

**Council for Native American  
Farming and Ranching, Meeting: August 14-15, 2012  
CD3 8-15 Track01 to Track07**

**Contains Public Comments**

[Start of CD3 8-15-12 Track01]

Joanna Stancil: We have a representative from United South and Eastern Tribes, Ms. I think it's Colombini?

Lindy Colombini: Hello. Thank you all for allowing me to come up here and speak to you today. It's really great to be here. My name is Lindy Colombini. I work for United South and Eastern Tribes. USET is what we call it, and we are a nonprofit consortium of 26 federally recognized Indian tribes in the Northeast and Southeast part of the U.S. We have tribes from Maine along the coast and a little bit into North Carolina and New York and then down into Texas.

We are made up of a board. We have a board of 52 tribal leaders, and then beneath them are 12 committees. We meet three times a year. And I mostly work with the Natural Resources Committee and Economic Development Committee in Culture and Heritage now. But USET, we have two main departments, the Office of Environmental Natural Resources -- Environmental and Resource Management. We just changed the name last week so it's a little new. And then Tribal Health Policy. They work with tribes to spread information on health issues. And the Environmental Office, we work with certification. We certify

water and wastewater operators, and we also work with emergency management. And then my position, I am part of the technical assistance network with IAC. We have an MOU signed with IAC, and my region that I work with, provide assistance to is the Eastern region, so basically USET member tribes. And I just wanted to let you all know that USET is a resource, and we're here to help. That's about it. Thank you.

Joanna Stancil: Does anyone have any -- I've the privilege of working with USET over the years. Does anyone have any questions or need clarifications while we have them in the room? Mary?

Mary Thompson: Just a comment that USET is another resource out there or a partner like all of the others to get that we can utilize to get information out to our members.

Lindy Colombini: Mm-hmm.

Mary Thompson: Thank you.

Joanna Stancil: Sarah?

Sarah Vogel: I think last night, you mentioned you also had a link with the IAC. Could you talk about that a little bit?

Lindy Colombini: Yes. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding, and we work together. I'm the technical assistant specialist for the Eastern region, so I work with all the tribes that are basically within the USET member tribe area.

And because I'm with USET and I work with USET, I'm set up more to work at the tribal government management level, and I work with not so much the producers but with the tribal programs, such as the environmental programs, the natural resource programs, agriculture. We don't have so many ranches in the East, so we do a lot more with Forestry, work with Forestry and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, are the two main USDA programs that I help outreach for.

Joanna Stancil: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. And she did provide us some information so we've got that. Thank you. Let's see. Thank you, Lindy. We have Vince Logan, Nations Group.

Vince Logan: Good morning. Vince Logan, I'm the president of The Nations Group in New York. How long do -- I got a few minutes to tell you about some of the things we're doing. I work with Janie on a few things. I just wanted to give you a brief rundown of what I'm doing and what I'm doing with my company. My company, I'm an investment adviser for tribes, and I work with tribes around the country on investment matters, long-term funds and investments. But what I'm also doing is I'm working with tribes on economic development as part of investments.

I'm on Oklahoma State University's Foundation Board of Governors, so as part of that, I'm working with tribes in

Oklahoma on economic development projects relating to the university, of course, the university, the Agricultural School and the Ag Econ School at OSU. And right now, we're working with five tribes mostly in Northern Oklahoma on building sustainable agricultural and ranching operations. It's very early on. We are just a little bit past the discussion stage. We're starting to do a little planning. But the thing that excites me the most is that there is such -- there's just a lot of momentum right now, particularly in Oklahoma and particularly with Oklahoma State University. We haven't boiled it down to concise plans and deliverables, but we're all very excited. Janie is very much part of this, and she's been following this. And what we would love to do is start building some business models for tribes who do not have internal capacity to build agricultural and farming operations.

Most of the tribes that we work with have some internal capacity but they haven't really got it down to -- there aren't, for example, Departments of Agriculture within the tribes. And also, most of the tribes do not have fundamental agricultural laws and policies in place. So we're kind of working with them on that, and Janie is a big advocate of that as well.

But right now, what we are doing is we're looking at some establishing farming and ranching operations with the five tribes that I'm working with now in the hopes that we'd turn

this into an economic force in that region, working with the university, and turn it nationwide. That is our hope. And I'm open to calls and contacts from any tribe. It's not really the primary piece of my business, but it really is when you're talking about investing tribe's resources in the long term. I certainly advocate that farming and ranching should be part of that. I mean it makes sense. But it always comes down to we've got to crunch the numbers. We've got to look at how much the investment, the return on the investment, time horizons, just like any other investment. As an investment professional, these are the things I would tell you anyway. This is what we're building, this kind of business model right now. So I'm grateful to be here. This is great.

**[CD3 Track 2]**

Joanna Stancil: Let's start with Janie.

