UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON :
BIOTECHNOLOGY AND 21ST CENTURY :
AGRICULTURE :
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A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on December 15, 2015, commencing at 9:04 a.m. at the United States Access Board Conference Room, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20004-1111.

Russell C. Redding, Committee Chair
Michael G. Schechtman, Executive Secretary
APPEARANCES

Russell Redding, Chair
Michael Schechtman, Executive Secretary
Tom Vilsack, Guest Speaker

Committee Members:
Jerome Slocum
Mary-Howell Martens
David Johnson
Isaura Andaluz
Keith Kisling
Paul Anderson
Julia Doherty
Michael Funk
Jill Schroeder
Alan Kemper
Lynn Clarkson
Josephine (Josette) Lewis
Gregory Jaffe
Leon Corzine
Melissa Hughes
Latresia Wilson
Barry Bushue
Kelly Rogers
Angela Olsen
Ron Carleton
Laura Batcha
Douglas Goehring
MR. REDDING: Good morning. Welcome back. Thank you for coming back. And to the folks who joined the group dinner last night, I'm sure it was another social and culinary delight, if I know SCHECHTMAN's past performance. Right? No -- yes, can't hear?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You're getting better.

MR. REDDING: I'm getting better. I'll be well-trained by the time this meeting is over. Realize, these microphones, you know, there's a secret to turning them on and off. The other secret is you've got to hold it close, right? Yeah, it is.

So, yeah, thank you all again for being here. Look forward to another productive day. As I reflected on, on Day One, I was very encouraged knowing that the work that this committee has done set in motion a set of actions that not only changed the USDA's programs, such as the risk management and the greater protection of germplasm, but also made some systemic changes on how the USDA approaches data collection and market information as two examples. I'm not sure that that would have happened without our recommendations and work of the last couple of years.

These changes help move us from the aspiration of coexistence closer to the practical. And as with many things, there will always be tension between the
aspirational and the practical. We are, we are no strange
to that on our own farms, certainly in our government, and
in our communities, we know that there is always sort of
tension between sort of what we aspire to be and where we
find ourselves in a moment, given all of the incredible
issues and such that we deal with. But I fully believe that
the work of the committee has moved us closer to the
practical.

Now, part of the practical is getting from the
farm level, getting farm level conversations and planning to
occur that protects the integrity of crops while respecting
the choice of farmers to employ the production practices
that they want to employ as part of their business model,
but also encouraging diversity.

As was noted both in, in our report of
discussions, there remains a need for a coordinated
education program on coexistence with coequal goals of
teaching and, and learning, as Jerry noted yesterday. Our
main charge combines these coequal goals to the development
of a joint coexistence plan between neighboring farms led by
local and, and state, at the local and state level, but also
supported by the federal level. The USDA is taking that
lead.

So we began yesterday to explore other models that
could be borrowed and serve as a guide for this effort.
While the topic is new, the topic being coexistence, there are certainly existing models that can serve as a guide, but also venues that we believe can also help us in furtherance of this, such as our Pesticide Continuing Education Programs as well as the Pollinator, the State Pollinator Plan development as well, as both NAS appointed, as well as Ron mentioned yesterday as a potential.

So that's where we'll pick up the conversation today, really looking at our charge, making sure we're clear on the charge, looking at the models that are, are available to us, what can be borrowed to make sure that, you know, we can still meet the goal without, as noted, recreate the wheel. But it will take, it will take the concerted effort. I think the difference here is it's got to be intentional. It can't be just assumed that somehow somebody else is going to do it. I think our charge from the Secretary now is to say local and state efforts, what can you do in furtherance of that? We'll support you. But what, what incentives should be considered, what the USDA can do to support local and state action in that regard.

So, and just a reminder, I would ask you please, if you haven't already looked at your schedule for the next couple of months, if you could mark your calendar, please, and make sure that we've got that so we can have a discussion. Dianne is collecting those, and make sure you
give that to her. Because we certainly want to make sure that, before we leave today, that we've got a read on at least some windows of time for the next couple of months that we're going to work, as difficult as that has proven to be, in practice, our practice of trying to find a time that works for all of us. But we've got to sort of come to some agreement on general time frames here before we leave today. So, so let me stop there. And maybe others have their own sort of reflection or thoughts that they have pondered overnight that would help us here in our charge, some framing for the day that you would like to, to share. I'm certainly open to that and any feedback of, both in terms of reflection of the day but also reflection on the charge that we have before us. Anybody? Yeah, Angela, please.

MS. OLSEN: Angela Olsen. I was reflecting last night on the good conversation that we had at the, at the table yesterday, and just putting this out there as a form of brainstorming. One of the things that I really liked about our last report is that it started off with some guiding principles. And Mr. Chairman, you walked us through that. And I think that was very helpful. We heard some really good input. Mary-Howell was taking about neutral, based in fact, and there were, there were other good thoughts around the table as well. So I wonder with this
charge if we might, if we're looking at this with fresh
eyes, is, is there a new set of guiding principles that as a
group we may want to come up with that will help guide not
only our work here, but also whatever our report is or our
recommendations. We want to be inclusive of all farming
methods. I mean, there's a lot of good thought that can be
put into what are those guiding principles, and then tying
any recommendations we have back to those guiding
principles.

I think there's a lot of value at looking at the
other models that were discussed yesterday. I'm really
interested in hearing more on the efforts that Doug is doing
with I think it was the Pipeline project and the MP3 model,
some of the things that you've got outlined, Mr. Chairman.
I think that would be very helpful for us to hear, hear
about as well.

Also, to understand what are the options at the
local level. We heard about extension services. We heard
there are some pros and cons. That might not be the answer
in every location. Is it the state department, departments
of agriculture, is it, what are, what are even the options
at the local level? And maybe, maybe there are different
solutions in the different jurisdictions. I don't know the
answer to that, but really so we can all understand what are
those options.
And I think one of the things that was made very clear is that any solution or any recommendations really do need to be driven at that local level. We're hearing about differences in topography, differences in, you know, it's not going to be a one-size-fits-all. So is there perhaps a framework that we come up with. You know, and again, Doug was describing some of that yesterday, and that's what made me think, maybe it's a framework that we're thinking about that could be very useful for these, you know, for these local solutions.

So again, it's sort of just some brainstorming that I was doing overnight and don't know what others think as well but, but defer to my colleagues in what they may think also.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Other thoughts to start today? Josette?

MS. LEWIS: All right, the green light. One of the things that I have been grappling with is that we're and advisory committee to USDA and the Secretary of Agriculture. And so what is the leverage that we as a committee have to try to promote action by other entities that aren't just USDA. And so clearly developing some tools, best practices or models that, that other state governments or local organizations, public and private, could utilize is one component of our leverage. But the other that I think about
is can we bring visibility to a particular range of organizations and motive them by giving them some spotlight, giving them some opportunities, some visibility perhaps on a larger stage.

And so from that perspective, thinking about what, who are some of the types of organizations and maybe even some specific organizations that we could perhaps try to motivate to, to get engaged on this issue perhaps more than they are, either because they have an inherent stake in this, and they're motivated, and we are going to give them some attention to that. Or because we think they should be more, paying more attention. And I, again, I really think about that broadly. It could be both public and private organizations that we could be trying to incentivize by some visibility and attention.

The one group that certainly came to mind through our discussions yesterday was this National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. They seemed like the kind of organization that takes on this type, set of issues. We've heard that with respect to the MP3 plans, for example. Within that, I also think about the readout we got from the report from Catherine Greene I believe it is on the, where there have been economic impacts to organic producers. You know, the State of Illinois for example came up as one that has had more problems than other states. You know, maybe
that's a target opportunity because that could have, it could have a significant stake in this issue and perhaps at that, whether it's just received Department of Agriculture or other constituencies within the State of Illinois.

So that's the sort of, some of the way I think about this as, you know, really the toolkit is important. We could put out a great toolkit and no one can use it because we're talking to you guys at USDA. And so, to me that bringing spotlight, thinking politically about who are some targets of opportunity, public and private, that we can motivate by some visibility and cultivation through this process seems to me like a, a way we could be more effective.

MR. MCKALIP: If I could just say a couple of words on that. You know, here in D.C., a lot of legislation is written in a particular way so it gets referred to the right committee. And I would say the charge that we handed around yesterday clearly has that phrase, and help advise USDA as how to facilitate this, to make sure that it is squarely within AC21's charge. But in my view, there is no other body like yours that advises on biotechnology and the future of AG that contains folks with the background that you have. So I would say all of the above in terms of the types of concepts that you're thinking about. We're lucky that we have a lot of organizations that come to USDA and
say how can we help. I think what we're looking for is the means to tell them here's what, here's what we do need, or channeling that energy and the right types of follow-up actions to the right folks. It may not be a USDA action. It may be something that was a partnership. I hope that it is a partnership because, absolutely I think we're not just limited to, you know, things that come back to USDA but more leadership and direction on how to facilitate the local and county-based, state-based action on coexistence and on, on the future.

MR. REDDING: Good thoughts. All right. I mean, so there's sort of two tasks as I think about it. One is the, what is it that we want to do, all right, is a big piece of this. And be clear that whatever we design it be sort of outcome based. You want changed behavior at the farm level, community level. And then the second part is who or how you do you do that. All right? And that's both by individual and I think by organization. So thanks for framing that up.

Angela. Sorry, Laura. Laura and then Mary-Howell.

MS. BATCHA: Laura Batcha. As I've been reflecting on yesterday I think, I've got some notes and some ideas about this, the what question and the, and the who and the how. But I'll save that because I think we're
going to have a lot of time to sort of progress through this today. You know, I think first I want to share my reflections on the charge itself.

You know, I do, you know, just to be clear, I do see real value in the charge. I like the idea that we're focusing on state and local where there may be pockets of activity. But that can, can make a real difference and raise awareness and that ultimately progress on this issue is going to depend on the practitioners in the field embracing the idea of co-responsibility. And so I really do appreciate that focus on the charge a lot.

I will say that I have some disappointment that in our last charge, one of the places where we really in my mind hit the wall was around this question of are there truly economic losses happening. And we identified in our report that we needed to be able to answer that question to move forward. And went out and NASS went out and asked questions and answered the question. And we documented losses, and we can, you know, have a lot of conversation about the quality of the NAS data or whether or not it's sliced and diced the way we need to, what's the next set of data. But for me, there is, I am challenged and disappointed that there is not a thread from what was the major open question from years of deliberation as a committee last time.
So, I am struggling with that a little bit and, and where is the threat to bring that into these discussions. I do appreciate, Josette, you identifying that we might be able to use that data as a targeting mechanism. And I hadn't gotten there in my mind yet. So I really do thank you for, for thinking, for thinking that way overnight. But I, you know, I just will share with the committee that, that for me that's sort of a disconnect that creates a lack of continuity in the development of our work that to me is notable.

