfortunately, these are
25 growing in numbers, as I'm sure you're well aware

1 of, and so is food cost.

2 I see a need to expand the amount of food
3 stamp dollars. I see a need to evaluate the
4 recipients' needs more closely in the application
5 process so as to address specific health and
6 dietary needs to ensure the recipient receives
7 adequate food.

8 I strongly urge you, Mr. Secretary and
9 members of this panel, today to consider these
10 programs that will help us to make these choices
11 and to urge Congress to increase the amounts of
12 food stamp dollars as well as improve the
13 application process to include closer evaluation.

14 I'd also like to take a minute to add an
15 addendum. I recently completed an internship in
16 hospitality and restaurant management with a
17 nonprofit organization called the Grand House and
18 Hospitality. This organization has been in
19 existence for over 50 years and is the largest
20 hot meal site in the metro area. It serves three
21 meals a day, six days a week in one-hour meal
22 periods to people that are homeless, low income,
23 or indigent. I observed in the nine weeks there
24 that the lowest count was in the first half of
25 the month. In the last half when the food stamp

1 allotments ran out, the count often exceeded 600
2 people a day. So that's for you to consider.

3 Thank you.

4 JANICE SMILEY: I'm No. 12, and I do have
5 written comments.

6 Under Secretary Bost and committee members,
7 thank you for being here. My name is Janice
8 Smiley, and I'm here today representing Oregon
9 State University Extension Service and the
10 Extension Nutrition Education Program. Our
11 program provides low-income families in Oregon
12 with the information they need to make healthy
13 food choices and to choose active lifestyles.

14 We receive funding through two nutritional
15 programs included in the farm bill -- Food Stamp
16 Nutrition Education, or FSNE as we know it; and
17 also the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education
18 Program, which we all know as EFNEP. We urge you
19 to make these two programs a funding priority as
20 you discuss the reauthorization of funds through
21 the 2007 Farm Bill.

22 The need for practical education and
23 nutrition education in Oregon continues to be
24 grave. Participation in food stamps increased
25 more than 70 percent from 2000 to 2004 and

1 emergency food requests also increased. Hunger
2 rates in Oregon are significantly higher for
3 families that aren't usually at risk --
4 double-income households, households without
5 unemployed people, and households with two
6 parents and children. EFNEP and FSNE nutrition
7 education programs help families learn practical
8 skills to use all food resources available to
9 them and make wise decisions when food dollars
10 are limited.

11 One of the strengths of the food stamp
12 program is that it increases the food purchasing
13 power of low-income households. Our extension
14 nutrition education program contributes to the
15 success of the food stamp program by teaching
16 clients how to get nutritious food safely on the
17 table. We teach family members, both youth and
18 adults, how to select nutritious foods and how to
19 safely prepare those foods and store them. We
20 teach individuals and families with young
21 children how to stretch their food through
22 resources so they will have food left at the end
23 of the month.

24 In Oregon, food security is a serious
25 problem. Oregon Food Bank's 2004 Hunger Fact

1 Survey showed that 95 percent of food stamp
2 families ran out of food stamps at least a week
3 before the end of the month. One of the
4 strengths of the Extension Nutrition Education
5 Program is that we teach in communities where
6 food-stamp-eligible families live. We develop
7 relationships with the families we serve and gain
8 their trust. That trust allows us to break
9 through barriers so families feel comfortable
10 learning and practicing those new skills. It
11 allows us to have conversations with families so
12 they learn how to access all available food
13 resources, particularly food stamps.

14 The funds appropriated to EFNEP and FSNE
15 through the farm bill allow us to reach out to
16 low-income audiences in a very personal manner
17 and help individuals make positive changes.
18 Participants consistently improve food resource
19 management, nutrition and food safety practices
20 which translate into significant improvements in
21 daily living skills. These programs actively
22 contribute to USDA's goal of enabling families to
23 obtain a more nutritious diet.

24 In conclusion, I urge you to strongly
25 consider an increase in the 2007 Farm Bill

1 authorizations for both the food stamp program
2 and EFNEP. Nutrition education programs reaching
3 low-income food-stamp-eligible families are only
4 successful with adequate, sustainable funding.
5 And in Oregon, even with both EFNEP and FSNE
6 available, we are not able to meet all requests
7 for both youth and adult classes in rural and
8 urban communities.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to visit with
10 you today.

11 SHARON THORNBERRY: Good afternoon. Thank
12 you for being here, Under Secretary Bost and
13 members of the committee. I'm No. 3. My name is
14 Sharon Thornberry. I do have written testimony
15 to give you. I probably won't follow it
16 completely.

17 I am the Community Food Program's advocate
18 for Oregon Food Bank, but I am here today as the
19 president of the Community Food Security
20 Coalition board. We are an organization that
21 represents over 325 organizations across North
22 America that are engaged in rebuilding our
23 nation's food system, to make health care more
24 just and sustainable.

25 Recently the Community Food Security

1 Coalition held its annual conference in Atlanta,
2 Georgia. In Farm Bill listening sessions from
3 October 6 through the 9th, many views and
4 concerns were raised by our membership about the
5 future of food and farm policy in the United
6 States. I'd like to share some of those concerns
7 with you today.

8 It is clear to us that healthy food and
9 healthy communities are closely related
10 especially in low-income rural and urban
11 communities, the lack of access to affordable and
12 good quality fresh fruits vegetables and meat
13 products is closely related to poverty and to the
14 instance of nutritional disease, hunger, and food
15 insecurity.

16 Hunger and poverty can be eradicated in
17 America. The role of government policy is vital.
18 Existing nutrition programs provide a safety net
19 for nearly 35 million citizens, 13 million of
20 which are children. These programs including
21 food stamps and child nutrition programs are
22 vitally necessary for millions of Americans who
23 do not earn enough to cover the cost of housing,
24 health care, heating, fuel, transportation, and
25 food.