Janie Hipp: This is Janie. I just wanted Vince, or to let you know that Vince was a part of -- and Kim Teehee is here. We want to put you on the spot in a minute. But when Kim held the first White House Rural Council Roundtable on Native Food and Agriculture at the White House, Vince was there to share his expertise on the investment piece because when you're talking about a slaughter facility or a big distribution infrastructure, then you're talking lots of zeroes, right, Vince?

Vince Logan: A lot of zeroes. My personal expertise, I was a lawyer in New York, my expertise is in financing. So we've got to discuss how to these projects are going to be financed and how the infrastructure is going to be built over time. Yes, we have to crunch the numbers. It has to be done in a business-appropriate manner. But right now, actually, I'm working with Ag Econ people at the university on -- it's not whether or not the tribes should enter into farming and ranching, but it's an economic question as to what particular activities would be beneficial to the tribe because not all of them would be because for the most part, the tribe can bring in from the outside the same products had they grown them themselves.

It's an interesting argument or interesting topic. The Macroeconomic Theory, and I won't get too far into this, but it is if you can import it cheaper than you can produce it, then it's better for the state. So we're looking at that right now. But I'm open to that. I don't completely adhere to that position because I do believe that a sovereign nation's -- each nation should determine its own path and look at its own, what it wants to do and how it wants to operate within the marketplace, if that makes sense. But that's where we stand right now. But I'm every excited. It's a great movement and

it's going all over. It's getting and we got a lot of momentum right now.

Joanna Stancil: All right. Sarah?

Angela Sandstol: Angela.

Joanna Stancil: Oh, I'm sorry. Angela.

Angela Sandstol: Hi, Angela Sandstol from Alaska. Do you do any work in Alaska?

Vince Logan: No, I do not.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. And then could you leave your contact information?

Vince Logan: Oh sure, absolutely, I will do that.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. Thank you. And do you want to do work in Alaska?

Vince Logan: I've never been.

Joanna Stancil: Thank you, Angela. Anybody else have any questions or comments?

Male Voice: I guess Vince, you work with an investment firm or is it --

Vince Logan: My own investment firm.

Male Voice: Your own firm?

Vince Logan: Yes.

Male Voice: Investment firm? So you got your [cross-talking] --

Vince Logan: -- New York.

Male Voice: Your Series 7 license, CFP. That's awesome.

Joanna Stancil: He knows all those terms.

Vince Logan: I just got the train down. That's why I was a little late. I took the six A.M. train and still a little late here.

Male Voice: I had my 6 in '63. I was just a registered representative for a while so it fits one of those questions. But I'm highly interested in your topics. But of course, it comes down to a monetary sort of situation in getting that information. So what you're developing would be accessible by other tribes across the United States as a template? Are you going to have an Internet access to that or would we call you personally or how would that work?

Vince Logan: Being a governor at the foundation, one of my tasks is to present the university with opportunities, and which is how I want to structure this, is being a university agricultural school-economics project. No, we don't really quite know how it's going to look and how people are going to access it, but we all understand it's technical assistance is what we're talking about, particularly in building business planning, business models.

But no, I don't quite know what that's going to be because every time we are approached by a tribe and we visit them on site, we do an assessment, we go through community meetings,

we're finding that every one is different. It's very subjective. So I don't know if there is going to be a template. And this is just what I'm personally doing with my business, and I don't know what else is out there. I mean Janie knows a lot more what's going on on the national scene. But what I'm thinking is that we have a resource center at the university level. Particularly at a university that -- they advise countries on the same issue so that's actually how we got to this point.

The president was telling me, "Well, we had China in here and India in here. Why aren't we dealing with tribes an hour away?" And I said, "Yes, let's do that." And so I'm personally getting this dialog going, but it's -- I'm not a farming and ranching expert by any stretch, but I'm a business person, and this is a business decision. I will say one thing. Janie often talks about it and it is so true, and this is something you can't build in a template. It is the tribe's responsibility and hopefully it will be built in into their internal capacity to have the -- what do you want to call it -- the business not only acumen but to keep this going, the strategies and internal capacities. Because the one thing that concerns me is when I went out there and started talking to tribes is that the tribe had something going, then the chief didn't get reelected, and so that was the end of that project.

I hear that all the time. And so I went to the university and to some of the political science people there, and I said, "This is a problem. How does momentum, how do we have this continuation of ideas and projects?" They said, "Do it on the individual level. Don't do it on the tribal level. That's the way you could do it." And so now, I'm thinking, well, maybe that's a better way to do it, just to support individual farming and ranching. But Danny and I, we don't agree to that completely either so it's open. But to answer your question, we haven't really built the template yet. I'm very interested in any ideas though. I'll leave you my contact number.

Joanna Stancil: Angela?

Angela Sandstol: Yes. Angela Sandstol from Alaska. Many of the tribes, well, the tribes in Alaska that I have dealt with have to put together a community plan in order to submit any kind of a grant. I don't know if that's true all the way around, but I know for all the tribes in Alaska, that's pretty much getting consistent. You have to have a community plan. Community plans are not for one, two, three, four years. So that's just an idea.