MR. REDDING: If I could just sort of pursue that a little bit, I mean, just so we're, I'm understanding. So that the, the, from your perspective, the recognition of the loss, that that was the, you know, created a lot of anxiety in discussions leading up to our recommendations. Right? So we had a report out yesterday that at least begins to inform that. And then I think it can be more robust. And I think there were some observations about why it isn't as such. But at least it takes the step in that direction of quantifying for the first time that there is, in fact, sort of loss occurring. Real loss, right? Economic loss.

Right?

MS. BATCHA: It's not sort of loss. I think that, I think the data suggests that there is loss.
MR. REDDING: Okay. So, are you saying that that's not, that's, you want more detail around that? I guess I'm trying to sort of point to it to say what's missing in that presentation, the thread piece that you mentioned? What does that mean? Yeah, would you please just --

MS. BATCHA: Sure. Yeah. I think for me it's that, sort of that was the open question that we couldn't get beyond. And so, the question essentially was answered. And so, but also just sort of put out there, and there it is as a piece of information on a plate sitting out there with no continuity to action plans going forward. And I think not the acknowledgement that that is some of the information we were looking for that we couldn't get to in our last deliberation. So I think, and I'd like to continue to explore the ways to create those threads, like Josette has suggested. Because I do think that we're starting from a place that we didn't start from last time, which is that, that data has identified there are, are losses, so.

MR. REDDING: So, thank you. Mary-Howell.

MS. MARTENS: First, first I'm going to add a little bit to what Laura said. The reason why the answer is ambiguous is that most of us organic farmers who do grow vulnerable crops choose to plant differently. Where our, where our neighbor is going to have GMO corn, we don't plant
corn next to it. That would just be stupid. We plant dry beans or soy beans or heritage wheats and actually make more money at those crops than corn.

So the fact that the losses are not apparent in the data may not necessarily be that we're not getting the data. It may be that organic farmers are smarter than that, and we are trying very hard to avoid losses by growing different crops. And it isn't necessarily at a disadvantage to us. Now those, those are some real, true realities for organic grain farms.

But as a farmer, thinking about this last night, I don't, I don't like talking about things endlessly. I feel like we can, we can accomplish a great deal if we just put our minds together and start doing it. From what it looks like, there are eight crops that we are initially talking about that have counterparts in GM. Eight crops, some of which are self-pollinated, some of which are cross-pollinated. Those take different considerations.

What would be really helpful is if we could start drafting a guidance document. And it would be fairly straight forward because as Leon said, a lot of this information is known. A lot of this information is out there for seed producers and for other producers who are trying to do IP. But it may not be all in one location, and it may not be framed in a way that is simple to both, for
farmers both to understand and also for cooperative extension or someone else to teach from.

It looks like we have three characteristics that we need to discuss, or at least uncover. One would be the effect of pollen drift. And, and that, we need some information about what is an effect of distance on buffer, what geographical characteristics of a buffer would be important for filtering, what about the geographical lay of land, uphill, upwind versus downhill, downwind. And other things that have to do with the effectiveness of a buffer.

The second would be the effect of AP in seed. And so that would be another category. What percent AP in seed if you start with. Now, organic corn tends, the threshold for organic corn, non-GMO point is .25 percent. If you start with .25 percent and, and do not have any further contamination, what are you likely to end up at? And will it be within the realm of what is acceptable for feed grade, acceptable for food grade, and acceptable for some of Lynn's more, more sensitive markets. What is an acceptable buffer and percent AP in seed for the amylase gene versus the Roundup Ready gene? Those are two, would be two different categories.

And then finally, the third category would be the cleanout of machinery, both planting machinery and harvest machinery. And I know this information exists. I've seen
it from Iowa State. I've seen it from Purdue. Researchers have done work on how to clean out a combine so that it is sufficiently cleaned out and not harboring bits of seed here and there. That information is out there. It's not hard to find. But it's probably not all together in one location.

So if we could put together something very practical and neutral that covers these three categories, and breaks down the risk for self-pollinated versus cross-pollinated crops, we would have a document that could be talked from that could be distributed and could be useful for furthering the discussion on how to coexist in a, in a, you know, non-judgmental way.


MR. KEMPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, I think we need to keep going forward with our vision, not go backwards. We talked a lot about compensation, various means of compensation for any type of unintended consequences of any crops from anywhere. With all due respect to USDA, ERS, Dr. Greene's study, which I appreciate it, was no more than back of a napkin type of approach to a problem. I mean, it identifies $6 million of valued loss of 92 farmers, and you don't know the crop, and you don't know who contaminated it. It could have been their own
contamination from their other crops tells me baseline we have nothing.

So I can't put much value in that. And simply, that we need to go forward. And as Dr. Greene said, it takes several years to do that. And maybe AC21 will be around for several years. I hope not. Hopefully it sunsets in a couple years. But I think we need to go forward, Mr. Chairman, and find the tools, find the procedure, find the protocol to move us forward into dealing with what the charge was, was how do we get farmers or how do we encourage farmers to create coexistent plans within their local communities.

That doesn't need to address us right -- with all due respect to Mary, and I appreciate your comments, right in the nature that university staff do on a daily basis. It might compile it. It might show a tool how we can compile or how the farmers in that respective local area can compile it. It might be, we might put the tools together on who can deliver the message or who can be the neutral side, whether that's the intention. Whether that could be a local FFA chapter or district FFA guys or part of your others. But let's not go back and address the same old stuff you guys dealt with in 2012 at a level on compensation. That's not part of the new charge. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. REDDING: Thanks, Alan. Isaura.
MS. ANDALUZ: I kind of want to talk about a little bit what you're talking about, Alan, is that, you know, like on the organic surveys when they're asked for losses, I've had departments call me up. And, and there'd be losses in seed, in seed production. And they have a lot of contamination. And what's happened to the organic, the organic producers who work with the organic association, they don't, they don't sell that seed. They have to destroy all that seed. And people are experiencing increasing losses every season. And some farmers have quit actually growing like corn seed and other things because they can't keep it clean.

And the other thing is, I mean they, they, when they test it, it's not, they know that that's not their own contamination because they do zero detect. And so, and so, so in, unless it's like that there is so much contamination that we start growing and the aggregated amount increases every year. But if there's, if it's contaminated, they destroy it. They don't sell it. They don't eat it. It's destroyed.

And the thing is, you know, if we're looking to have coexistence, we need clean seed. We need seed that is at zero detect level, period. And that's, and so that's, you know, we're asking for, as I said it before, our foundation seed needs to be clean before we move forward.
MR. REDDING: Okay, thank you. Doug.

MR. GOEHRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking back, and looking at our charge now, I'm not sure if moving forward at this point and trying to change how we're going to approach this is going to help us much. I think we have a, certainly a challenging task before us, but I think it's, I don't know, I think it's doable based on work we've done in the past. Some of the challenges I see with addressing the issue that we dealt with before was we really did ask some questions about what damage, what harm has been done. Just wanting documentation, verifiable, not anecdotal.

And I know that, just as you stated, Laura, it was suggested that there's harm, there's losses. And absolutely, on our farms we see that every day. We talk about those things. But we generally have to pick something up and take it to those lawmakers to show them, here, I have a loss. We experience it all the time with discounts on commodities because we can show where they've, they've discounted, where they've said that this is an issue and the marketplace isn't going to pay for it, isn't going to compensate you. They've actually taken discount. So it's something that we can take and then address too. This management agency, for example. And yet, you always have that no-man's land that, that area that you're just not going to get anything for it.
But with all that being said, you know, and just addressing the comments from earlier, and part of what Mary talked about, you know, creating an outline or a model as, as Angela has stated I think is doable. I don't know if we can be as restrictive about just doing certain areas. I think we can make it all-encompassing over all crops. If we talk about this, doing it in just a few areas, I think our challenge is to get ag producers to the table, to get the farmers there to be engaged and to listen.

If we talk about this in a broader sense, I think we have the ability of saying let's talk about those challenges as producers we experience every day. We might get more buy-in. We might get more people engaged and involved in this. And I was thinking about it, and I did jot some things down yesterday, and I jot them again, jotted them down again this morning. But if you were to look for a neutral, third party, and I think that's probably one of the bigger challenges we have. And I don't want to say it's impossible.

But you do have to stay away from certain entities, certain groups because if they're perceived as being biased, they're not going to carry any weight. You're not going to have any participation.

So whether that would be the departments of agriculture in some instances, maybe its extension in other
instances, it's about getting the, the stakeholders there to
talk about best management practices for all types of crops,
and let's deal with it at a state and local level, because I
think that's key. It seems like everybody is saying that,
and I believe it's, it's absolutely right because they
understand the culture, and they can address those things
for considerations such as soil type, topography, climate,
types of crops, what are your own pests, what are your own
pathogens in the area? What are the weed species? Learn
the practices that are taking place. Is there tillage?
Isn't there tillage? What are the types of systems that
exist out there? You have conventional systems, you have
identity preserve systems, you have seed, seed producers,
you have organic producers.

This is all about mitigation. Because to the
point, and maybe I was a bit subtle when I was suggesting
and talking about it, I have all these in my state. And one
of the challenges I have with those producers that do
extensive tillage is soil that is moving from their property
to somebody else's. Whether it's nematodes, other soil-
borne pathogens, maybe it's through wind erosion, maybe it's
through water erosion. And I have some conventional farmers
that have called and said can you talk to the organic farmer
because I'm ending up with some issues over here. Maybe
there is water that's moving soil down into a flood plain
and someone else is having to deal with it. How they deal with it, they just understand those are the inherent risks that exist in agriculture.

But they say is there some way to mitigate that? Is there something that can be done? Is there a buffer strip that could be put up? Is there a situation where, and I dealt with this one where we had late blight in an existing potato crop that affected several thousand acres of seed potatoes. And because they were organic, there was a different method and approach to dealing with them. And yet, the conventional seed producer was challenged with trying to manage this pathogen on a daily basis.

So this goes both ways. But it really is about understanding the climate, the culture, the practices in the area, getting producers engaged with each other. Because, quite frankly, they may need, they may not always be aware of what the other one is doing. And I know, Mary, that you've had some challenges. And understandably, we just have some people out there that are just difficult to work with. I've got a few of those too.

But this would at least probably get more producers engaged in the process and understanding what mitigation can do. And a lot of it is education, is outreach. But I certainly think there is a model and a format that we can design, and then figure out who should
deliver that into the agricultural community and get more
and more people informed and maybe taking a different
approach to how they're doing some things. But again, it's
probably going to be voluntary. I would say with 99 percent
certainty it will be voluntary. So how do we entice them?
Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Thanks, Doug. Greg.

MR. JAFFE: Thank you. Greg Jaffe. Reflecting on
the charge from yesterday, as well as the discussion and the
update from USDA, I guess what strikes me about all this is
I guess I'm maybe a little bit annoyed at ourselves, the
AC21, for the way we wrote our report or maybe a little bit
disappointed with the way that USDA interpreted this
recommendation, but, you know, it talks about the idea that
we said that the USDA should provide incentives for
neighboring farms to develop joint coexistence plans. And
USDA seemed to have read that very narrowly, like we don't
have the authority to do incentives, so we can't do anything
in this area. And I think our, I think what we really
wanted to say, we want to encourage people to do this.

