

FEATURE – VILSACK TESTIFIES ON BIOFUELS

INTRO: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack testified before a Senate committee on the effect and influence of biofuels. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more.
(1:20)

TESTIFYING BEFORE THE SENATE'S ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE, AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK RESPONDED TO COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT ETHANOL'S EFFECT ON FOOD PRICES.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-New Jersey: Using corn for fuel instead of food drives up prices for people already struggling to put food on the table.

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary: I would say that there are many reasons why there are food shortages globally, but none of them have to do with American farmers and ranchers in a sense that we continue to be extraordinarily productive. Storms, droughts, floods in other parts of the world, export controls that were imposed by other countries, the currency issues, there are a multitude of reasons why we have the some of shortages that we see today in other parts of the globe.

VILSACK ALSO ADDRESSED THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFECT OF THE U-S REACHING ITS ETHANOL PRODUCTION GOALS.

Vilsack: And when we reach the hundred thirty six billion gallon threshold, a hundred thirty eight metric tons of C-O two equivalent will be reduced from the atmosphere, the equivalent of taking twenty seven million cars off the road.

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS THAT GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES FOR ETHANOL PRODUCTION SHOULD BE REDUCED, VILSACK SAID THE REDUCTION SHOULD BE GRADUAL.

Vilsack: I don't think that there is any question that you all will over time and should over time reduce those incentives over time, but I think if you create a cliff you're going to create a significant job loss in rural America.

IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.