Vince Logan: We use the term "business discipline." And since what we're talking about is a "business" and we're there to make money, that takes discipline to stick to that business plan. I'm not saying that a social service for the tribe is not

as important because it certainly is. But if you're building a business model, it takes business discipline. And that's one of the things that I just hear over and over, is that we just are, we're missing that piece. Maybe some tribes have -- I know there are some great one-off projects out there. I do know that. I've seen it. I've seen other tribes, so we can all learn, or I'm trying to get as many ideas as I can. So if anyone has anything to offer, I certainly -- Janie and I talk about this at least once a week, things that we see, things that we heard.

**[CD3 Track 3]**

Joanna Stancil: All right. Gilbert?

Gilbert Harrison: Good morning. I'm Gilbert Harrison from Navajo. The tribes, they have a lot of tribal projects. But my interest, and where I come from, a lot of our Native Americans, Navajos, are from farm plots that are five, 10, 20 acres at most, and those are basically, they're not the big corporations. And what we are seeing is these people need help too, so don't forget us. I do a 1099, and I'm told every year, IRS expects you to make a profit every so often. I said I'd like to invite IRS to come down and show me how I can make a profit on five or 10 acres with everything being so expensive. So we have these ideas that the tribes are into big business. But don't forget majority of the land and the people there are working the small

farms. Somewhere, include us in your thoughts. How can we get some help for these people?

And I'm a Navajo. I know most of the people are the elders that keep the land, they keep it going. And we have an issue of they don't have the Internet. And most of them don't have the capacity to even own a tractor so we have to help each other. And a lot of them, they don't know anything about cash flow or economics. And to develop a business plan is beyond that capacity.

So somehow, I'm thinking here, I hear all these great programs, I hear all these going on, but I'm saying how do we get something to the small, small, small farmers? And if you look around, they are the keepers of the land. They are the keepers that keep things going. And I think I just want to comment, like, keep us mind. And those are the people that somewhere we have to provide some sort of assistance to. So I wanted to jump in and say that.

So this import/export to me is if I go to town and I sell my hay, that's exporting. That's far as I know about this export business. But really, that's what it is. The reservation land is where we export and import, and we import a lot of stuff. We export just what few we can. But that's the kind of issues we also face on the reservation. So I think that

needs somewhere to be addressed in what manner we can. I don't know what it is. That's a big issue. Thank you very much.

Vince Logan: I will say that the macroeconomists, it is their belief, the ones that I'm working with, that it's the individual tribal farmer and producer which makes the sustainability possible, that it's not the tribal venture, that the tribal venture is the wrong way to go. And I don't completely believe that, but there are people -- I could bring in experts and they would support your case. This is how you should do it. If you want to help farming and ranching operations in Indian country, do it through the individuals and not the tribal venture. I don't know. I mean I'm -- like I said, we talk about this philosophically, but there is a financial component because if the tribe is investing in their individuals, this is the same as it's a tribal investment, period, helping them with business plans, tax planning, these fundamental pieces. Or do they go the route of building, creating a business for their tribe, the tribally owned business? They are not mutually exclusive. They can all be done. It's just someone at the tribal level, at tribal leadership has to make that determination. And I can help them at least with respect to crunching the numbers.

Joanna Stancil: All right. Janie?

Janie Hipp: I think Vince's last comments, I was leaning over and whispering to Chris. Vince and people like him are in a space that USDA can't be in. I mean we can't decide for a tribe what its governance structure is going to be or what its ag strategy is going to be. We have tools that can run alongside and insert. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it's really -- and that's why we've developed weekly relationships and things like that and why it's important to have this web of folks who are really working at this from all angles because at the end of the day, USDA can't make decisions for a tribe or for an individual tribal member for that matter. And so someone has to be in the picture that understands Indian country to a very strong degree that it's helping to run those numbers and to make those strategies happen. It's just not a place that we have the statutory authority to be.

Joanna Stancil: Are there any comments? Thank you so much for being with us.

Vince Logan: Okay. Thank you. One last word, I do believe that it's the kids. In working with kids, a kid Native American youth however, in whatever way, that's where the sustainability is going to be solved.

Female Voice: And the women.

Vince Logan: And the women. And the young girls. And --

Joanna Stancil: On the record for that one, please. Thank you.

Vince Logan: Thank you very much.

Joanna Stancil: Thank you.

Janie Hipp: Thanks, Vince.

Female Voice: Thank you.

**[CD3 Track 4]**

Joanna Stancil: All right. Next, we have Kimberly Teehee with the Mapetsi Group. Did I get that right, Kim?

Janie Hipp: Actually, Joanna, this is Janie, I sort of wrote in Kim's name.

Joanna Stancil: Oh. You weren't even [cross-talking] --

Janie Hipp: No, come on out there. But I wanted the council to really understand that we heard from Jodi yesterday, and she was at the White House during the moments of Keepseagle settlement. But Kim was the adviser to the president during those critical days. Before she left the White House, she actually convened the first White House Rural Council Roundtable that started to kind of dig into these native food and agriculture issues. And so I just wanted to kind of put her on the spot and embarrass her a little bit. But I wanted to publicly thank her for her leadership at the White House during this important, important time that led us to this place. And she has a blue jacket also, just so you know, Kent. And when we

invited some of the young people after the FFA, all I had to do was pick up the phone and say, "Kim, we need to have these kids come and have a tour of the White House," and there they were the next day. And so it just is really important that she was there. We love having Jodi there too, but it's just -- so, say a few words.