And so then the second, what's now part of our new
charge is to encourage this to happen at the state and local
level. And I'm not sure why the federal isn't also included
there. In other words, for the sentence that says is there
an approach for which farmers should be encouraged to work
with their neighbors to develop joint coexistence plans at the state and local level, why doesn't that say at the federal, state, and local level? I'm concerned that USDA has sort of, sort of stepped back and said since we don't, can't provide incentives, we can't do anything in this area, or we need to, you know, we'll leave it to the state and local level.

And I guess my perspective is that USDA should be encouraging farmers to, to develop joint coexistence plans. I think that should be, that should be sort of meant from our last thing. And I think what's important, because USDA sets the tone for this issue. If it's not a priority at, with the Secretary and USDA to tell farmers that it's a priority, it's, it, you know, that's how it helps the states and locals do that.

So I guess I just, I guess I'm a little disappointed with the narrow view that this was only, if there wasn't incentives, the USDA didn't, really couldn't do very much here. I'd like to, because I'm not sure we're going to find better incentives at the state or local level if we're talking about financial things or legal things that they can do. And I'm not sure this committee is really set up where we can get enough information about what are the legal authorities that states or local levels to figure out incentives.
So I think in the end what we're doing is how do we encourage people to do this? How do we give them the education? How do we take something that is going to probably volunteer, but, but make it in everybody's best interest. And I think the first way to do that is for the federal government and USDA to take leadership and sort of be at the head of that. And so, again, I'm annoyed with ourselves because we wrote the word incentives there. Maybe we should have said encourage including the use of incentives. But I hope the USDA is not going to, and I, you know, I still think that that should be part of our work that we're done here, not just focusing on what can be done at the state and local level to encourage farmers to do this, but what can be done at the federal level to encourage them to do it, less the incentives.

MR. MCKALIP: Just a couple quick thoughts on that. And again, I can't state enough how important it is for NRCS to open up the conservation program portfolio to be available for coexistence practices. Again, there have to be water quality, wildlife habitat, as well as air quality component to that. But we're talking about a, you know, it's a package of incentives that has at least a billion dollars per year. Often costs shared 75 percent in the case of a new or beginning farmer, a limited resource farmer, 90
percent of the cost of that practice can be paid for using those dollars.

So, you know, we may not have the, the, everything perfect in terms of the width of the buffers or exactly what the practices look like. I think that's going to be an ongoing development thing that there certainly are a tremendous amount of federal resources that could be brought to bear. And I feel like for where we were maybe 12 months ago, where we are now, we are in a much stronger position to help utilize those programs to help.

As we continue to gather data on where losses have occurred, and it was an important first step to do it in this last NASS survey. As I think Cathy talked about yesterday, this is an ongoing process. We're going to expand that and make sure we gather even more data. It's difficult for us as we look at that 0.65 percent of producers having the loss to establish a federal program for it. But I think what we're looking to do is to, again, localized, see where those are happening, what types of crops, what areas are mostly likely to experience the losses.

And that's why we're I think really interested in the state and local, county, state approach to, you know, figuring out what the best ways to get those coexistence plans into place and get farmer-to-farmer, you know,
speaking to each other to, you know, figure a lot of these pieces out because, and maybe you all have been around this a lot longer than I have. The idea of like a federal program targeted at this effort is really difficult to see based upon the data that we're looking at so far.

MR. JAFFE: Can I just follow up for a second? So I think the NRCS program, that's great. And I was one of the big proponents at the time for having that as a two-for-one kind of thing. So I'm very, very glad that USDA has figured out a way to do that. And I hope that it is beneficial in the long run. And I'm not suggesting there should be a whole federal program on this, but I do think the tone for what states and locals do, because as Doug said, they've got lots of issues and lots of problems with farmers that this isn't going to reach a top priority unless the Secretary and USDA says this is the top priority.

So I'm not necessarily suggesting that this be a, that a separate program be established at USDA just on this issue. But I do think that, you know, three or four years ago when we were an A-list committee, the Secretary talked about coexistence a lot. And USDA talked about coexistence as a major policy and issue going forward. In the last couple years, that hasn't been the case. That hasn't been talk. But I know that there have been lots of issues and lots of other reasons for that. But I do think that the
federal government can set a tone that will give states and
locals more reason to do some of the things we'd say here in
any report or any solution.

So I guess what I'm saying is I still think there
needs to be federal leadership in this area if we want to
encourage joint coexistence plans. And I'd like to see part
of our work being how to set up that federal leadership on
making this issue an important issue to the biotech
companies, making it an important issue to farmers, to state
and locals. That's all I'm saying, is I think that in order
to have the effect at the state and local level, there's
also got to be federal emphasis on this, maybe not through
money. Maybe not through a set program, but saying this is
a critical part of agriculture going forward in the U.S.

MS. HUGHES: Also, can I ask a follow-question on
NRCS before we --

MR. REDDING: Sure. Yeah.

MS. HUGHES: Sorry.

MR. CORZINE: You can have it for a moment.

MS. HUGHES: Thank you. Just for a moment. Doug,
are there any, is there any precedent in the NRCS for joint
conservation plans of farmers working together and
approaching the NRCS with a conservation plan that covers
both of their farms?
MR. MCKALIP: Assuming both farmers are willing and interested in doing that, yeah. In fact, it goes well beyond just adjoining private landowners. There are situations where private landowners are next to the federal government BLM lands, you name it. And I think even within this administration, there's been a lot of movement to develop more holistic plans to even crops boundaries because you've got a ranch that may be grazing on their own property and going into the BLM. So, yeah, I think there's been increasing amount of experience in developing more joint things. Again, it has to be something where both producers are willing and interested to do that. But certainly the agency has the capacity to not just stop at field boundaries or property lines and help develop something that is more integrated.

MS. HUGHES: I see. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Leon.

MR. CORZINE: You're welcome, Missy.

MS. HUGHES: Thank you, Leon.

MR. CORZINE: Leon Corzine. Good morning, everybody. I'd like to start a lot of times with it's another great day to be alive. Right? To add a little levity. I took a little different tact or look. And Greg, I kind of, being a farmer, I kind of like the idea that you're finally talking more about directly farmer-to-farmer
or state and local type things. Because, you know, especially with a lot of things that are happening out there, it doesn't go over very well in the countryside when you come out and say we're the federal government and we've got a program here to help. You know, it just isn't very well received if you really want to get people serious about some of these things.

So I like the idea that, or my thought is what we could do, and it's already been mentioned, and Mary-Howell mentioned it, as far as having some principles that we can come up with to have tools for, in different parts of the country. You know, we're very diverse in what, what works in one part doesn't work in another. Even, even, I don't think we should designate or attempt to designate what group or what organization should handle this because there are places where NRCS might work. Where I am, majority of where I am, it doesn't. Maybe extension works. Maybe Department of Ag works.

We have a thing that really works where we cooperate most with is drainage districts. You have a common problem. You get together, and you solve it. Right? But what I see as our charge, we could come up with guiding principles that could be considerations. You know, I kind of snickered when I, when Mary mentioned machine cleanout or
clean out a combine. What the heck? We can clean out. But maybe enough people don't know that.

We've actually as an organization went to the machinery manufacturers because the combines and a new generation of them were harder to clean out. So we went back to them and said, hey, we've got to make these easier to clean out.

What I like about this charge is it is not, and I think we have to get away from, this is not organic-specific. This is for IP products, and that involves a lot of what we do. So you have some of those practical things you can do. You know, there are going to be areas where you aren't going to get interest. Because, in my county we have two organic growers. All right? Both of them happen to be in my neighborhood, and we talk about things, and things kind of work out. But the other guys across the county, they aren't going to go to a meeting and talk about that. But, if you can talk about, and I think there's going to be interest in identity preserved products, or renewed interest with what we're talking about with what economics are.

And we look at that every year anyway on our farm. My son and I sit down and say, okay, what's out there. You know, whether it's seed production, whether it is the white corn, whether, you know, and you have all those things you have to consider. Where there are setbacks, you know, what
are, what is the extra time cost, what are all of those things? What's the transportation? It's going to take a lot more to deliver 50 miles, especially if you have to deliver at harvest, than to my own grain bins or to somebody that's five miles away.

You know, all of those are considerations, and, and I would hope that whoever you're contracting with has those, but maybe not. So maybe that needs to be in the category as well. Or if I'm going to grow a new IP product, I need to call up the guys in my neighborhood and, and talk about that, right, and what I want to do and what and how it's going to affect you in that drainage district principle maybe.

But if we had a set and made it known, USDA did, to help, you know, the extension service in, in my neck of the woods, they have annual agronomy meetings. So they could have a segment at part of their agronomy meeting to at least help make people aware of, okay, here are, if you're considering IP, and maybe you should, you know, with, to, to increase your value at Farm B, whatever it is. And if you're in Northwestern Illinois, NRCS probably works. If you are in Central Illinois, maybe not. It's one of these other organizations. Or you do it yourselves, but at least you make an awareness that there are these set of considerations. I don't know that we can make them, we, I
don't think we should call them recommendations because it may not be a recommendation in a different geography, right?

So then you kind of work things out. I used the example, and you've all heard me say it. The guy I know that grew pharmaceutical corn and needed half-mile setbacks. Well, it was an added-value product, very highly added, so he shared in the value. There was a shared value to get folks in his neighborhood to participate. Because to do that particular product, that's what they had to do. And he went on, and there wasn't a big fight in the neighborhood because they participated all the way. Right? They took care, the guy doing it took care of the setback for, for that guy by paying him, and then also keeping it mowed, whatever it took where they weren't growing a crop.

So I think there are a lot of things there that on a, that really gets to a more practical point where we really haven't been. And, you know, you can, you can work on the geography. And here again, it's different. And to your three points, Mary-Howell, the, you know, the pollen drift. The pollen drift different in different areas. And you mentioned that, Doug, as far as where there are more trees, or the topography is different. And, you know, the temporal difference. We worked that out, you know. And so there are a lot of things we can list that maybe are rather obvious to some of us that are actually boots on the ground,
if you will. But maybe in general they aren't. So that's where I see USDA can, can, or this committee can, can come up with a, with, that this listing or a catalogue of, okay, you folks need to do that if there's a new product out there. This is what, you know, take a look. And, and it will take a little bit to do that.

And then you don't, and then it is a neutral party. You don't have, like I say, for the federal government to come out. That isn't going to go too well. But if it's the extension service, Department of Ag would work in some states. In my state, we've got so darn many financial issues, budget issues in the state that everybody is like this. So that doesn't really work. Or the drainage district type model, you know? Because we've got a lot of drainage districts that works great. And you operate on need.

So I think if we move forward and, and categorize or develop a list of what these guiding principles are, because there's a lot of experience. And we don't need to be reinventing the wheel or, or thrashing around old, old arguments here. I think we can get past that and really make a lot better use of our time. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Thanks. Lynn. Lynn, then Laura, and Mary-Howell.
MR. CLARKSON: Lynn Clarkson. I'd like to make several points. One starting with something that Russell brought up yesterday at the close of our meeting talking about good neighbors. My concept of a good farm neighbor is one that does his best to avoid damaging his neighbor, and he doesn't want to be damaged unreasonably. I enjoy that legal term, unreasonable. It gives flexibility.