1 And I'd like to echo those before me that
2 talk about how unrealistic the income guideline
3 is. One hundred and thirty-five percent of
4 poverty does not come close to a living wage in
5 most of this country. And it's been a real win
6 for us in Oregon to use categorial eligibility,
7 but it needs to be across the country, not just
8 here.

9 The Coalition joins and supports anti-hunger
10 and nutrition advocates fighting to keep and
11 improve the safety net of the nation. Meanwhile,
12 a new policy and programs are needed to link
13 vulnerable producers and vulnerable consumers in
14 communities from coast to coast. The food system
15 of the United States is vulnerable to shifts in
16 the cost of energy to national disaster and other
17 threats made painfully evident in the wake of our
18 recent hurricanes.

19 New policy tools are needed to benefit both
20 vulnerable rural and urban populations and local
21 and state levels such as the rise in farmers'
22 markets, food banks sourcing from local farms,
23 farm-to-school programs, community food projects
24 and increasing procurement of local food by
25 institutions benefit both farmers and consumers.

1 Win-win programs need win-win policy to grow and
2 become a foundation for a new, more equitable
3 food system.

4 The food system starts with gardens in
5 communities across the country, and the survival
6 of small- and median-scale diverse farming
7 systems is essential to food and homeland
8 security. Farm workers, minority and
9 limited-resource farmers, new immigrant farmers,
10 and independent family farms are still the best
11 guaranty of natural food security in the face of
12 threats to transcontinental and international
13 food supply chains in an uncertain future.

14 I'd really like for you to look at my
15 testimony, talk about and look at what our farm
16 bill priorities are. We need to protect and
17 enhance the nutritional safety net. We need to
18 make sure that the policies we put in place in
19 the next farm bill benefit both producers and
20 consumers of communities, and we have examples of
21 several of those policies in our testimony.

22 Thank you.

23 HOLLY WILKALIS: Hi. I'm No. 14, and I do
24 have a written copy of my testimony I'll turn in.

25 I work for the Oregon Hunger Relief Task

1 Force as are a lot of us here today hogging all
2 the time. Thanks for coming to Portland and
3 listening to us.

4 I want to start by noting that the food stamp
5 program here in Oregon has improved enormously
6 since I first started working on outreach in
7 1998. The application process has improved,
8 customer service is enormously better, and the
9 program staff are so much more proactive and
10 willing to partner with advocates to make
11 improvements.

12 But I still think there's a lot more we can
13 do to make sure that families, particularly the
14 working families who have been hit hardest in our
15 recent recession, are able on access the help
16 that they need.

17 I work quite a bit these days with families
18 who are participating in the federal child
19 nutrition programs, and I talk to many parents
20 who are hovering in the 130 to 185 percent of
21 poverty range. Based on the current federal food
22 stamp income guidelines, they should be doing
23 okay, but they're not. When school is out for
24 the summer and those subsidized school meals go
25 away, the kids are eating watered-down macaroni

1 and cheese and Top Ramen at the end of the month.
2 Even if a family is able to use our categorical
3 eligibility guidelines to get on the food stamp
4 program, the food stamps almost never ever go far
5 enough, especially if they've got kids with food
6 allergies or other special needs.

7 These families are struggling to put any food
8 on the table. Forget about being able to buy
9 whole grains or fresh fruits and vegetables.
10 I've never seen kids so excited to get fresh
11 apples or fresh broccoli as these kids were over
12 the summer. Parents are struggling to hold to an
13 older car to get the kids to school and day care
14 and get themselves to whatever job, if not
15 jobs -- multiple -- whatever they're working at
16 to try and make ends meet. They're struggling to
17 try and pay health insurance co-pays, if they
18 even have health insurance -- many don't.
19 They're struggling to pay rent and hope that this
20 landlord doesn't sell the home right out from
21 under them in this tight housing market. The key
22 word here is "struggling."

23 So what can we do in the farm bill to help
24 ease the struggle for our working families? Many
25 people have raised some good ideas and I'm sure

1 will continue to do so. Personally, I just want
2 to say that I think some of the most important
3 steps we can take is raising the food stamp
4 program income limit to 185 percent of poverty to
5 align with other programs like WIC and school
6 meals, excluding household resources from the
7 eligibility consideration, and basing monthly
8 food stamp benefits on an updated measure of what
9 families need to buy health foods.

10 We've been using the categorial eligibility
11 policy here in Oregon now for a few years to make
12 the first two improvements for many families, and
13 it has helped a lot. Now it's time to make sure
14 that families -- all families will be able to
15 benefit from that increased access.

16 Thank you for your time today.

17 SUE WOODBURY: I knew I was going to end up
18 at this podium.

19 (Laughter.)

20 I'm number 15 and I have submitted written
21 comments.

22 Under Secretary Bost and gentlemen, welcome
23 to Oregon. My name is Sue Wood. I'm the program
24 manager for the WIC program in the State of
25 Oregon. We also manage the WIC Farmers' Market

1 and the Senior Farmers' Market program. I'm here
2 to talk about the Senior Farmers' Market program.

3 That program has increased the income of
4 thousands of growers nationwide by expanding
5 access to fresh produce at farmers' markets and
6 farm stands, and it allows at-risk --
7 nutritionally at-risk seniors with low incomes to
8 help the community by purchasing from those
9 farmers.

10 Here in Oregon over 500 small family farmers
11 participate in our state Senior Farmers' Market
12 program; however, additional funding is needed
13 for the program so that a greater number of
14 eligible seniors can be served. For example, in
15 2005, Oregon was only able to serve 53 percent of
16 the nearly 40,000 seniors eligible to
17 participate. In 2005, state funding requests for
18 the senior farmers' market nutrition program
19 totalled over \$28 million. This was almost
20 double the available funding provided by the
21 current farm bill. There is clearly more demand
22 for the program now.