Joanna Stancil: Surprise.

Kimberly Teehee: Thank you so much, and this is really an honor for me, to see this council convene this inaugural meeting, because I can tell you, having worked in the White House and having had the privilege of working for President Obama and knowing the economic challenges that this country is facing and the fact that he recognizes that rural America is the heart of America, the heart and soul of America in getting this country back on track. And so that's why he convened and created the White House Rural Council and chaired by Secretary Vilsack and without question, making sure that Indian country was included in their broader plans of the Rural Council was a part of that discussion.

But concurrent with that, just back to the economy, I had conversations with Indian country, with tribal leaders time and time again not just about business development because we did have a business roundtable in the White House as well to talk about barriers in Indian country generally and just had

organizations just talk about business, the business side. But in addition to that, as I engage in these conversations, I recall having a discussion with Chairman Nathan Small of Shoshone-Bannock, and he talked about the challenges of farming on their reservation, also regarding leasing and the fact that you have non-Indians leasing Indian lands who are making a huge profit, access to capital, the impediments relating to farming opportunities where the tribe can actually profit, just as I think Gilbert was talking about, where you can gain the profit yourself and not being able to do that.

But I also had a similar discussion with the Winnebago tribe. I think Lance Morgan is one of your fellow council members, who was not able to be here this week, who was talking about hindrances within the Bureau of Indian Affairs regarding the leasing, regarding the term limits and access to capital and partnering and how in Nebraska, where they had the richest soil, they can look across the street and see that a non-Indian is getting \$400 an acre and they're stuck with \$150 an acre for a three-year lease, but that's what they got to take. And then they are leasing to a non-Indian who is getting the profit and the tribe is not getting it back.

And so the Winnebago did an innovative -- I'm speaking for him and I shouldn't be because I don't know the program as well as he does. But as I understand it, the Winnebago now has a

program and has a law in place where they're reacquiring back that property as those leases expire because they want to engage in customized farming. But what that means for your purposes is how does the administration then forward-thinking-wise, remove the impediments that would allow tribes to engage in customized farming, to reacquire their property back, to be the farmers themselves where they get the profits.

And so I had these discussions because this is not my area. Yes, I'm a blue jacket holder. I can tell you -- I think Jerry mentioned something and it really moved me about kids who were sometimes overlooked. I was one of those kids. I was a chubby little quiet Indian girl in Oklahoma, Claremore, Oklahoma, who -- I didn't seek out. I wasn't a star athlete. I wasn't a star in the organizations. I was just quiet. But in my school system, you either wore a letterman's jacket or you wore the blue and gold corduroy jacket. And so I raised three bunnies, three little rabbits in order to earn my right to a blue and gold jacket, and I sold sausage. Do you remember that? Fundraising, absolutely. My Mom still buys FFA sausage. And I know that menu has expanded since. But it definitely unequivocally gave me the tools I think to fall in love with advocacy for people who otherwise don't have a voice.

But in talking about these issues with Janie, I realized there was a need in the food and agriculture space that was not

addressed. And in having my discussions with tribal leaders, that was the same conversation. Whether it's in Nebraska or in the Southwest or in the Great Plains, it was a similar discussion about barriers that are emerging. And so we talked about having some kind of convening at the White House at the highest level because we knew Keepseagle had just settled. We knew that this council needed to be created, and we thought that there was a way to tee up this conversation at the highest level and to help inform the administration of what these barriers are, what the unique opportunities are.

And as Janie indicated too, the administration cannot tell tribes what to do. That's not their role. But the administration can be informed and they can provide the technical assistance, the tools that tribal leaders need to make informed decisions to develop their own plans, their own path forward, to be thoughtful about the kinds of opportunities they engage in. And I think that's the value of these kinds of discussions.

And Janie has taken it a step further. I mean she's hosting these regional roundtables and poor thing is traveling, as all you know, all the time every week, and she is getting to know those very specific regional issues that are unique to the tribe, to the region. She is getting to know the agricultural aspect of it, the wild rice-ing aspect of it, the fruit side,

every element really, and that's going to inform your decisions as you all make the recommendations you need to make to Secretary Vilsack to better improve USDA's coordination with tribal leaders.

And so it's really a great honor for me to be here. I wasn't expecting to speak. But I can tell you from the get-go sort of the idea and what was behind the scenes in getting to the point where this council was seated for the first time and knowing that the conversation that took place and knowing that you have a committed and strong ally and advocate in Janie, who is remarkable in the secretary's office. I can tell you, I often say and I've told her before, is that Janie, when she says she is going to do something, she does it. And she always does it ahead of time, ahead of schedule, and that's just the nature of USDA, and it's also the nature of her recognizing too that sometimes, tribal leaders, the assistance they need is just technical assistance. It's just connecting the dots. And I can tell you I've been one of the people where I had to call her in the private sector and say, "Janie, how do we do this?" And it's just, it's an easy thing for her, but for a tribal leader, it's more meaningful than that because sometimes, a large part of not being able to help is just not knowing.