The second thing is, almost every dialogue around this table goes back to what I would say is the issue of purity. Inside an agricultural system that's being modernized away from fungible to much more distinctions. And we've got organic distinction, we've got the non-GMO, we have distinctions within the GMO. And we, when we get into loss, the losses aren't just a few million.

The losses are now numbering billions of dollars because we have losses of foreign markets, we've got billion-dollar suits going on by farmers all over the country against the seed companies for putting a seed out before it was approved by a major buyer known as China. We're going to see losses. And I don't know what the distinction tomorrow will be. But in the past, we had distinctions that went pretty much to biochemistry, and you might say many of the distinctions now. Good social values. And every one of those values is important to recognize.
And the real organizing factor here is this thing called the market. So today, in rough terms, I'll tell you what the market is offering as distinctions. For conventional corn in the middle of Illinois today would probably bring, and some of you guys can update me. But I think we're around $3.60 a bushel.

MR. KEMPER: Conventional, or is that GMO?

MR. CLARKSON: That's conventional anything. So, it can be GMO. So, to me GMO is conventional too. So around $3.60. If it were non-GMO, it's $4.00. If it were organic, it's $10. So the incentive here comes from the market, and whether those who buy will take away the incentive if we don't get what we want. Because what determines what we want is customer satisfaction, scattered around the country with some degree of purity. And so it's purity definitions that are most troubling to us.

So, a policy that would help show farmers and everybody else in the chain, because it's not just a farmer issue. It's an issue for everyone in the food chain. What it takes to satisfy the market would be helpful. At a local level, at the state level you've got grain and feed associations in almost every state. You've got the National Grain and Feed Association. This is increasingly important to them. You've got the Millers Association, you've got farm equipment companies.
My company used to pay a premium for people who would harvest specialty crops with a rotary combine made by International Harvester. And that was pretty clear right up until the day John Deere discovered the rotary combine. And so, then it was no longer so important to us that you have a red combine, we could also buy from the green guys.

If we find a farmer that consistently grieves us of too close to the edge on what we would call adventitious presence or in our cruder terms, contamination, we'll reject them. And we don't want to deal with people we reject every day. We like around 95 percent recidivism. We like to keep people in the system, have a long term relationship. And I'm sure that's not unique to my company. I think you'll find it throughout the, the grain buyers. You have major companies that are wanting to please clients with Panamax vessels full of crops that meet certain degrees of purity. And so what vision do we have of U.S. agriculture 10 years from now and 20 years from now? How do we compete in a world where Brazil is much better than it is today, where we have good transportation, where the Chinese have addressed some of their problems, where the Indians have addressed some of their problems.

My crude vision of that is we're a country that can provide a reliable degree of purity more so than many of these other countries. I think that goes to address a
variety of social values around the table. So I like what Greg suggests about creating a policy to sensitize people throughout the system to the importance of food purity or commodity purity that we're delivering. There's probably a better marketing term for it than I'm using.

But I think that's a direction that most of the economists around this table are going at, and how do you do it. Well, the market is carrying the load right now. And it would like help from everybody else in the food chain in getting product segregated appropriately to serve different markets. For farmers' attention this, there has never been a better time in 10 years. Most of the farmers around the table will talk to you about how close to the line between red ink and black ink they're going to be. There are going to be a lot of farmers losing money.

And what I told you about a moment ago with the premiums that are paid for non-GMO or paid for a specific GMO or paid for organic are the difference between success and failure in the farm community. There is more interest than there's ever been in the past. Are there a lot of people that aren't interested? Yep. But there's still a higher degree of interest today. So there's a higher degree of interest, demonstrable interest in farmers knowing how to meet the specs the food industry is coming out with to satisfy the client. So, a policy at the national level...
spread down through the various agencies that work with the USDA to help show farmers how to meet these standards like everybody else said I think would be excellent. End of story.

MR. REDDING: Very good. Thank you. Laura.

MS. BATCHA: Thanks. I just want to lay out a couple of ideas. But first, I want to go back. Perhaps I wasn't clear enough in my communication. I want to go back to my earlier statements with my colleagues and assure Alan specifically based on your response to what I said and, and my colleagues. I'm not proposing we look backwards. I'm not proposing we rehash old debates. What I was doing was acknowledging a disappointment that I expect will come from the stakeholders that I represent that we took the step to collect the data and sort of left it there and my desire to create some sorts of threads to the future with, with that data. And I liked the ideas that Josette put on the table, and I look for other ideas like that.

But I do want to clarify in no way was I communicating my intention to take us backwards and bog us down in a debate that we spent two years on. And I am embracing the charge that's been laid out by the Secretary. So I just don't want that to be confused.

So as I think about the work on the charge, I sort of jotted down some notes about what are some pockets of
work that we might break this up into as a committee, because I think some of us are going to have natural areas of interest and expertise as we try to tackle the problem. And so I'll just put these out there. I know it's not a perfect organization of the work by any means but my initial ideas, and they are in no particular order.

I think one area of work is defining a set of parameters for what a coexistence, joint-coexistence plan could include or look like. And I think Mary-Howell started to articulate that by looking at pollen, seed, cleanout, these kind of things. And within those parameters defining who might, depending on whatever the circumstances is, this is an indication of who must or who might participate in the joint plan for all these speaking.

I think another area of work is understanding models, like the pollinator model, joint NRCS conservation plans, and have a group of us tackle those models and share that information with the others. Explore incentives broadly speaking. I don't mean just monetary incentives, but other incentives that might encourage participation in this. Identify targets for where we would get the, you know, biggest bang for our buck if we're going to put effort into this.

And then identifying some, either principles or recommendations for convening, adapting the work at the
state and local level in terms of a road map for that. And
I think, Joe, that you spoke to that yesterday that, that a
lot of this is, is going to be about, and again, there's not
a one-size-fits-all solution, but there could be some
principles about how you go about convening, identifying the
stakeholders, and working with the parties at the local
level.

And then the last one I think is a question
around, you know, is there a role for technology and how
USDA might facilitate that. So.


MS. MARTENS: There is a case, there is a case
study that -- am I on? Yeah. Oh. NRCS, at least where we
are, is by far the best federal agency out there in the
field. The local NRCS people are terrific. They
communicate well with farmers. And they have a package of
goodies that beats them all. And, and the case study is, is
actually my son, who is a young farmer. Therefore, he
qualifies for the best of the goodies. And he also is
farming some highly erodible land that he's renting. And it
definitely needed some help, some, some drainage, some
tiles, some sound waterways, and some buffer areas.

But it didn't discretely break up into just the
farm he's renting. It, really the, the drainage area went
over on an adjoining farm that is rented by another young
tiger who is convention and very anti-organic and was not about to do anything to help our son prevent drift issues. However, when JoBeth, who is our local NRCS person got involved, she had this, this wonderful package of goodies for both these young men that was going to help the drainage issues, but, you know, coincidentally also helped some of the contamination issues.

And because she was able to work with both the two young men and also the two landlords, and do a lot to improve the land drainage-wise and cut down on erosion, which became a real issue two years ago when we had some serious flooding, she was able to build bridges that would not naturally form between two adjoining farmers. And she was able to build in a package of incentives that both is going to cut down on the erosion, cut down on the, on draining issues, but also create more of a buffer between the two farms and make both farms a little bit more protected.

Would that, would these two, young tigers have done it on their own? Of course not. They're, they're two young men in their 20s, and they're going to not find common ground easily. But having the NRCS person there with the money and also with plans because she is also a conservationist, and also with some, some sensitivity to what was going on between these two young men, everything is
so much better. I mean, this is just a tremendous success story with 90 percent cautionary.

So, I really think that there are opportunities. If JoBeth had had a nice training manual about how to build in, into this conservation plan tools that will also accomplish additional goals for both of the two farmers, so much the better. So this is why I feel very strongly that we have a very short time frame. We have to be done with some sort of deliverable, it sounds like by September.

September is not very far off.

We can develop something that is a deliverable that can be then distributed to people like JoBeth Bellanca, who then will take it out into the field. The channel out exists pretty easily in different ways. In our area, it's NRCS. Maybe in Leon's area it's Cooperative Extension. Maybe in other places it's something else. But in order to come up with something that can go out, a solid, tangible item that can go out and help people like JoBeth to build these plans to protect farmers, all farmers in a way that is already incentivized I think, I think it's very accomplishable. I really think we can do this, and we can do it in a way that antagonizes virtually no one.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Doug.

MR. GOEHRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few thoughts based on some of the conversation. I think Mary
has got a good point as to maybe some other sources to tap into. So I was thinking NRCS. I know that they have to be charged with the mission. They have to have the funding, the appropriation to do that. And maybe in the next farm bill, maybe something like this can be put together with the conservation programs that would target some money towards conceptually in theory a joint conservation plan.

Now, in some cases, you're not going to get anybody to sign on the dotted line. But an agreement worked through program participation, there might be certain things that can be done. It sounds like what's going on in Mary's backyard is, is a great deal. And that would be something along those lines, what can you put on the table that, that helps both parties address some of their concerns and issues. That's going to be the biggest challenge.

And I know that Greg had mentioned maybe the resources or the expertise doesn't exist around the table to know what states can or can't do or what federal government can do. I think it probably does based on the fact USDA and the federal government has to be careful how far they step and what they do. Encouraging is a, is a great way for them to get involved.

Right now, there is so much sensitivity out there about federal overreach that if you mandate anything, if, if USDA comes up and takes a hardline approach on something,
there's going to be such pushback, you won't have any
participation except in certain areas around the country.
And then it's self-defeating. So we have to be a little
careful. And it would be, it would be political suicide.

So I like the word you chose, encourage. Because
I think if USDA were to come out and say and the Secretary
would say we encourage joint conservation plans, coexistence
plans, and then provide this framework for people to operate
by and under to look at, hold stakeholder meetings, because
I think Mary's point, and a few others have said it, every
area has its challenges.

We talked about temperature, humidity, all those
things will affect what's going on in an area. What are the
natural barriers and buffers that exist in an area, hills,
trees, wind direction, you know, prevailing wind direction I
should say. Those are some things that I believe we can
outline, put together, and drop as a deliverable that could
be utilized clear around the country in so many different
ways. And it would help, help further the conversation and
take us a step closer. I don't believe there are any
dollars. I'll tell you in a state like mine, the
legislature would have to appropriate it. Even if all
prices were up right now, they probably still wouldn't
appropriate it.
So to that end, it would probably have to be something that Congress would do in the next farm bill to set aside a little bit of money for NRCS to look at a program within their realm to help deliver that into the whole agricultural community, and something that would be just put on the table for them is going to get a whole lot better participation and acceptance. So I, I think that would further the cause. Thank you.