23 Regarding the Senior Farmers' Market's
24 strengths and accomplishments, we're very much
25 appreciative of the flexibility that states have

1 currently to implement a variety of innovative,
2 creative, and very popular programs that benefit
3 both our farmers and our seniors. In June of
4 this year we submitted comments on the proposed
5 senior farmers' market nutrition regulations on
6 behalf of ourselves and our state agency
7 partners.

8 We do agree in general with the policies
9 based on the framework for the WIC Farmers'
10 Market Nutrition Program, for farmers' markets,
11 and farm stands; however, we also expressed major
12 concerns about the proposed requirements
13 regarding recipients which would be impractical
14 and costly to implement for a relatively small
15 benefit that's available.

16 We would like to take this opportunity to ask
17 you and your staff to review the comments we've
18 already submitted and look forward to continued
19 success with the new permanent program. And a
20 copy of those comments is included with our
21 written comments.

22 Thank you very much, and welcome to Oregon.

23 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: I think that we're
24 going -- how much more do we have?

25 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR NG: Twelve more.

1 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: We're going to take a
2 10-minute break. We've gone through 15. I think
3 we have 12 more, so it's a good breaking point.
4 A 10-minute break.

5 (Break.)

6 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: No 16. Go for it.
7 The podium is yours.

8 RUBY JONSRUD: And thank you for allowing me
9 to come in and speak. My name is Ruby Jonsrud,
10 and I am a current food stamp recipient. Food
11 stamps have provided my family with a more
12 holistic choice of foods than I would otherwise
13 be able to purchase. I'm a student at Marylhurst
14 University, a year away from attaining a master's
15 degree in gerontology. In an effort to maintain
16 my household needs, I work two part-time jobs,
17 and I do receive \$278 a month in food stamps.
18 The difference in what I can provide for my son
19 and myself after receiving the food stamps was
20 definitely dramatically improved.

21 And more and more as we move into the future
22 and redefine "family" and "household," it becomes
23 important we reevaluate what constitutes need and
24 eligibility. I would certainly have had
25 difficulty without raising the threshold to

1 185 percent. I think that's very important.

2 The food stamp program is a helping hand
3 during this time while I am completing my
4 education that hopefully will allow me to
5 contribute to society in a significant way, and
6 this is what it is meant to be really, in my
7 estimation, a helping hand.

8 While I'm confident that my family will wean
9 away from the assistance in the near future, I'm
10 so grateful that it is available for me now so I
11 can complete the training that will allow me to
12 become a valuable resource for others.

13 The recommendations that have been made by
14 really so many of the other people that are
15 involved with the Oregon Food Bank and the other
16 programs are necessary to reflect the needs of
17 the changing families and the growth of the food
18 stamp program as a tool in assisting education
19 and moving towards independence and contribution
20 of all the recipients. From a personal and
21 societal standpoint, I would add my voice to them
22 and ask for their consideration and adoption from
23 this committee.

24 Thank you.

25 CYNTHIA MUELLER: I have written testimony

1 that will give more information. I'll be reading
2 an oral presentation in the interest of time.

3 My name is Cynthia Mueller. I'm a disabled
4 person on social security and food stamps. I'll
5 be speaking to you of a policy problem, and in my
6 case at least, resolution that I experienced
7 after October 2004 when the third-level utility
8 standard was implemented. This utility standard
9 was created for households that could only show
10 one none heat utility charge. This standard is
11 called the Telephone Utility Standard or TUA.

12 Prior to this change, I had been receiving a
13 limited utility standard. In mid-September of
14 2004, I was notified by DHS that my food stamp
15 benefits would be lowered to the Telephone
16 Utility Standard and that the food stamp benefits
17 would be reduced by up to \$50 a month.

18 Concerned, I called DHS who confirmed that my
19 food stamp allotment would be calculated using
20 the new TUA standard and my allotment would be
21 cut by approximately two-thirds in November 2004.

22 Dissatisfied with DHS' decision to cut my
23 food stamp benefit so drastically, I asked for a
24 hearing. While preparing for the hearing, I
25 obtained a copy of the Administrative Rule

1 461-160-0420 and it was pointed out to me that
2 specific parts of the rule had been overlooked
3 when drafting the policy on the utility standard.

4 It appears that had all the rules be applied
5 when drafting the policies, I would have
6 qualified for the utilities allowance for two
7 years prior to October 2004. The reason that I
8 would have qualified for the full utility
9 allowance is that even though I am not billed
10 separately, I have been receiving low-income
11 energy assistance for several years. The
12 administrative rule states that food stamp
13 recipients who currently receive low-income
14 energy assistance qualify.

15 I put this information to DHS to consider and
16 I was relieved when they not only changed my
17 status to full utility standard but reimbursed my
18 account for the difference between the TUA and
19 the FUA during the time that my hearing was in
20 process.

21 After asking DHS for a hearing concerning the
22 dramatic reduction in my food stamp benefit, I
23 discovered that the process that I had entered
24 into was often difficult and frustrating.
25 Needless to say, the process was long; however,

1 clearly, in this case, the grievance process
2 worked and I am thankful.

3 After my food stamp benefits were reduced in
4 November 2004, I found myself going to the local
5 food bank for the first time in my life. Having
6 to go to the food bank caused me to feel as
7 though I had, for the first time in my adult
8 life, failed to provide myself with something so
9 basic as enough food to keep from going hungry.
10 I felt helpless and demoralized.

11 When the food stamps were increased with the
12 FUA in August 2005, I began receiving
13 approximately \$75 a month more than I was
14 receiving. Now I am able to go to the store and
15 buy more healthy food. I can go when it is
16 convenient for me and have the dignity to go to
17 the store picking out what I want to buy and
18 having means to pay for that purchase.

19 Thank you.

20 BRAIN PARSON: I'm No. 17. My name is Brian
21 Parson. I'm a member of the Farm Bureau and the
22 director of the Oregon Farm Bureau. I'm a farmer
23 and I farm raspberries, Marion berries,
24 blackberries, and blueberries which,
25 nutritionally, are great for you.