And then also the whole team, Joanna who joined and then John, it's just been really remarkable to see this come to

fruition. And so congratulations. You got your work cut out for you. And I for one look forward to the next steps as your recommendations and stuff evolve and develop. Thank you.

Female Voice: Thanks.

Joanna Stancil: We're going to put you on the spot for just another second. Does anyone have any questions of Kimberly before she leaves the podium? All right.

Kimberly Teehee: All right.

Joanna Stancil: Thank you so much.

Kimberly Teehee: Thank you.

Female Voice: Thank you.

Female Voice: Thank you.

**[CD3 Track 5]**

Joanna Stancil: All right. On my list of commenters, I have that we have two representatives that would like to make a comment from Intertribal Agriculture Council. Jeremy Brave from Heart Law Firm.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: It's Jeremy Brave-Heart.

Joanna Stancil: Brave-Heart? Okay, thank you.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Thank you. Good morning, everyone.

Participants: Good morning.

Male Voice: Good morning, Counsel.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: My name is Jeremy Brave-Heart. I am here on behalf of the Oglala Sioux tribe who I represent with

the law firm of Hobbs, Strauss, Dean & Walker here in D.C. I wanted to make just a few comments. First of all, thank you for the work that you're about to engage on. It's very important. Also, we've heard a lot today about starting businesses and starting farming and ranching operations in Indian country. But I would like to provide in brief kind of a real world example that's happening right now of how these things can fall apart once they're already established and have been in operation for a long time. As we know, much of the country is involved in a drought right now. All of Pine Ridge right now has been declared a D3 disaster area because of the drought. They are in extreme drought conditions.

A little bit of facts first. The Oglala Sioux tribe has about 1.2 million acres of trust grassland. They have about 39,000 acres of trust farmland, 350 tribal members operate livestock or farming operations with about 30,000 herd of privately owned livestock as well as private buffalo herds. The tribe itself also has a private herd or its own herd of 1,200 buffalo.

Now, they've got a Drought Relief Board. The tribe has done everything they possibly can. They've got their own Drought Relief Board that's tried to coordinate with federal officials both local and on the national level in D.C. to try to get relief for both the tribal members and the tribe itself.

They've been very successful in a lot of their farming and ranching operations that they've operated. But as I said before, the problem is when you're successful and then you've got a natural disaster like this, there is really nowhere to turn.

And I know the president and the administration has engaged in a lot -- the Rural Council especially very recently has been trying to corral federal resources from federal agencies. But the bottom line is that -- and I'm not being critical here; I'm just offering a recommendation -- the Oglala Sioux tribe should not have to call their attorney in D.C. to try to figure out where to turn. There should be some type -- this is a recommendation -- some type of a clearinghouse, some type of disaster relief clearinghouse. I've been on the phone with the tribal liaisons with almost -- with four or five different agencies, including FEMA, the USDA, the Department of Interior for the past week and a half, and it's been terrible because not only have they been hit with the drought which pertains specifically to your work, but at the same time, they've been getting hit with these straight line windstorms that have been causing millions in damages. And as I was sitting in the audience actually, they were just emailing me news reports of another windstorm that hit them yesterday and this morning, as well as an outbreak of hantavirus that they're dealing with.

Male Voice: Outbreak of what?

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Hantavirus. So similar to the one with the Navajo years ago. It's from mouse droppings that dry up in your home and you sweep them up. A young child was confirmed dead from hantavirus. So they are dealing with that and then the drought hit or has been ongoing rather. But I don't want to be Debbie Downer, bearer of only bad news, and I make these statements as things to think about as recommendations for the council moving forward that tribes, especially tribes on the lower end of the economic ladder in Indian country, are having a very, very hard time with the drought right now.

For example, when I saw the administration's recent Rural Council meeting on the drought relief specifically, I was clicking a few links and kind of looking around, and it really does take an attorney to figure out what programs, who can apply for what and when and how. And yes, they do have to call their FSA, their local FSA, the tribe itself, and start dealing at the local level, but it seems very convoluted. Just as a lawyer myself, it seems rather convoluted and hard, especially when they've got their members knocking down their door saying the federal government is saying they're going to put out \$170 million to help ranchers cull their herds. Well, what if the tribe doesn't to cull their herd?

Feed assistance is critical. It's very critical right now for tribes like the Oglala. They don't want to cull the herds. They need feed assistance. And truth be told, the federal government has stepped up and the people that I've talked to, and we've gotten a lot of assistance, and we're getting some. But there are great challenges, and we've heard a lot about how to start these business operations and keep them going, and that's very, very important.