MS. LEWIS: Okay. Now I'm in the John Deere realm in my International Harvest sort of red. So I want to pick up on the discussion around tools. And I see two potential work streams or efforts around tools. One is, and actually, I went to a website that you told us about yesterday on USDA.gov/coexistence. If you go to that website, and it's unfortunate we can't do that while we're all sitting here, that it's a set of tools. Now, they're a little bit of a mishmash. There's some very broad-based kind of factual components that help you think about the policy dimensions, so you can think about the policy level tools. And then there's a really hands-on, extension-oriented stuff from Clemson University, University of Minnesota, the American Seed Trade Association. So you have some very technical, hands-on kind of toolkits in there.
So starting from that, and listening to conversation, I see two kind of tools that we're identifying we could put some more clarity behind. One is a set of very practical tool for producers, the farmers who are going to be trying to navigate the world of coexistence. And that's kind of some of the things I think that Mary has been talking about. And again, when I go to that website, there's probably not enough of those kind, pretty clearly.

The second kind of tool I think is at a more aggregate level and is oriented toward, it could be producer organizations, it could be state extension, it could be state departments of agriculture. So again, extension in this world happens in a lot of different ways. And I know in our state a lot of it is done by non-profits and commodity organizations. Because we're in the world of specialty crops where unfortunately USDA doesn't have so many resources to bring to bear.

So, but it's a set of tools that help get at what are the models for promoting coexistence, either models that could be facilitated to bring growers together to work on this challenge at a more aggregate level, or it could be for states to incentivize growers to work together. So that's kind of the MP3 models that we heard about yesterday. So it's kind of a more policy or process-oriented model. It's
not the hands-on for the grower. So those are kind of two sets of tools I've heard about that we can do some work on. And then kind of picking up on Greg's point, I personally will always promote a direct recommendation back to USDA, even if it's for USDA to help provide leadership and facilitation. And I think about, I'm right now at a webpage for, for the USDA agriculture marketing service. And they have a federal, state marketing improvement grant program. I'm sure the director of that program would dislike that I would say it seems to me the scope of that program could be grants to state organizations, state departments of agriculture who they give matching funds to. It could be a grant on something related to coexistence.

So I think about AMS, NIFA, BRAG, who we heard about yesterday, USDA has grants they give to cooperator organizations. There's a broad set of tools not having a dedicated federal program but just integrating in coexistence under the development of the tools for the producers or the development and implementation of the tools at kind of a more aggregate process level that USDA does have the capacity to facilitate. And personally, I think that actually was the thing that impressed me the most about the report we got out yesterday is how many pieces of USDA have made coexistence part of their program.
You know, we didn't, we heard from, I think we've heard from, what, you know, about a dozen different, or half a dozen at least, different USDA agencies. So to me, that's power that USDA has without making a dedicated program. And it seems to me that would be always on my mind as an explicit recommendation that we did come up with.

So, I just put that forward as, on the two pieces of the toolkit. And again, I'll come back to my earlier point. As I think about what, who we want to have speak to us in future meetings, who we want, is going to be in part based on who are we trying to incentivize to actually make this a priority for their own organization's action. And how can we give them visibility in front of our Secretary of Agriculture and at a more national stage that would hopefully incentivize them to do something differently, and to take this up as part of their mandate.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Mary-Howell, and then David, and then we'll take a break.

MS. MARTENS: As an organic corn grower, among other crops, I guess I'm kind of a canary in the mine in order to figure out whether or not this information is getting out to us. Because if it was getting out to us, I would know about it. And it isn't, because I don't know about it. My certifier, organic certifier will say things
like you need to talk to your neighbor, or you need to have a GM protection plan or something like that.

And then when, when asked, the certifier, when I asked the certifier or the inspector, what exactly does that mean, they really don't know. You know, you've got to have something effective. Well, what is effective? Is 880 feet effective? Can you give me data to show that that is going to be sufficient to limit pollen? No.

The other thing about your websites, yes, I've looked at those. And there is information out there. 80 percent, or probably 60 percent of the people I work with at our feed mill are older Amish or Mennonite farmers. That is where the growth area of a lot of organic farming is right now. They are never going to see those websites. They don't have Internet access. They don't have more than an 8th grade education. They don't have the scientific ability to read a lot of the data that's out there. Data is not helpful. It has to be digested into something that is a practical, actionable response that a farmer can understand.

So what I, what I feel like is if this information was getting out to farmers growing organic corn, I would know about it. And it's not. And, and this is not just, just the guidance but what to do. What is sufficient? What data has shown that the buffers or the seed percent AP is
sufficient to produce a sufficient level of AP low level in
the harvested crop.

    Maybe the data is known. Maybe the cleanout
procedures are known. But for farmers to be able to use
the, they have to be digested into a form that makes sense
to them and is actionable on their farms. And yes, I
understand that there are going to be differences in
different areas of the country. But a lot of the practical
considerations aren't that much different in different
areas. You know, they have to be adjusted, but they aren't
necessarily different. So, you know, again, I'll just say,
we have a short time frame. But, what I'd like at the end
of the time frame is to be able to stick my finger in the
air and actually feel something up there as an organic corn
grower. Because if we're not seeing it, it's not out there.

    MR. REDDING: Thank you. David.

    MR. JOHNSON: David Johnson. First, I think that
the Department has done an excellent job of shining light on
coexistence and the conversation that we have before us
today and the thread going on over the last several years,
since 2011. And as I think about what we're trying to do
next, I look back at what our committee name is. And it
says USDA Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century
Agriculture. And our actual title of our last report was
called Enhancing Coexistence, you know, a report to the Secretary.

And so as I think about coexistence, and I have listened to everybody around the table, we focus a lot on plants and crops. And I, and I think, you know, having heard people talk about birds and animals and microbes, air quality, viruses, soil, water, nutrients, I think anything that we do from a policy perspective, our recommendation should take into account agriculture.

You know, I grew up on a wheat farm in Western Nebraska. Our coexistence strategies really related to soil and water erosion. And so, you know, I think this conversation is going really well. I like how we're, we're, you know, we're debating these issues and discussing them. But I, I don't really think we should get fixated on a particular segment because coexistence is really a large subject about so many things. I think we ought to keep, keep that in mind as we, we debate what we want to do next and develop these tools. And I'll leave it at that.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Let's take a short break. But again, when we come back, I would just ask you, we'll start sort of looking at the, the work plan, and I think there were some themes that sort of evolved here this morning. I put it in sort of two, two buckets. One is around sort of the content question, right. What is it that
we want to have, that you want to deliver, right, in terms of, of practices and information, education? What is that content piece so far? And then the, the process, I mean, who actually does it? How do you want that to occur?

They're two, very distinct pieces. I think the, the value that we add to the conversation, making sure that the content piece is right. And then we can figure out, you know, is that a USDA piece supported, is that a local, any number of entities. And I don't subscribe to there is one, single entity that's going to do this. I look at it much like the conservation conversation where is a sheer challenge and, and objective of many. Just to make sure we've got a good, solid conservation practices is one of the field. That's as much a Farm Bureau conversation as it is a regulatory agency. Right? So this is not unlike that conversation.

Time is short, both today, but also in the months to come. So be thinking about how to organize the work. But if we could have a really good, solid content piece, then the rest of that becomes major conversation of how do you push it out, and how do you incentivize that, and where does it show up in conversations of education. But let's get the content piece done right. Okay?
So let's take a short break, and we'll come back, and we'll pick up with discussions here around work plan and addressing our charge. Thank you.

Whereupon, at 10:42 a.m., a brief recess is taken.

MR. REDDING: Okay. So let's pick up the conversation here. We're going to put this on, sort of looking at that work plan and coming back to the charge. But really focus on what it is now as we see. And again, I put them in two buckets. Maybe there are other thoughts around this. We've had some great conversation this morning. I think it was really, really helpful, some ideas and perspective, some way of organizing our work.

I guess I look at our charge and being able to provide, you know, some broader themes and, you know, just for illustration, probably being able to provide a good sort of table of contents and not necessarily worrying about whether I'm writing the content to that table. Right? But I want to know the table of contents. I want to know what it is that we are focused on specific to coexistence and how to, you know, get the, you know, the neighbors to, in agriculture to develop these joint coexistence plans.

So, so let me stop there. I guess I'm just trying to look at our next hour. We're going to break about a quarter of. The Secretary will be here at 1 o'clock. I
want to leave you an hour to, to grab lunch and come back.

We'll try to have you back here before 1 o'clock since the Secretary we're expecting to be here at 1:00. So we'll make sure we're taking full advantage of his time and be able to start right away.

But we've got an hour now to really focus in on the work plan. And I would ask, ask us to think about what we heard this morning, you know, look at the charge, admitting, Greg, that, that there's a USDA piece here and whether from my perspective whether it's explicit. It is implied here that I think the USDA will certainly be a partner in that.

I think our charge from the Secretary was, given whatever set of authority or lack thereof, recognizing that this is a conversation that is probably best held and managed locally anyhow. We really need to sort of look at that as our first step, and then say where can the USDA sort of echo that to make clear in policy guidance and encouragement, they can certainly do that. So I don't take them out of this conversation. I think it's still attached to the Secretary for sure. It's his charge to us, right? And it builds off of the recommendations we had made in 2012. That's our base. Now, the question is what can we do relative to the joint coexistence plans to encourage that.
So, my recommendation is here in the next hour, as we look at that work plan, let's talk about the content, what has to be in that table of contents for, for the plan. That would include, you know, the BMPs. That would include some of the points that both Josette and Laura and Mary-Howell and others have made this morning relative to, you know, some of the, the key components.

And then we'll look at, as sort of a second phase, the process. How do you put this out? Who puts it out? How do we, how do we put this in the best form? Who would be in the best position to sort of lead these conversations with, with producers. I think Mary Howell's example earlier with, with her son, the case study, is, is sort of how you would like these conversations to evolve, with a more, they're going to occur out of need, out of recognition by, by farms or are going to be spawned by some folks who are service providers. So, a good example, but again, I think that's one among many of how we could see this work progressing, okay?

So let's look at the, let's identify from what we've heard this morning just sort of the outline, what is it that we would want to see in this content around the joint coexistence plans? What is important for someone to consider, be considering as they develop joint plans? Make sense? All right. So you're going to have some, some
planning. Now we're into a planning phase. Right? There's something that's got to happen for folks to take action to develop, you know, a set of practices, an approach. If there's, if there's items out there already on websites or of trade associations, what needs to go into this plan?

Paul.

MR. ANDERSON: So, just thinking about components of a coexistence plan, and assuming more than one need to be addressed here. And one of those I would see that's critical is information sharing about who you want to talk to to develop that plan, what you need to talk about, and the mechanism for getting, easily getting that information.

Listening yesterday, I really liked what I heard about the MP3, Pollinator Protection Plans, and their mechanism for populating a database of who is doing what, where. And I think that is, that's a good point of departure for developing a plan for this type of activity as well. And someone just mentioned to me recently, if you just take pollinator out of it and plug in whatever you want to plug in, but getting, getting a digital database that one can access really quickly to know again who to talk to about a lot of types of things.

MR. REDDING: Latresia.