1 (Laughter.)

2 They have the highest antioxidants,
3 anticancer, anti-aging, and they taste good, too.

4 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: What was the second
5 berry you said?

6 BRAIN PARSON: Marian berries? They're a
7 variety of blackberries.

8 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: I know. I just didn't
9 hear you.

10 BRAIN PARSON: The American people have high
11 standards that they require of all American
12 producers. These high standards come in the form
13 of ever-increasing minimum wage laws, social
14 security, Medicare, unemployment insurance,
15 workers' compensation insurance, OSHA, EPA, ADA
16 requirements, taxes, fees, bureaucratic red tape,
17 and many other government regulations that
18 significantly add to the cost of production.

19 At the same time, the American people are all
20 able to buy products imported into this country
21 that are not produced under the same standards
22 the American people demand of us. That double
23 standard is killing us. It has destroyed the
24 textile industry, the steel industrial, home
25 electronics, many other industries, and is

1 hurting a lot of us farming families, 90 percent
2 of which have to support the family with off-farm
3 employment, or a third of which have to be
4 subsidized by some form of government payments.

5 The secretary of agriculture gives us
6 statistics that 27 percent of our products are
7 exported, but most of that is to developing
8 countries whose population have very low incomes
9 and can ill afford the environmental and employee
10 standards that the American people demand of us.

11 If you really want us to be competitive in
12 global markets, and I believe we have to be, you
13 must remove that double standard that is taking
14 all the profit out of farming and many other
15 businesses.

16 There are only two ways you can do this:
17 One, remove the burden of paying for these high
18 standards off the backs of producers; or two, not
19 allow consumers to get around our laws by
20 importing from countries without those same
21 standards unless the cost of those standards are
22 added back in.

23 The first seems easier to do in terms of
24 WTO-like payments for environmental improvements
25 but I believe -- but the second, I believe, is

1 better in the long run because it puts less
2 pressure on more regulations and encourages other
3 countries to come up to the standards that we
4 think all people would benefit from.

5 The Oregon Farm Bureau has adopted specific
6 recommendations to accomplish this: One, placing
7 a moratorium on any further regulation on
8 business until all the following steps are
9 accomplished. This puts pressure on to get
10 things done more quickly.

11 Two: Require the U.S. Department of Commerce
12 to standardize all current government regulations
13 and compare with other countries; two, assess the
14 cost of current regulations to domestic
15 producers; three, require all products imported
16 into this country to meet the same standards.
17 All countries that have the same standards would
18 have free trade for all products; then those
19 countries with lower standards than ours would be
20 required to levy a tax on their own products that
21 they export to us equal to the cost of the higher
22 standards required of domestic producers; next,
23 remove those tax requirements as producers meet
24 the standard as required in this country. And
25 last, approve all future regulation.

1 Some fear no one will trade with us if we
2 require others to meet our standards. Not true.
3 Japan has higher standards than we do for wheat
4 that they import from us and we meet those
5 standards. Our auto emission standards must be
6 met by foreign auto manufacturers and it
7 certainly hasn't stopped them from exporting to
8 us. The truth is that we are a huge market for
9 the whole world and it will be in their economic
10 interest to meet the standards that we insist on.

11 Is it right to have unsafe working conditions
12 or pollute the environment in other countries
13 just so we don't have to pay the cost of
14 standards that we claim to believe in and require
15 of own producers? Should our government condone
16 and even encourage such practices in the name of
17 free trade?

18 It is time that we made trade in this country
19 both free and fair with universal standards for
20 all products that the American consumer buys.
21 Then more production will stay in this country
22 and we will have a strong, stable economy.

23 Farming will then be more profitable and you
24 will see -- of those six questions you asked of
25 us -- that more young people will go into farming

1 because it's profitable; assistance is where it's
2 needed because it is efficiently done by
3 commercial markets; that farming is profitable;
4 farmers who are willing to add --

5 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Out of time.

6 BRAIN PARSON: Thank you. I do have some
7 written comments.

8 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: I'm No. 18.

9 Mr. Bost -- Under Secretary, Mr. Carter,
10 Mr. Allen, thank you for coming to Oregon and
11 thank you for listening to our concerns. My name
12 is Cecilia Gonzales-Lyons, and I am the food
13 program coordinator for Oregon Housing and
14 Community Services.

15 I coordinate three food programs for the
16 State of Oregon. I do the Commodity Supplemental
17 Food Program, the Emergency Food -- I knew I was
18 going to mess this up -- TEFAP. I've come here
19 today to talk to you about the CSFP program.

20 Historically -- I'm not good at this, and I'm
21 really nervous, so I'll do the best I can.

22 You'll remember me. But --

23 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Take your time.

24 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: Janice is used to
25 me.

1 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Tell me what you want
2 to tell me. Don't read it. Talk to me.

3 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: That would be
4 better.

5 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Tell me what you want
6 me to know.

7 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: Well, in the past,
8 Oregon has only done the CSFP out of one county.
9 Last year, we took it to two more counties:
10 Pendelton/Murray, which is doing very well; and
11 Medford, Oregon, which is a larger city which has
12 a high elderly population.

13 It took us a while to get our caseload up.
14 As you know it takes a while. Not in each state,
15 but we expanded.

16 What I'm asking of the new regulations that
17 are going in is that you don't decrease our
18 caseload. We're going to ask for an increase
19 because presently we are now a little bit over on
20 our CSFP. It took us a while, but we got there,
21 and we're beyond.

22 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: I know that you're
23 over. In those states that are significant,
24 we've had to cut back.

25 Keep talking.

1 (Laughter.)

2 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: What I'm asking is
3 that you look at our program. I'll even send you
4 something personally about how we expanded it and
5 got it up to a level.

6 But what I'm asking you today is not to
7 decrease Oregon's caseload level to help us take
8 it to another county, and to spread it to our
9 seniors.