But there also has to be the fallback position of what happens if they fall apart because of something that is completely out of the control of any business owner, rancher, or farmer, which is extreme drought? So with that being said, I think that I just wanted to make a few comments on that so the council is aware that these, as you all are already probably to be sure, that there are tribes out there going through extreme difficulties right now because of the drought. And I think it's very critical to address those kinds of issues.

I know that almost every agency has a tribal liaison or an Office of Tribal Relations, and these are all very important things. But I guess what could be proposed is something like click a link and here is where you can go if the grassland doesn't exist anymore this year because there is no rain and you need to feed because the grassland can't sustain your herds. So I'm open to take questions. Thank you very much for your time,

and again, thank you for your work, council, and I also look forward to your ongoing work.

Joanna Stancil: Does anyone have questions?

Gerald Lunak: I just have a comment.

Joanna Stancil: All right, Gerald.

Gerald Lunak: Gerald Lunak, Blackfeet. I guess I made a comment yesterday about the disaster program that was basically a tribal program. And I think this kind of touches on that issue, and I think it needs to be revisited. One of the things about the Disaster Feed Program that was basically the Indian Feed Disaster Program was Tribal Council-enacted. It was not county-enacted. And we've had examples at Blackfeet as well where the council was pressing the county to deem it a disaster, and they were struggling getting them to concur. And so I concur with your concerns, and we've had those. And again, I'd like to see that Indian Disaster Feed Program revisited and possibly re-funded.

[CD3 Track 6]

Jeremy Brave-Heart: To follow up on that, as well as the water issues, not just the feed but the water. The FSA has the water delivery program, but it's so funds-limited. And of course, getting more money anytime right now is, like, so difficult. But with the drought up there and their water projects being underfunded already, the Mni Wiconi Water

Delivery Project, the pipeline that brings water in from the aquifers, that is already encountering difficulties and funding difficulties, appropriations. And so they go to FSA and they need water -- it's not just the feed; it's the water too -- to be delivered. And the FSA would be just strained. I mean we're talking about a reservation almost four million acres, 35 percent of which is a grassland that's scorched. So they're having terrible difficulties. And thank you all for taking note.

Gerald Lunak: Just a followup. Gerald Lunak, Blackfeet. The one thing I know over the years, the ability to haul water. In fact, in days past, that wasn't policy and that was developed where you guys would pay to allow people to haul water, their livestock. Is that true, Juan, or --

Juan Garcia: Yes, Gerald. This is Juan Garcia with FSA. We're looking at a program. In fact, I just got something today from a state that wants to get into that program. That program is the Emergency Conservation Program. And as you mentioned, it is short on funding. We get appropriated by Congress ever other year or several years, and we just have to come up with funding. Whenever we do allocate, many states do not utilize their funding, so it comes back and we'll try to allocate funding for other disasters.

2011 was a major disaster also in a different type in parts of the country. South Dakota had a lot of rainfall back then, so we had a lot of flooding and all through other states, so it depleted our funding by quite a bit. We are trying right now to reallocate or reapportion funding from other programs to the Emergency Conservation Program so we can help with this drought situation, especially, and maybe installing pipelines for livestock water so they can go to another part of the pasture that hadn't been grazed because of lack of water. So we'll try to do our best with the funding that we have available.

Joanna Stancil: Jerry?

Jerry McPeak: Jeremy, Jerry McPeak from Oklahoma with the Creek Nation, and my wife is a full-blood Cherokee too. Are you aware that you could have insured your grass?

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Excuse me?

Jerry McPeak: Yes, that's what I thought. Thank you. That answered my question. I said are you aware that you could have insured your grass?

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Insured my?

Joanna Stancil: Grasslands.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Oh, the grass? Yes, no. No.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you.

Joanna Stancil: For point of clarification, what Jerry's [cross-talking] --

Jeremy Brave-Heart: That's outreach so --

Joanna Stancil: -- talking about is the insurance programs within USDA that there is a presumption that there is not enough information out in Indian country for people to take advantage of these programs.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Yes, absolutely. And that goes to the point that I was making where it shouldn't take an attorney in D.C. to try to navigate these things, to figure out what programs and what they need to be doing, what they failed to do in the past because of lack of information. And so it's very important. That's what I was saying, that there should be some kind of central clearinghouse, I guess you could say, for native farming and ranching resources. It would be very important, I think, and it would be very useful. There may not be Internet on 95 percent of the reservation at Oglala, for example, at Pine Ridge, but they've got Internet at the tribal government headquarters. And if they could just click that link at tribal government headquarters and have all the things they need right there, it would be very, very helpful so that they can speak to their tribal members when they're coming in from everywhere else.

Joanna Stancil: I think Janie has a comment, and then Mary.

Janie Hipp: Yes. I've been convening a weekly telephone call on the disaster for the last three weeks, three and a half weeks. And if you'll give me your e-mail, I'll be glad to let you know when it is. But the tribal headquarters have been alerted every week of that call. It's at least a one-hour call. We've been known to stay on for an hour and a half. And the lead for our disaster response from FSA and NRCS, all of our agencies, as well as BIA, Small Business Administration, and HUD are on that call. And it's very fluid, question and answer, latest updates, so we'll be glad to include you on it. But more importantly, the tribal headquarters has gotten weekly notices of that.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Oh yes, yes. And I believe they participated last Thursday as well.