MS. WILSON: Latresia Wilson. I pretty much agree what Paul's saying. I think first we should start off with
at least the definition of what a coexistence is. And then the next step would be who are the players, who is going to be looking at this and who is going to be participating. And then we get into I guess a, perhaps, maybe a website link or somehow whereby they are directed to the different players and who will they need to speak with. And then further into what are the actions that you can take from that point on.

MR. REDDING: Paul? Is that you're -- I'm sorry. So what do you want to see in the plan? All right, I keep thinking about if I'm going to have this conversation, you know, with my neighbor, what is it that I need to be thinking -- sorry, Jerry, did I miss you? I just want to be thinking about what is it that is going to be important to convey, right? What am I talking about and what am I, what am I also doing myself if I am a producer. Right? But also, if I'm going to engage in some, some conversation, what is it would be, would be important to consider in that conversation? Jerry.

MR. SLOCUM: Jerry Slocum. Mr. Chairman, I think the very root of co-existence plans is the, is the realization that, that drift occurs. And I think early, early in our content piece we need to talk about the reality of drift, whether it's pollen, whether it's herbicides, whether it's weed seed, whatever it is. So that just the
basic recognition that, that at the farmer level, at the
fence level, at the crossroads level, at whatever you want
to call it level, that's things most in the farmer's
control. And I think we ought to address that early, early
in the piece. And there is lots and lots of data. Some
might have contradicted Mary-Howell about how far, what
realistic distances are. But you have to have that
conversation because that's going to be the part that most
affects those guys on either side of the fence. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Yes, Alan.

MR. KEMPER: Mr. Chairman. I pretty much agree
with Jerry and others --

COURT REPORTER: Your mic is out.

MR. KEMPER: You're right. Oh, right, it's got to go green.

COURT REPORTER: You just press it once. You
don't -- there it is.

MR. KEMPER: It will eventually go green. There
you go. I agree with Jerry, as far as that goes. I think
we need to recognize that there are certain natural drifts
that do occur, whether that is crop protectants or that's
pollen drift or what. But, but we do not need to get down
in the quagmire of determining what the right orders are. I
think there is a line of universities like Purdue, Ohio
State, Iowa, Illinois that have great publications on
setback requirements for various crops. And so maybe we can do the guidance on the hyperlinks or how you get to those various sites for various regions in the country. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. REDDING: Angela, and then Laura.

MS. OLSEN: Thank you. Angela Olsen. It seems we're talking about what might go into a coexistence plan. And certainly there are areas that we have identified around the table that likely would go into that. I wonder, though, given that we've heard that there is differences in location, you know, what might work in New York might not, you know, there may be completely different issues in Illinois with regards to coexistence.

Whether we should focus on a process, because really I think it's the local folks that are going to know, if we think about agriculture broadly, and I think David was right with that comment. If we think about agriculture broadly, there's going to be different types of pressures and different considerations from location to location, even within the same state. So that's why I like the idea of coming back to these local solutions.

It may be difficult for us. Maybe we can come up with some high level points about what should go into a coexistence plan. But I think a lot of materials have been developed number one. And number two, I think it really has
to be customized to those local areas. And it's those local stakeholders that come together that know what's important for their particular location. I think it's difficult.

So again, I just put that out that I like the idea of pulling the stakeholders together, having the stakeholders locally come up with what needs, you know, what are the issues that are important to them and what might go into a plan. You know, sort of that next level of definition.

MR. REDDING: I guess, you know, thinking in just, from the USDA or the Committee's perspective, I think getting some broad framework around sort of what are those BMPs that are production practice neutral, they are geographically neutral. They're just things that, I mean, the drift is, is the drift. Right? There are, cleaning out machines is cleaning out machines. There is, there is purity questions and seed purity questions that are universal. And so there is that set of just things that are going to be transferrable whether you're in Pennsylvania or you're in, in Illinois.

And then there will be some other things, all right, when you get down to how do you really sort of manage that. And so looking at this is sort of two pieces, right. What are those top-line sort of BMP things that you would want to have happen regardless of where, where the
agriculture is. And then those other things are going to
have to be tailored just because they're, they're going to
be driven by either the practice, the region, the
topography, whatever. Right? So, yeah, agreed.

So I think for us, looking at those top line
things would be important, with a footnote that this, this
clearly is going to have to be tailored to other regions or,
or areas that. But, but there will be, as pointed out
yesterday, there will be the, what was the term used, but
basically having a set of standards regardless, right, as
around the curriculum in education. You've got a set of, of
teaching points that are universal that we want to be able
to, to focus on. Laura.

MS. BATCHA: Thank you. When I think of the
elements of the plan, I think, I almost imagine a product
that is recommendation or whatever language we want to use
for our template. And within that, a piece of it is,
there's an assertion of the, you know, what we know about
the BMPs on a crop-specific basis, because I think there's a
general agreement we can get our hands around that as a set
of information, it can get cropped in. And then a template
that guides the participants in the development of the plan
through the questions that they should be asking as they're
working together.
And so the things that, that come to my mind are, I think absolutely it's who is doing what where, and the stakeholder identification. Are we talking about farmers, landowners, who are you identifying that can participate in your plan? Is it your NRCS agent, whatever it is. So, you know, identifying the stakeholders and who is doing what where would be a critical part of the template.

I also think we might be able to look at sort of the HACCP model where it, it asks the questions of what are your particular critical control points that you need to pay attention to based on this identification of who is doing what, where, and who are your stakeholders, and what are the BMPs for those crops that may be concurrently planted, and sort of use that as a, as a template that then could be populated and adapted, et cetera.

MR. REDDING: Mary-Howell.

MS. MARTENS: I was going to mention the HACCP plan too. Because a HACCP plan, and there are good people out there that maybe we could get somebody to come to our next meeting, probably there are people in the government or there could be specialists out there that could be called in to talk about how to write something like the HACCP plan. I mean it's not, it's not rocket science that we have to reinvent. But identifying control points and then identifying what needs to be done at each control might, is,
is a really straightforward, linear way of looking at this that can then be adapted to geographical area.

I do think that our, our danger will be to not be too vague so that it, you know, moves forward beyond saying, you know, you need to develop a plan but is not too specific that we cannot adapt. One thing I'm going to throw out one more time, and I think this is really important, be it in Chapter One, or, you know, of your outline, is the difference in risk between self-pollinating crops and cross-pollinating crops. And then within cross-pollinating crops, those that are wind pollinated versus insect pollinated. Because all of which, those are different risks that need to be treated differently.

MR. REDDING: Okay. Doug.

MR. GOEHRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just listening to some of the conversation, people are really starting to come together with some framework here. So if, I think we start off by asking the question, who is going to direct or provide on those deliverables. And I know we've spoken to that a couple of times. There's going to be multiple entities that, that can do this. And second would be the stakeholders. Third would be the stakeholder meetings, who would all be involved in those type of meetings.
Considerations, and I think you picked up on something that was very good to, to outline here, and that's the geographical neutral, what type of considerations and best management practices, you know, overall that can work everywhere conceptually. And as I spoke to earlier, then you go through those considerations. But I don't know, what are you mitigating? I think that comes down to something I continue to hear around here. It's pollen. It's soil. It's pathogens. It's seed. And on that, the seed part could be anything that's on your property, or it could be weed seeds. It could be something that's being found not to be very advantageous to your specific situation.

So, at least I picked up on those four, pollen, soil, pathogen, and seed as being items that we'd want to mitigate. And it fits for every operation because everybody could have these concerns, whether you're a seed producer, an organic producer, an identity preserver. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Okay, thanks. And just for clarity I guess around the web piece, the pollen and the germplasm piece I think we can have, introducing the soil and the pathogen component to this, and just sort of opening that up here just to make sure that I'm thinking about it correctly, is that, how do you, like, how do you see that sort of being, being molded into the, the content around the coexistence plan?
MR. GOEHRING: I guess I'm looking at coexistence in a broader term. If you want to capture everybody's attention, think about all of those things that farmers are considering and are concerned about. If you want that, people come to the table to think about pollen, start thinking about some of the challenges that they have to deal with right now. Which may mean, you can talk about pesticides for example. We're concerned about how pesticides may affect our neighbor. That's a coexistence issue.

But to that degree, pathogens. If you have a producer that has aphids, so a pest or a pathogen, for example, or they have scab. And if you don't have the right type of seed or the types of plants that are necessarily resistant who might be susceptible, then you're concerned about what's happening next to you.

In other words, I'm trying to capture I guess overall, everybody's interest in this. They might want to come and learn, sit down and talk about these things on a broader scale. But in all this, you also introduce the concept about pollen. And it gets people thinking, first of their situation, what's relevant to them. And then pretty soon it expands their thinking to think about other things that they should consider or could consider. And then you start to mitigate some of those risks, some of those issues,
and some of those challenges out there that everybody is doing. And that's why I went through to talk about whether it's pollen, whether it's soil, whether it's seed, weed seeds, pathogens, and pests. I think overall you captured a farmer's attention. And you ultimately do get to the part of the plan of what we're talking about when you talk about coexistence. It's just another, broader scale, but it gets their attention.

MR. REDDING: So you end up with sort of this good neighbor policy, right? I think it is --

MR. GOEHRING: I like that, good neighbor policy.

MR. KEMPER: That's a good phrase.

MR. REDDING: Right. And it really is. There are things that just, you need to be considerate of, you simply would want your neighbor to also consider for your operation, if there is a virus or a pathogen or a concern that you know is going to have a negative economic impact. You know that because you're experiencing it yourself potentially. And you would want that to be in the, in the conversation about, or with your neighbor. Right? Yeah, okay. Okay, Mary-Howell.

MR. KEMPER: Mr. Chairman, before Mary, could you, a halo effect is starting to take over. Could somebody --

MS. MARTENS: Okay.

MR. REDDING: You're seeing red?
MR. KEMPER: No, I'm seeing angels. Don't go red on me. Sorry Jerry.

MS. MARTENS: Just to clarify a little bit, because I'm not sure that everybody knows the definition of HACCP. H-A-C-C-P is Hazard Appropriate Critical Control Points. And I think that follows directly to what Doug is saying. Hazard appropriate, you know, it can be, what is hazard appropriate to me might not be exactly the same as to somebody else. But we can identify the critical control points, and then go from there to develop a policy or a plan. Not a policy, a plan, that satisfies the needs for everybody involved. But identifying the control points where the issues may occur is important.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, Leon.

MR. CORZINE: Mary, we're thinking alike because I needed to look that up to double-check. So I just Googled it. And it's, you're almost right. It's Hazard Analysis --

MS. MARTENS: Okay.

MR. CORZINE: -- Critical Control Point. And I have a lot of issues with using that term. We talk about some terms that are appropriate for us and some that are not. And, you know that, especially if you use that out in the country side, a HACCP plan, are you kidding me? That will go nowhere. So I think we've got to be careful with that term. And I know farmers in my part of the world, and
me personally, that one is not going anywhere. So, be
conscious of that.

Because we aren't talking about things that are
hazards. We're talking about coexisting. It's kind of like
talking about if you look at the, the term contaminant, we
moved away from using that word for the definition reasons
as well. So I think it's important we be careful with our
terminology.