10 What you said in Oakland, that you're
11 considering this as a senior program, and here in
12 Oregon we have a high population of seniors, and
13 I ask you to advocate for Oregon like you've
14 advocated for other states and the food programs
15 in the past; to advocate for Oregon to help us in
16 assistance. Increase the caseload for the CSFP.

17 I'm looking to see if you have the sign up.
18 I have one more program to talk about, the TEFAP.
19 And I have to admit, historically, yes, you have
20 been a great advocate for that. We don't have
21 bonuses are a little iffy. Regularly that
22 program is stable.

23 But there's one problem with that program is
24 because the admin money hasn't grown. And what
25 we're looking at now with our food bank networks

1 is that with the gas prices -- the gasoline
2 prices going up and with utilities going up and
3 for them to have to maintain and run their
4 warehouses, it's costing more money.

5 So what I'm asking you right now is that we
6 get a small increase in the TEFAP administrative
7 funding. I know that's a big -- but I'm just
8 asking for a little bit, so we can be able to
9 distribute our food to the low-income people in
10 Oregon.

11 Okay. I'm done.

12 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Actually, you have one
13 minute.

14 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: I have one minute?

15 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: You have.

16 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: Should I go on?

17 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: You have a minute. If
18 there's anything else you want to say, I don't
19 want to cheat you out of your time.

20 CECILIA GONZALES-LYONS: No. I'm done.

21 SHAWN DeCARLO: Good afternoon, Under
22 Secretary and members of the committee. Thank
23 you for your time.

24 My name is Shawn DeCarlo and I was involved
25 in national service as an AmeriCorps VISTA leader

1 from August 2003 to August 2004. I have a
2 written statement.

3 The rules surrounding food stamp eligibility
4 for those serving in national service,
5 specifically AmeriCorps VISTA, are confusing to
6 VISTA members and even worse, sometimes not
7 understood by caseworkers at the local level.
8 The reason for this confusion comes from the
9 manner in which the subsistence allowance of
10 AmeriCorps VISTA members is considered income and
11 the manner in which it is not considered income.

12 When an individual becomes an AmeriCorps
13 VISTA member, from the time they take their
14 oath -- which, incidentally, is the same oath
15 taken by members of the Armed Forces of the
16 United States -- the modest subsistence allowance
17 they receive, which translates to below federal
18 minimum wage, is counted under federal law as
19 income. Before taking the oath, the subsistence
20 allowance is not considered income.

21 This situation leads to unequal access to
22 services for those national service members
23 already residing in the communities where they
24 serve. For example, a national service member
25 from North Dakota, say, relocating to Oregon for

1 national service would find it much more
2 difficult to apply for food stamp benefits before
3 they take their oath, from North Dakota, than a
4 member residing in Oregon who is able to apply
5 because they already reside here, have an
6 address, and an income of effectively zero; that
7 is, assuming their national service subsistence
8 allowance will be their only form of income.

9 The situation has led to national service
10 members in the state of Oregon being liable to
11 the Department of Health and Human Services for
12 the back payment of incorrectly-allotted food
13 stamp payments.

14 What happens is a member, usually from
15 out-of-state, but not always, applies for
16 assistance in the form of food stamps after they
17 have taken their oath as a national service
18 member. The member applies for benefits, for
19 which they would appear more than eligible in a
20 forthright manner, by declaring their subsistence
21 allowance. The subsistence allowance is then
22 incorrectly assumed to be ineligible as income
23 due to confusion between AmeriCorps VISTA and
24 AmeriCorps regulations.

25 Recall that the subsistence allowance of

1 AmeriCorps VISTA members is considered income
2 which the member applies after they have taken
3 their oath but not considered income if they
4 apply before they take their oath. The situation
5 for AmeriCorps members, however, is that the
6 subsistence allowance is not considered income
7 either before or after they begin their service
8 in national service.

9 Due to this disconnect, the law is applicable
10 to Americorps and AmeriCorps VISTA, at least one
11 VISTA member in Oregon has had their subsistence
12 allowance incorrectly not counted as income,
13 along the lines of the regulations regarding
14 AmeriCorps members.

15 Additionally, for at least this one member,
16 the caseworker error was caught and the member
17 required to pay back over \$700 in incorrectly
18 caseworker-allocated benefits. I know,
19 personally, of other instances of VISTAs owing up
20 to \$2,000 in back payments.

21 The rules regarding the application of
22 national service subsistence allowances as income
23 need to be made parallel for both AmeriCorps
24 VISTA and AmeriCorps members in order to avoid
25 that kind of caseworker error leading to an undue

1 burden on national service members in the future.
2 There is no reason why a well-intentioned
3 individual who serves his or her country in an
4 honorable capacity should be left with a debt to
5 pay at the end of their service.

6 The rules governing the status of AmeriCorps
7 VISTA subsistence allowances as income should be
8 made congruent with those of AmeriCorps. Current
9 regulations are a barrier to service and require
10 members to pay for the administrative mistakes of
11 caseworkers who do not clearly understand a
12 confusing law.

13 President Bush has professed a commitment to
14 national service. I encourage him and members of
15 the committee to view even this single incident
16 as evidence of the need to remove an unnecessary
17 governmental barrier to national service. I urge
18 a reconciliation of the laws surrounding benefit
19 eligibility for AmeriCorps VISTA members similar
20 to those applicable to AmeriCorps members.

21 Thank you.

22 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm speaker No. 1.
23 Today, I'm here to speak to you about support for
24 a Dairy Forward Contracting Program in the 2007
25 Farm Bill.

1 I am Shawn Reirsgaard, director of
2 environmental and political affairs for the
3 Tillamook County Creamery Association. The
4 company I work for is a cooperative comprised of
5 142 family dairy farms mostly located on the
6 northern Oregon coast. We have two facilities:
7 One located in Tillamook, Oregon; the other in
8 Boardman, Oregon. We employ 495 workers at
9 family wage jobs between the two facilities.