Janie Hipp: Yes.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: They were one the call last Thursday.

Janie Hipp: Yes. Just continue to be engaged.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Yes, oh, absolutely, absolutely. And as I was saying before, once we have it on the outreach in D.C., we've gotten great -- there is no question that we've received help and that we have not been stonewalled. And it was just it's that second but we had to take that second step. And that's what I was referring to. But no question that we've received positive and supportive response from every agency and

everyone we'd talk to. And I actually have a status report for you too from them. So I have a final status report that is going to be submitted to DOI as well. So I'll include you on that e-mail.

Joanna Stancil: Mark? Oh, I'm sorry, it's Mary's turn and then -- wasn't it?

Mary Thompson: Jeremy, thank you for bringing that point to our attention [indiscernible]. As I sit here contemplating the goals and the mission of this council, I am still [indiscernible] a lot of information. But for bringing that up and reminding me that that's something that needs to be engaged, so the process, the procedure, and reviewing those policies and procedures, whether they're in-house or statutory, thank you.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

Mark Wadsworth: Jeremy, Mark Wadsworth, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. You said that your tribe actually has a cattle ranch that they operate, and then you have separate Indian producers that operate on the reservation themselves?

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Yes, yes. There are about 350 tribal members that have their own private herds.

Mark Wadsworth: And I guess this is an immediate problem, and I'm always looking for solutions rather than -- under this Emergency Conservation Program probably that wouldn't help in the immediate. There would be no way that you can put in a

five-mile pipeline to get through out there right now when they just basically have no water. But that's besides the point is what I'm getting at, is that there is probably maybe a possibility, you might want to contact your producers, that they may have signed up already for a CAT, which is offered under Catastrophic Disasters. If they did that, there is a possibility that they can get some reimbursement through that program, and that's operated outside of the Risk Management Agency, the program that Mr. McPeak was talking about. This is operated from the FSA. And there may be a possibility that even a tribe, if they have done an EQIP Program or something in the past or have done something that they may have applied for that, so you might have to contact the state or the local counties to see if those producers have applied for that and are unaware of it.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Yes, yes, sure, yes. Thank you for that recommendation. Yes, it's hard to sometimes coordinate with the private herd owners and when we represent the tribal government out in South Dakota. But thank you for that recommendation, and I'll definitely relay that information. But to drive that point home, it's like people may have signed up for it and didn't know about it. It's all about information. The best choices are made with the right information. No matter what political stripe you come from, you have to have the right

information. No matter what you're doing with your business, you have to have the right information. And through this experience, I've realized how little my client in particular has not had the right information and then just kind of got hit with it when it decided to stop raining. So again, thank you for your time, if there are no other comments.

Joanna Stancil: This is Joanna. I just had one question. At the state level, what is the state doing? Is there a way to work perhaps with -- since there's a declaration of a disaster, the drought, work with the National Guard for feed and water delivery since they do have the equipment?

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Right. Well, we are working a lot with the state. One other major issue right now is that we've got two other disasters piggybacked on the drought, so with the straight line windstorm that happened on July 21st, almost \$1 million in damage. We were working with FEMA. Because one of the issues is the threshold, FEMA thresholds for public assistance for government-owned buildings, in this particular situation, it's about \$1.1 million but it has to be tribally owned. And so on Pine Ridge, you've got houses -- I mean it's terribly difficult. And then to try to get tribal members to try to come in and fill out individual assistance applications through FEMA is just as difficult. So we've got that.

So we're working with the state on the windstorm disaster and then also coordinating with them on the drought disaster. And then this hantavirus, we're coordinating with the IHS on that disaster. So it's just a triple threat. The IHS, like I said, the agencies that we touched based with have been very helpful. South Dakota was slightly difficult at first -- I'm not going to -- but they've come around and they are working with us now. It just all hit at once, and I think South Dakota was just as blindsided as the tribe was. State-tribal relationships can always be improved on any issue. But when it comes to this disaster, it's -- I mean they're giving it news coverage at least. I mean they're getting good news coverage out of Rapid City and all of that, so it's a terrible situation there, dire situation that if it weren't already dire enough as it was, as it were, so --

Joanna Stancil: All right. Thank you for sharing with us. Anybody else have any comments or questions? Thank you.

Jeremy Brave-Heart: Thank you for your time.

Male Voice: Thank you.

**[CD3 Track 7]**

Joanna Stancil: We had on my list that Steve Bond from Intertribal Ag Council.

Male Voice: He was just standing outside the door.

Female Voice: I told him.

Joanna Stancil: All right. But John is going to make one more look for him, and then -- pardon?

Female Voice: Is that it?

