AC21 Chair’s note to members accompanying the working draft of the report 8/17/20

Good afternoon AC21 members –

I want to thank all of you for your continued commitment to AC21 and willingness to help draft a constructive report to the Secretary.  We received excellent feedback and suggested amendments on the initial draft, many of which are incorporated in this revised draft.  In reviewing the proposed language, we tried to be more specific and substantive with the recommendations but not drift from the middle ground.    I believe we have a better product today due to your input, so thank you.

Even with this progress, it’s clear we have significant work to do  that will require all of us to be mindful  that this report has boundaries – the charge from the Secretary – and while we identified many  concerns and issues  important to coexistence, they are beyond what can realistically be accomplished in this report.   It’s important we keep track of these items, for future consideration.  It’s also worth reiterating that each of us, as sole author, would write a different report, emphasizing different points and using different words, all in response to this charge.  It is also undoubtedly true that there will be something in the report for each member to dislike, apart from the editorial changes that each member might like to see.  As a Committee report, however, it requires all of us to compromise and accept the report will read and look different than our own, but I remain hopeful that we can produce a report that we are all proud of and can support.

In response to comments, we have reorganized the report, moving the Compensation Mechanisms section to the front to reflect its importance.  Further, within the recommendation section, options for your consideration have been added, noting edits to the original proposed approach and another alternative approaches for a compensation mechanism provided in comments on the first draft. After reviewing the comments on the original recommendation and proposed alternative language, I have added a “bridging” option for consideration.  This option is designed to encourage the development of joint coexistence plans by neighboring farmers by providing insurance and/or conservation incentives.  There is added emphasis is on the joint activities, which address the realities that true coexistence comes from good communication and planning with neighbors, as we have discussed and noted throughout our report.

I have also sent along a compilation of all the comments received on the earlier draft.  Both of these documents will be posted to the AC21 web page today.

Our agenda for the August 27 and 28th Plenary meeting is dedicated to finalizing discussion, recommendations and refinement of our report.    We have significant work to do that may require more time and effort than can realistically be completed in two days, but we will need to complete all substantive work during the meeting.  We will also have a full discussion on how to wrap up this significant effort following the meeting.  I look forward to the meeting and making further progress.

Thank you. Russell