10 We produce a variety of dairy products from
11 butter to sour cream to drinkable yogurt;
12 however, we are best known for our award-winning
13 cheddar cheese and ice cream. Because our family
14 dairy farmers produce the highest quality milk
15 and our cheese makers are committed to producing
16 the highest quality dairy products, the Tillamook
17 County Creamery Association is an agricultural
18 success story.

19 To meet the growing demands for our dairy
20 products, my company doubled production capacity
21 in 2001. This year, we began construction on a
22 facility that would allow us to increase
23 production by an additional 50 percent.

24 This rapid growth requires tools that allow
25 us to manage risk. Dairy Forward Contracting is

1 such a tool.

2 Under the pilot Dairy Forward Contracting
3 Program, we were able to provide price stability
4 for milk producers that they used to anchor bank
5 loans for land, make capital improvements to
6 their facilities, and enter into contracts with
7 key suppliers.

8 Dairy Forward Contracting proved its worth
9 when the Tillamook County Creamery Association
10 expanded production into the Boardman area.
11 Based upon our success with this program, I urge
12 you to include Dairy Forward Contracting in the
13 2007 Farm Bill.

14 Thank you very much.

15 DALTON HOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Under
16 Secretary. I'm Dalton Hobbs, Assistant Director
17 of Agriculture here in the state of Oregon. I'd
18 like to welcome you to Oregon and add our voice
19 to those here in this room.

20 In coming here, I think you are getting the
21 picture that Oregon is one of these states that
22 Secretary Johanns described as the two-thirds of
23 US agriculture that don't grow program crops, and
24 so here are things like Marion berry, blueberry,
25 et cetera. That's Oregon, and we're happy for

1 that.

2 Indeed, just about a bit over five percent of
3 Oregon's agricultural farm value is derived or
4 represented by program crops and almost all of
5 that is wheat. Oregon is a specialty crop state
6 second only to California in terms of diversity
7 of crop production. So not surprisingly, our
8 growers tend to think beyond traditional direct
9 payment programs and look to support mechanisms
10 that are more innovative and address the
11 considerable constraints that specialty and
12 program crop producers face alike.

13 And at the risk of oversimplifying what is
14 otherwise a very complex arena of public policy
15 development -- that is, the farm bill
16 development -- to me the principal constraints
17 facing Oregon agriculture are as follows: One,
18 the increasing cost of energy and fertilizer
19 inputs for producers; second, is increased
20 foreign competition in domestic markets coupled
21 with persistent lack of access to offshore
22 markets due to tariff and nontariff issues; the
23 third, consolidation of our nation's food
24 processing and retailing infrastructure; and a
25 significant opportunity as well as a constraint

1 is ensuring that we have access to tools or to
2 ensure sustainable agricultural practices.

3 In developing the next farm bill, we urge
4 USDA and Congress to address these constraints
5 with the expansion of some existing programs and
6 implementation of new programs with particular
7 emphasis towards specialty crop producers.
8 Again, the two-thirds of the people who are
9 nontraditional producers.

10 And I have written remarks here and I will
11 submit those for the Record; but specifically,
12 and I'll summarize here in my remaining time, we
13 certainly think that the farm bill should include
14 a reauthorization of Title IX in terms of
15 developing renewable energy resources. It's also
16 critical particularly for us here in Oregon so
17 dependent on export markets that the farm bill
18 fully fund market access programs and allow us to
19 continue some of the really impressive work that
20 we've done to develop offshore markets here in
21 Oregon for our specialty products.

22 A spectacular success for us here in Oregon
23 was the USDA specialty crop program a couple of
24 sessions back. This program allowed our growers
25 and processors to develop some really innovative

1 products as well as implement successful
2 marketing strategy to address some of the
3 concerns of consolidation of processing as well
4 as retail.

5 Others that will follow, we have a
6 producer -- we'll talk about the importance of
7 CRP and EQIP and CSP. Suffice it to say, these
8 programs are foundational to the success here in
9 Oregon.

10 And finally, let me add my support of the
11 Senior Nutrition Program. Oregon was an early
12 adopter of that. We have over 90% redemption of
13 this program and yet we can only fund about
14 50 percent of the folks who are eligible here.
15 This is a tremendous program, not only for Oregon
16 but with respect to Washington. I wish we could
17 share some money with you. But it's great for
18 the United States and great for our seniors.

19 Thank you.

20 BERKELEY DAVIS: Good afternoon. Thank you
21 Mr. Bost for coming and members of the panel.
22 I'm Speaker 3, and I don't have written
23 testimony.

24 My name is Berkeley Davis. I farm in eastern
25 Oregon. I raise wheat and grass seed. I'd like

1 to speak today on a few of the programs that are
2 very important to our area. By the way, I also
3 sit on the Saltwater Conservation Board, and I'd
4 like to speak on a few of the programs that are
5 very important for the county; those being CRP,
6 the other one being CREP or Conservation Reserve
7 Enhancement Program, and the CSP.

8 Agriculture in our area in the last five
9 years has made tremendous advances. We've had to
10 have adaptation of high energy cost. As you
11 know, fuel is just killing us, killing everybody
12 that drives. We directly have to deal with it
13 because we have to put fuel in our tractors, put
14 mounds of fertilizer on our ground, and those are
15 all energy-related. And it's become real
16 burdensome for us.

17 So these programs have tremendously helped.
18 The CRP has helped sideline ground that is
19 normally nonproductive, put in grass and
20 enhancement, and also has helped the zoning in
21 our area, kept the ground in farm-related instead
22 of being converted into some type of housing, big
23 housing projects.

24 The CREP has been very beneficial. We've
25 got -- in our county we've got hundred of miles

1 of stream bank restoration through the
2 enhancement program which has been very
3 beneficial to wildlife. The salmon restoration
4 is unbelievable. We just last week -- I believe we,
5 just two weekends ago, had open pheasant season.
6 It was the biggest pheasant hatch and best in 25
7 years in our area.