Joanna Stancil: That would be it. And if we don't find Steve Bond, then we will go to lunch. And what I would like to offer is that we come back from lunch. Since we really control the rest of the day, our next presenter would be Janie, and then we would have a representative update on food and -- are you going to --

Female Voice: Brandon.

Joanna Stancil: Brandon. So we need to make a decision now on when we're going to hold the election. We could do it after Janie's just before we go into -- we would like to have a chair in place before you have your discussion on your strategy for documenting your recommendations. So we can do it right when we get back or right after Janie's.

Female Voice: Either way.

Joanna Stancil: Yes. All right. We'll just do Janie first and we'll get that part out, and then we will dedicate a slot of time for the election. And then we'll move on to the first up, the poor chair, their first official duty, and I'll work with them.

Male Voice: [Indiscernible] is John buying lunch?

Joanna Stancil: Apparently, we do have someone. We have Dan Cornelius?

Male Voice: [Indiscernible]

Joanna Stancil: Okay. And then we'll go to lunch.

Dan Cornelius: Hi. I'm Dan Cornelius. I know I've met probably most of you already, had an opportunity to talk with many of you. Zach, I worked with the Intertribal Agricultural's Technical Assistance Network. I'm the representative for the Great Lakes region, and Zach did an excellent job of really, I think, of summarizing a lot of the key issues facing tribes. But I did have a couple of specific points that people in my region had wanted me to pass on. I want to clarify though that these are not officially endorsed or are perspective of Intertribal Agricultural Council but it's -- everyone doesn't have the resources and time to be able to come and travel here, so I just wanted to just mention a couple of the quick points. This will only take a couple of minutes.

The first one is that for Farm Bill, there's a strong desire really with a lot of the people that I work with to have a more inclusive process, and I realize that a lot of that comes down to the political process and the current state of how things are operating politically. But if USDA can find ways to continue to have roundtables and other stuff, there's just a desire to have a more inclusive process.

For funding, the point was made that tribes don't have the years of experience that other agencies and organizations have had in providing governmental services, and that tribes have a more limited ability to generate revenue. For an example, with rural development, as the programs have moved more toward loans than grants, tribes are really looking to have that grant, those grants back because a lot of them already are saddled with a lot of debt and just don't have that revenue-generating capacity.

Another specific point is for easement programs. The point was brought up that a lot of the easement programs don't work for tribes. And one of the examples of why they don't is that in many instances, for different programs, if you're going to get the easement, then you need to open the land to the public. And to reiterate or to go back a second, for the easement programs, the point has been brought up that they don't work, and one of the reasons why is that oftentimes that you need to open the land to the public, and tribes don't have an ability to define who the public is. So to access a lot of them, you need to open up the land for anyone to come in.

Another thing with the funding is that there is a belief that there is a lot of money for planning but not for implementation. On a related point, for different programs, there is a desire to expand tribal eligibility where for different programs either you need to be a nonprofit or they're

administered through the states. Two specific examples would be the Community Food Project, which you need to be a nonprofit to apply, and then for the Specialty Crop Block Grant, they're administered through the states. And if there would be a way for tribes to participate directly, I think there is a strong interest for that.

So those are all points that people in my region, and this is mostly through the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council. There was a meeting of that group last week and I just mentioned I was coming, and they wanted me to pass those points along.

The one point that I will make, just from my own perspective, that I do want to point out that group of the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, it's an NRCS committee that reports directly to the State Conservationist, and there is a representative from each tribe on the committee. And from what I've seen, I try to make it to all the meetings, and it's a really great opportunity not just for NRCS but you've got USDA, a variety of USDA agencies that are coming in and been working to -- I think we're going to be getting the State Ag Department to come in. It's been a great opportunity for people to come together, and there are some really -- I think it's inspiring to see some of the ideas and the communication and collaboration that's come out of it. And I know that the WTCAC

group had gotten a grant this year to do outreach on what these Conservation Advisory Councils are and really across the whole country. So I think that there is a lot of promise and developments there. So that's all I have and I do open myself up for questions.

Joanna Stancil: I think it might help the council if you could put those into little bullets for the record because you had a lot of material in your few minutes.

Dan Cornelius: Yes. And I actually do have an -- I wasn't even -- I didn't necessarily want to get up to speak. I know Zach had done an excellent job yesterday, but I do have an e-mail and also have sent that to Joanna.

Joanna Stancil: And we'll get back out to you. All right. Anyone else have any questions? Thank you. Thank you for joining us. Well, we've arrived at that hour, at the end of the public comment period. I am very pleased to say I think we had excellent visitors, excellent public comment. We weren't expecting that many, and I think we achieved a nice public comment period for this council. So having finished that, when we come back from lunch, we're now on lunch break, and it's kind of the same process as yesterday, we are here in the building. We hope you will stay in the building and have lunch. If not, we'll have an area like we did yesterday for all of us to sit together, and then we'll come back. Janie will talk about

advice the agency is seeking and discussion and then update on Food, Farm, and the Jobs Bill. And then we will hold the election for chair and vice chair. So see you after lunch.

[End of transcript]