MR. REDDING: Fair point. I think there are some,
some, at least principles around, you know, the approach
that producers take with HACCP plans that could probably be,
be borrowed. Maybe it's a coexistence control plan. Right?
You're taking themes of, you want somebody in a HACCP to
look at their operation and say I'm vulnerable at this
point. Right? There's a, the vulnerability may be things
that come on your farm. Was the machine cleaned out?
Right? Is someone bringing a problem to me that I don't
have today. Am I taking a problem to somebody? That's the
critical control point.

Fair point, Leon. I think that you couple HACCP
as a tendency to be food-safety related. And that's not. I
think you're borrowing the principles of the HACCP thinking
and plan per farm. Right? But there are some things within
that that I think are, are really helpful and probably
appropriate here. But not in, in total. Right? You're okay with that? I want to make sure you're --

MR. CORZINE: I am okay with what you said, but I, we aren't talking about hazards, I guess is --

MS. MARTENS: Those of us who are invested, though, we are talking about hazards.

MR. CORZINE: You're talking about trying to coexist. It isn't, I mean you're talking, when you look at hazard, and this is under the FDA. We're talking about hazards to food. I don't think so. So, and I don't want to spend a lot of time on that. But that's my caution, that --

MR. REDDING: Yeah.

MR. CORZINE: You're talking about HACCP, we're going to have a meeting about HACCP that's not going anywhere. You won't get anybody there in my part of the world if you want to get something that's going to work.

MR. REDDING: Yeah. I think the key under the HACCP is identification of critical control points and the ability of, of the person who is responsible for the operation being able to identify, you know, what those critical control points are, and then some mitigating strategies around that, that, you know, control point. Right, so.

MR. CORZINE: Okay.
MR. REDDING: So putting that screen I think on our work here to say we look at individual operations, I mean, there are going to be things that are required and priority concern for farms and others that are, that are not. Right? So, and I think the other principle of HACCP is it's individualized plan. There's a general framework I think we're talking about here. There is individualized pieces of those, of those plans for a farm and farm operations.

And I keep saying farm. I think you could say as well within the market channels, right, that there are critical control points for Lynn and Clarkson Grain or critical control points for technology providers. There are critical control points that really ought to be, you know, aware, all should be aware of. That's what a HACCP plan is really designed to do is to elevate the awareness of where am I vulnerable. And that is not something, while we are talking about farmer to farmer here, I think in this, in this food system, there are critical control points around the issue of coexistence and how, how is that, one, going to be identified, and two, addressed.

MR. CORZINE: Well maybe, you know, we're in the acronyms, so I can say, you know, maybe like it's C-cubed-E, like it's coexistence or CECCP. We've just got to get that hazard thing out of there for --
MR. REDDING: Got it.

MR. CORZINE: -- our discussion.

MR. REDDING: Okay. We'll take that out and sort of keep critical control points if that, that would help. Right? Because that's what we're after. At the end of the day, it's the identification of mitigation of critical control on the, on the operations in furtherance of coexistence. Okay?

MR. KEMPER: Mr. Chairman, I think you have to be very careful with your keywords and phrases that you're using. You just, well, to a lot of us, say, you know, first of all, you need the whole buying chain involved in this process. This is not farmer to farmer coexistence. This is the whole buying chain of coexistence. This is all the stakeholders coexistence. Because you can't worry about spray drift or something else with farmers if they're not spraying it their self and they're actually using a different vendor to do that. So they need to be in those type meetings.

I think that's very key. And if you start putting a whole bunch of really, I'll use the word nasty acronyms that are each, we'll say there are EPA to sort of help them too, at the same meeting, it's not going to work. You're not going to have the farmers get there anyway. You're
going to have to bake them a pie or something to get them to come to the meeting. Why a lot of them --

MR. REDDING: I just want the critical people.

MR. KEMPER: And one good acronym -- seriously.

One good acronym, and they'll walk out on you.

MR. REDDING: Yeah. Well then the -- words are important for sure. And I hear, I think what we're trying to say is that in this discussion around coexistence, really what brought --

MR. KEMPER: They'll go to the first bar and have a beer, and you will be the subject of discussion.

MR. REDDING: Yeah. Well, I think the, you know, if you go --

MR. KEMPER: They'll coexist, around --

MS. HUGHES: Very nice. Right? We got them.

MR. REDDING: All right. And we're making great progress.

MR. KEMPER: That's my rant.

MR. REDDING: No, and I think the, maybe go back to what sort of brought us to the table when the Secretary sort of relaunched the AC21, it was really this concern about what was happening out in landscape lands and farms, it was interrupting, you know, business models and markets and stuff. It was, it was these elements, right? And so we took our approach. Our approach was in the recommendations
to identify these things that ought to be considered by the USDA. And this charge here is saying, what do you do at the farm level to address these issues around coexistence.

How do you get that really top-of-mind thinking? Part of it is you have to sort of understand sort of where you're vulnerable. Right? Both in terms of the individual farmer thinking that, but also having your neighbor going through the same sort of analysis if you will to say where am I vulnerable. And then it allows for a conversation. Because the vulnerability may be in the air around pollen. Right? It may be in the machine. It may be at the seed that I'm bringing on the farm. It may become sort of really tangible things for us to sort of think about as you look at the coexistence.

At the end of the day, if you don't change the behavior and practice, we're not furthering coexistence. Right? You're simply adopting that a market and the dysfunction of a market is, is acceptable. And I don't know whether any of us here would say that that's what we want or desire. We really want to improve that marketplace. So how do you do that? Right? It's really putting a new screen on the thinking of stakeholders. Alan, I'll agree with you. It's not, it is not singly a back-and-forth.

MR. KEMPER: I don't want any misunderstanding here. This, Mr. Vilsack, Secretary Vilsack, is the first
secretary in a long time that I have known that actually, truly cares about production, agriculture at the ground level. I have worked for numerous secretaries over the decades. And I've seen them fly coast to coast without looking at agriculture. But actually, Secretary Vilsack has his feet on the ground. And he really cares about all farms. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, thank you. Something, just to, on that point, because I think the critical control points, you can play with the words but, but again, this critical control review that we want folks to be thinking about needs to be somewhere in our, in our content. Right? Okay. We'll drop the hazard, and we'll drop analysis, but we'll keep, you know, critical control. Okay?

Okay. Isaura. And then Missy.

MS. ANDALUZ: Okay. I think I'm a little bit confused here. Because under a HACCP plan, it's, you have like a temperature, it uses like a temperature maximum and minimum that you have to have. And you have to do a certain process if something stays out for a period of time. So what you're saying is an individual, it would be like an individual HACCP plan, but the critical points would be, would it be something that's set nationally, or would it be something that's for each operation? I mean, you know, because the HACCP, it's national. It's critical. I mean,
you have certain things that you follow. It's not just everyone has an individual plan that when you make this product it's one certain way. And if he makes, you know, the product at a different level, it's not the way to do it. There are some national standards.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, there are, there are some, at least some common principles around HACCP, right, and they're applied to, to different, any number of manufacturing or production practices. But there are some basic principles that are followed that most importantly is having the individual who is, is responsible for the production or the manufacturing line, whatever, is to look at that sort of system and identify the, what the vulnerabilities are in there. Okay? And then take corrective action around that particular plant.

So a good example is, I live in the fruit industry in Adams County. So the fruit growers are always looking at, from production to packaging of that product, or looking along the way to say where am I vulnerable in terms of the pathogens, the, you know, where am I adding an unnecessary exposure or hazard, right, and then how do I address them? It may be on the water quality. It could be on the worker protection standards, it could be the transportation. But there are some, you know, the broad framework around HACCP,
but there's, every plan is individualized to look at their own operation. Okay?

MS. ANDALUZ: But there is, it's inspected sometimes too. I mean --

MR. REDDING: Pardon me?

MS. ANDALUZ: But some of them also inspect it.

MR. REDDING: Oh, yeah. There are, there are retailers which inspect, you know, I want to see your HACCP plan, right? Completely acceptable. But I think over the years, what has happened is that producers have accepted that as a good management practice. I really should have, you know, critical control points identified, and then take corrective action to address them. Right? So what we're saying here is bring that principle forward in this type of planning. Let's see. Pardon me? Yeah, I know Missy was next, and then we'll do Doug and Keith and Josette. Okay?

MS. HUGHES: I think I have two thoughts. One, in the dairy world, and as I look around the room, I'm thinking that I'm not sure how much exposure there is to what's happening. But a number of groups have developed what, what's called a FARM, and it's F-A-R-M, audit. And producers, both conventional and organic, are being asked to participate in that so that the retailers, the big retailers can confirm compliance with things like animal care standards and some sustainability standards, and, you know,
looking to, for that. And so, I guess it's just perhaps a model that we might want to look at. And I'm also thinking about this kind of a whole value chain and where we might be able to find some incentives in the marketplace for people to participate in these kind of programs, farmers to participate in these kind of programs. And maybe we can draw some incentives out of the marketplace as far as that goes.

The second thought I have, again, is dairy. And we are not using it, but I know of two other companies that are using something that's called Caring Dairy. And what it is, is an opportunity for the farmer to go through an online tool that looks at what the farmer is going on the farm and offers opportunity for the farmer to become more sustainable, things that the farmer might want to consider doing. And it basically takes the farmer through a whole decision tree, and participating in, in Caring Dairy is incentivized by these companies. Their, their, their dairy producers are incentivized to participate in this. If you don't participate in it, you're not dinged. But if you do, you get some kind of a bump.

And I just, as we're talking about the work, or the plan that we might want people to engage in, it seems to me that it almost needs to be a facilitated decision tree kind of a conversation. Like, okay, so you have, you know,
you're a farmer. You have six neighbors. How do you, you know, approach them? And, you know, this one is doing this, and this one is doing this. You make these decisions based on that, you make these agreements.

And I think there's a way to make it a sophisticated but yet simple conversation. And how might something like an online tool or something like that help that. And also maybe, you know, bring a degree of objectiveness to the conversation or neutrality to the conversation that we're all I think feeling is key to this, to this whole, the success of this. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Again, sort of on our list of models, all right, we want to, we could look at a couple of those. So just in terms of, you know, think ahead in terms of task of the committee once we leave here, looking and exploring different models. So we've heard several in this conversation that we could certainly take a look at. Okay.Doug.

MR. GOEHRING: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would, I would suggest that it sounds pretty complicated. Or we're making this way too complicated when we talk about all the things that we're discussing. I think it's very easy, and I think everybody is right in what they're trying to identify and say, and maybe making it more relevant to themselves. But it is about mitigating strategies or
principles that we want to put in place to analyze those
critical control points. But quite frankly, it all comes
down to what we ask the food processing industry, for
example. It's best management practices. What are we going
to put in place. So I think conceptually we, we already
have it. We're looking at best management practices and
utilizing tools that are out there certainly helps us in
some areas.