8 These programs are greatly enhancing and
9 doing a lot of good not only for us as farmers,
10 but presently, for natural resources, they have
11 done a tremendous job.

12 The other program is CSP, the Conservation
13 Security Program. We're counting through
14 Mr. Smith -- been working closely with him for
15 our county. It's been a tremendous boon. It
16 takes a holistic approach. It doesn't pay to
17 over-produce a product, and it is very beneficial
18 to the environment.

19 We are just in the second year of the CSP
20 program, and it is a great program. It puts the
21 money where it should be. Farmers are
22 benefitting. It's enhancing the wildlife. It's
23 cleaning up the stream banks. The farmers are
24 producing commodities in a different light and in
25 a different way than ever produced before. This

1 program is a great program and needs to be
2 funded.

3 And I would like to say thank you for coming
4 and listening to us, and I appreciate it. If you
5 ever get to eastern Oregon --

6 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: How many years have
7 you been with the family farm?

8 BERKELEY DAVIS: My family farm? I farmed
9 with my brother and my dad, and farmed since
10 1900. Been in it for generations. And we have
11 been since then.

12 WILL NEWMAN: I want to make a remark before
13 I introduce myself. The remarks I make today
14 have nothing to do -- it's not about the good and
15 bad guys. Everybody I've heard here, you
16 gentleman, the people here, we're all trying to
17 do good things given the opportunities and
18 constraints as we see them.

19 I'm No. 4. My name is Will Newman. I'm the
20 research and education director for Oregon
21 Sustainable Land Trust, a statewide charitable
22 entity that is focused on actually addressing the
23 four major problems in agriculture that we see
24 not being addressed by government and education,
25 which is keeping agricultural land both rural and

1 urban in agricultural use, making that land
2 available to future generations of growers, and
3 doing research and education into the sustainable
4 production and distribution of agricultural
5 benefit; that being food, fiber, building
6 materials, medicinal, nursery stuff.

7 My remarks -- basically, I want to focus on
8 trying to kind of step back a little and talk
9 about the context that you gentleman need to make
10 these decisions in. About 12,000 years ago
11 humankind began an experiment we call
12 "agriculture"; the purposeful intention of human
13 beings to influence what grows where, when.
14 There are cultures that are not based on
15 agriculture. There are no civilizations that
16 aren't based on agriculture. It was only
17 agriculture that gave us the free time, the
18 productivity, the bounty that allowed us to go on
19 and actually start recording history, to create
20 arts, to create science, to have a level of
21 productivity, to do the kind of things that we
22 call "civilization."

23 We don't know how to do it sustainably. If
24 we don't figure out how to do it sustainably, we
25 will lose agriculture. We know we're doing it

1 wrong. We know we're doing a lot of things
2 wrong. And again, this isn't about good and bad
3 guys. We're all just making the best choices
4 that we can.

5 But we know that the industrialization and
6 commodification of agriculture has provided us
7 not only with a food system that doesn't work,
8 with a country with the most overfed and
9 undernourished population in the world, with the
10 worst health and most expensive health care of
11 any advanced nation, is producing food that we
12 don't know whether or not it's food. When it
13 comes to nutrition, we don't actually know what
14 the nutritive value of the foods are. We have
15 charts that are all essentially 50 years old.

16 We don't do the education we need because we
17 don't do the research. We don't do the research
18 we need because we work in a context that has
19 turned agriculture into an industry, and it's
20 not. It's a natural system. And anybody who has
21 ever grown anything knows, we're not in charge.
22 And yet we act as if it's a machine process where
23 we control the input and we control the output.

24 We've had now over 50 years of intense
25 regulation from the federal government down.

1 We've had over 100 years of research and
2 education in the extension system, and I've been
3 involved in all of these, by the way, and think
4 there's some good things going on. We have, as
5 you heard today, hundreds of programs that
6 attempt to work at pieces of this problem. And I
7 don't criticize any of the programs. I think
8 they all address real situations, real problems
9 with real people, and they have some success.

10 As you've heard, people who are involved in
11 them each have their own way they think they
12 ought to be tweaked, and I'm certainly not in a
13 position to say whether or not they are good or
14 bad.

15 But I do urge you to take a step back when
16 considering any of the stuff about the farm bill
17 and say, "What are we going to do to develop a
18 sustainable agriculture?"

19 All of the research that I've been able to
20 find says we have between ten and 20 years to get
21 it right. And if we don't, it will be too late.
22 We're running out of farmland throughout the
23 world. We're running out of water throughout the
24 world. We're running out of farmers.

25 I give you my best of wishes for trying to

1 find successful solutions to these very difficult
2 problems.

3 Thank you.

4 DEREK JOHNSON: Under Secretary Bost, members
5 of the committee, thank you for allowing the
6 opportunity to provide input in development of
7 the 2007 Farm Bill. My name is Derek Johnson.
8 I'm with the Nature Conservancy's Oregon chapter.

9 The Nature Conservancy is an international
10 nonprofit conservation organization with chapters
11 and offices in every state and over 1 million
12 members. Our mission is to preserve the plants,
13 animals, and natural communities that represent
14 the diversity of life on earth by protecting the
15 lands and waters that they need to survive.

16 I'd like to comment on Question 4, which
17 specifically asks "How can farm policy best
18 achieve conservation and environmental goals?"
19 and I'd like to outline seven very broad ideas on
20 how to accomplish that.

21 Number one is to maintain habitat-friendly
22 agriculture and forestry and to increase funding
23 available for long-term easements. Generally,
24 revisions to the 2007 Farm Bill should eliminate
25 incentives that encourage conversion or

1 intensified production on ecologically sensitive
2 lands. Also, revisions should strengthen
3 existing conservation programs and create new
4 programs to encourage conversion back to native
5 habitat and discourage conversion to more
6 intensive uses, especially development.

7 Number two is to address invasive species'
8 threats associated with agriculture and forests.
9 Amend the Plant Protection Act to bolster federal
10 capabilities of preventing the introduction of
11 plants and pests that cause harm to both the
12 natural environment and the agricultural economy.

13 Number three, better targeting of farm bill
14 conservation programs. Grant the NRCS chief and
15 FSA administrator the ability to select sites or
16 species to target a portion of program funds
17 where USDA programs have the largest broad-scale
18 impact per dollar spent.

19 Number four, promote improved water quality
20 and water flows impacted by agriculture and
21 forest management. Specifically, target water
22 quality programs on a watershed basis to address
23 water quality and quantity concerns.

24 Number five is to increase incentives for
25 adaptive management of native species. Cost

1 share for management of land under USDA rental
2 agreements and easements to: one, mimic natural
3 disturbances; and number two, control invasive
4 species.

5 And number six, measure success and employ
6 measures to refine program implementation and
7 allocations. Require ecologically-based measures
8 tied to the purpose of the program --
9 conservation program, and use performance
10 measures to inform and modify program rules and
11 implementation.

12 And number seven, increase resources to
13 monitor compliance of existing conservation
14 requirements. Require NRCS to return back to the
15 historical spot-check rate regarding conservation
16 compliance and strengthen sod buster language to
17 discourage conversion of grassland to row crop
18 land using farm program subsidies and programs.

19 We look forward to working with NRCS and the
20 Administration in creating a strong 2007 Farm
21 Bill. Thank you for the opportunity.

22 UNDER SECRETARY BOST: Did everyone who
23 wanted to have the opportunity to speak, speak?

24 BOB VANDERZANDER: Good afternoon, sir. My
25 name is Bob VanderZander. I'm a farmer here in

1 the Hillsboro area, and I'd like talk to you on a
2 much more technical basis than many of the other
3 folks who visited with you about.

4 My wife was on a county FSA committee board,
5 and because of that, we got to know people in
6 other parts of the state. And Farm Service
7 Agency has a lot of expertise in making payments
8 to growers, and they have developed a very strong
9 system of local involvement of the agricultural
10 community and county boards, state boards, and so
11 forth; all that help monitor and make sure that
12 the payments are going to the right folks, those
13 who deserve them and have a real viable
14 agricultural program.

15 Over the last few years, there's been a
16 conversion away from direct payments to growers
17 towards conservation, and I applaud the USDA for
18 that type of activity. It makes a lot more sense
19 to foster the type of conservation that is
20 necessary in our agricultural community; those
21 being handled for the most part through NRCS, and
22 they have the technical expertise for that. Farm
23 Service Agency has the expertise in the system
24 for monitoring the payments and making sure they
25 go to the right people.

1 A couple of things that will happen: One, as
2 I said, we have not completed this process. I
3 know that I'm doing a forum in Atlanta and
4 Austin, Texas, next week. And there's one
5 scheduled in Columbia, South Carolina, I believe
6 around the 17th of November. And I think that's
7 my last one.

8 We will look at taking all of these comments
9 and roll them all up and put them on our website
10 so that you can have the opportunity to see what
11 we have said. And all of the comments from all
12 of the forums that are being conducted around the
13 country will be available on our website at some
14 time toward the end of this year. I think that
15 we will have had a forum in almost all 50 states,
16 I believe. If not, it's real close. That's the
17 first thing I'd like to mention to you.

18 The second thing is this is the beginning of
19 the process. We're talking about the 2007 Farm
20 Bill. We will take all the comments, and we'll
21 look at them, and we will look at making some
22 recommendations that we will package in terms of
23 where we want to continue to go to in the future.
24 And at some point in time, of course, as part of
25 that process, we will sit down and share those

1 with Congress. Congress, of course, they'll have
2 their own ideas about what they think too. At
3 some point in time, we will meet and look at
4 those in terms of what the future should hold for
5 our programs.

6 The one thing that I want to say to you that
7 I think is very important, and it speaks really
8 to the Administration's commitment specifically
9 about the nutrition programs in this country, is
10 the fact that sometimes an under secretary, our
11 budget for these programs has increased from
12 almost \$37 billion dollars to almost \$52 billion
13 and will probably go to \$57 or \$58 billion this
14 year. I think that really speaks to our
15 commitment about how important the nutrition
16 programs are in this country.

17 I don't -- and I think that I'm correct in
18 saying this -- I don't believe that in the
19 history of the nutrition programs have you seen
20 such a significant increase in that period of
21 time for these programs. And I would say that
22 that is significant, and I think that that
23 demonstrates our commitment to meeting the
24 nutritional needs of people in this country.

25 So when you talk about, "Well, you need to

1 fund them," we have demonstrated our commitment
2 in terms of going to Congress and asking for
3 money in terms of meeting the nutritional needs
4 of people in this country, more so than any other
5 administration has in modern times. That is
6 indeed significant in terms of our demonstrated
7 commitment. It's one thing to talk about it;
8 it's one thing to deliver, and I believe that we
9 have truly done that.

10 If you have additional comments that you are
11 interested in making, you have the opportunity to
12 send those to us in writing. Send them to the
13 regional office in San Francisco -- I know that
14 is available -- or send them directly to us and
15 we will look at, as I said, all of those comments
16 in making decisions about where we're going in
17 the future.

18 Again, thank you for having me. Always a
19 pleasure to come to the Great Northwest,
20 especially in the wonderful state of Oregon. I
21 love your hospitality, and it's always a pleasant
22 time for me. I do love to come back and try to
23 come and go to the forest and also go to the food
24 bank and see if I can get some fresh berries
25 while I'm there.

1 (Laughter.)

2 Since I hear that you do those better than
3 most places. Some of the people in Maine, they
4 say that too when I'm in Maine.

5 But it's always a pleasure to be here, and if
6 there are other things that you want to say to
7 me, I'll be here for the next few minutes.

8 Thank you for being here. Thank you very
9 much.

10 (The forum concluded at 3 p.m.)