And I think of the same thing Melissa had spoke
about. Keystone has the Fieldprint Calculator. And it's
one that's used for outcome based metrics on sustainability.
There are different tools that we could use, but quite
frankly, when we get right down to ground zero, we have to
look at those farmers, their operations, the resources at
their disposal, and things they need to consider. So it's,
I don't want to dismiss a lot of those models out there.
They help us learn more about ourselves or operations. That
it really is going to come down to where am I, what are my
soil, what are my challenges and conditions, and working
with all my neighbors to figure out what is it that we need
to be mindful of?

And there's a lot of questions in that in itself.
So it's good conversation, and I understand why we're going
there. I just don't want to see us make it too complicated
because ultimately we all have to come back around to this
whole issue about best management practices and analyzing that.

MR. REDDING: Fair point. Thank you. Keith. And then Josette.

MR. KISLING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Keith Kisling. One thing we haven't really talked about yet is private property rights. And when you, if you have a meeting, and we're asking our farmers to all get together and come up with a plan, that they can all get along with, that's, that's, that's well and good. But if you want people to, if you want farmers to walk out of the meeting, you try to dictate to them their private property rights. So, we have not mentioned that yet. I'm just, just telling you as we come to a model that we all can agree on, we want to be real cautious about that part of it, the property rights.

MR. REDDING: That's a good point. Josette.

MS. LEWIS: I want to make two specific suggestions on perhaps the creation of working groups, two working groups, and also two sort of agenda of people, types of organizations and issues we'd like to hear from in our future meetings. One would be, to kind of pick up on the discussion we have been I'd say generally agreeing, the sort of practical tools for producers, and that the Mary-Howell examples of her son's case study, if he had this manual in
hand. So it seems to me that a group could dig into that a little bit more to kind of come up with an outline and maybe the key principles or elements.

I don't know what this thing is doing. It goes red and it goes green. It's a Christmas blinking light.

MR. REDDING: Technology. Now it's going.

MS. LEWIS: Well, okay. We'll keep trying. So, it seems to me having a group dig into a little bit, kind of coming up with what are the key things that need to be addressed there to equip producers to meet coexistence, thinking these are the things they can largely take action on themselves, even if that actually means reaching out to other people. Okay? So that's one program of work, and maybe it's a working group and/or some talks that we might hear in the future.

And I specifically in that area like to look more deeply at this example from the University of Minnesota, which is the Organic Risk Management Handbook. And that looks at, it's a whole lot of different types of risk, a lot of different types of risk for organic producers, including adventitious presence or unintended presence of GMO. So maybe that's where we would focus, obviously more of our attention. But it's, to me it's an interesting model that seems to address a number of the different types of issues here today. So, that's just one preview.
The second is a working group and/or kind of an issue to dig into in terms of hearing some speakers, is on information sharing to facilitate coexistence management plan. I think this is actually, there are some models out there. We heard about the MP3 plans that some states have that have facilitated information sharing. Geez, I can somehow remember several years ago when we hear from the American Seed Trade Association about pinning maps in the seed industry as a way to facilitate information sharing.

But I think there's a little bit of interesting challenges in this world because you're dealing with potentially market-sensitive information about who is growing what. So I think there is actually some depth of work that needs to be thought through on that. So that may be another working group and/or some speakers we could hear from on that topic. So it's two kind of specific suggestions I make.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Ron?

MR. CARLETON: Ron Carleton. I just wanted to go back briefly to, and not to beat a dead horse, but this concept of a control plan. And, you know, how we term it, what it looks like, you know, whether it's a HACCP or a, it's CCP3 or whatever. One of the things that, that jumped out at me as I was listening to it is that how we present
this, how it's done, I mean, I'm thinking about the producer
who hears that, you know, am I going to have to develop a
plan? If so, what's that going to cost me in time or money
or both? Who's going to be looking at this, and what are
the consequences if I either don't develop a good plan or I
don't follow it.

So, I mean, we also have to be careful about
making it look like we're imposing another obligation of
some sort on, on our producers because I think that's
another thing that gets them to walk away pretty quickly as
well. You know, it's one thing about promoting
conversations and promoting coexistence and promoting, you
know, whatever sort of collaborations or partnerships that
we might want to be promoting. But I just, bells went off
when I got to thinking about this being seen as the
imposition of an obligation to develop a plan that somebody
is going to pass on. So.

MR. REDDING: That's a good point. So there's,
there's a fine line in there, right? Because we want this
to be taken seriously. I mean, this is not just for one
more thing to either write or worry about. It really is
trying to change behavior at the farm and marketplace to
avoid a problem later. Right? Either economic personally
or economic in the marketplace. So there's that fine line.
But I agree with you. You don't want to, you know, you've got to be careful on how you position these things and attach them to existing obligations in the, in agriculture somehow. But at the same time, we want them to say I get it. Right? And okay, I get it. I mean, I need to be thinking differently about my practice, my behaviors. So how do you do that? All right? How formal does that need to be? Okay, good point. Lynn.

MR. CLARKSON: Lynn Clarkson. Following up on Josette's suggestion. In my mind, this is a two-channel approach, one government, one private. Under the government, I look at the inputs coming from Ag Marketing Service because we're talking about markets, making the distinction. NRCS, because they've got a great platform and good access, and extension. And in the private sector, the ones I think we would be dealing with from the parochial perspective of my world, it would be the Grain and Feed Associations, which has a national presence right here.

Secondly, we have a member of this committee who is with the Farm Bureau. And over the roughly 30 years we've been involved, or my company has been involved with identity preserved in a, in a serious level, we have seen the trade associations of the farmers move away from looking askance at IP to more and more embracing it.
The Indiana Farm Bureau recently put on a program about conversion to organic or participation. We've seen the Illinois Farm Bureau do that. We've seen the Iowa Farm Bureau make that. And the Farm Bureau or the Grains, or some of the other farm organizations have a footprint in almost every county in the country. And they put together meetings of neighbors. And so you can do neighbors at one level, your immediate neighbor, neighbors at two levels, the next field away, and three levels, and talk about good neighbors make good markets, good markets make good neighbors.

And at those, what we see, the invitations going out to, to seed companies. What are you doing to help me be a good supplier to this market? What's the degree of purity that you're offering for next year in terms of genetically engineered product in the bag or not in the bag? The technology companies are sometimes invited. Technology companies may blend with seed companies in talking about using some of the methods of blocking pollen transfer. Others would be talking about sensors that would allow you to cure a problem after you got it, which you would do by looking for markers in things.

So, a good working relationship with these farmer trade associations would have sort of neighborly meetings. And those would be happening sometime probably in August of
2016 in preparation for the 2017 crop. Because when you get into identity preservation and the market distinction, you think ahead of time. You can't come from behind and pull it out of the commodity. And you would invite market representatives because what you're talking about is local market distinctions.

The organic market is not so big that any farmer anywhere in the country would want to participate in that. But there are other markets that are important here for good behavior that are localized or regionalized. For years, the main non-GMO market was located along the Illinois, Mississippi, and Ohio Rivers because the demand for that market came from Asia. Only recently have you seen an increase in domestic demand for non-GMOs, and that expanded the market into Nebraska and, and Colorado and all across the mid-West. So if you're trying to set up good management practice, a good management practice for what? If nobody in the discussion group has any interest at all in a certain market, then that changes your good management practices. So that seems to be a starting place.

So, I would like to hear from the government agency that I just mentioned between now and the end of our sessions. And I'd also welcome inviting some of these representatives, these private organizations to talk to us.
MR. REDDING: That's good. Mary-Howell and then Josette.

MS. LEWIS: Oh, no. I'm fine.


MS. MARTENS: This is to follow up a little bit on what Ron said. As a farmer, on our bookshelf we have our conservation plan notebook. We have our manure management plan notebook. We have our organic system plan notebook. We are, we are kind of used doing this kind of thing. And also we go into FSA at least once a year to, to report our crops. Our banker wants to know everything that we've done. Farmers kind of do this as far as these system plans that lay out for other, other groups or agencies or people to know what we're doing. It's invasive, sure. But it's already being done. And it's something that qualifies us for various perks. Whether it's organic certification or farm programs or the continuance of our line of credit, you know, it kind of has to get done.

As far as coexistence plans that are somehow required, and that seems to be coming up as, as a threat to farmers, I don't think any of us are talking about that. I think what we're talking about is putting together a, a guide, a guidance document that allows farmers to make, first, first and foremost, good decisions on their own farms as far as where their, where their vulnerabilities are,
where their control points are, and, and then figure out, you know, what we can do on our own farm to minimize the risks to producing a product that will meet the markets that we want to meet.

That is the HACCP plan, or CCCCCP, or whatever we want to call it. I think we've got to be careful about those acronyms too. But to just come up with a plan on our own farm that identifies where our, our control points are, and then know what to do, know what the tools are in the toolbox that can minimize our risks at each certain control point.

At some point, this will include neighbors. But first and foremost, it doesn't. First and foremost it includes knowledge on our own farms what we have to do. And, and so as much as anything, I see a guidance document helping the farmers doing IP to better understand where their, their vulnerabilities are, and what the tools are out there for them to control those vulnerabilities. Does it mean buying their seed from a different company? Does it mean planting something different on this particular field where the perimeter is vulnerable? Does it mean that we need to plant some hybrid willow along this particular hedgerow that is a fast-growing species that's going to create more of a pollen filter?
But, but really, the tools we're talking about are not just coexistence as far as a relationship between to farmers, but just getting information out to the farmers who want to do IP, what are the tools in the toolbox. These, yes they are on the Internet. But they're not in a real farmer-friendly form a lot of them that just, just hands, both the farmer and also there are professions like the NRCS staff or, or the Extension staff, something that is, is easily understood and easily incorporated into a farming system.

If indeed then we do need to go and talk to our neighbors, we have something to talk about. You know, one of the problems I've had with the advice we've gotten from organic certifiers is you need to talk to your neighbors. Well, what do you talk about? You know, do we, do we go, want to go sit down with Dave Ingraham and tell him well you can't grow this on this farm? Well, that's not going to go anywhere.

What we need to do is to say, be able to say to Dave, if you and us can figure out how to better put in a buffer, and the buffer needs to be approximately this distance, and, you know, maybe, maybe there are reasons, other reasons or other programs that we can tap in that will help us pay for this buffer, I think that discussion would go somewhere. So, identifying what the topics of
conversations and the tools that we can use in those conversations would be really helpful to make those relationships work. But, you know, first and foremost, it isn't about necessarily changing our neighbors behavior. It might be about changing our behavior.


MR. GOEHRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mary, I just wanted to share a little bit when we talk about farmers are doing. And I know that organic farmers and, and our identity preserved producers and our seed producers are doing a lot of what you're talking about with documenting. But our other farmers are not. And that would be, boy, that would be a real challenge to try and get them to do that voluntarily. I will cite some examples, though, where they, they do get involved in documentation. The conservation security program or EQIP, in fact, I was one of the first in the first two years the very first conservation security programs that came out, I actually signed up for one because it sounded pretty alluring.

And then I found out what the paperwork was. Well, they had already initiated the payment, which kind of locked me in because it wasn't a matter of not doing it and getting paid. It was not doing it and then having to give them back their money. That was quite, quite an incentive itself. And I would suggest if you're ever going to develop
and design a program, that's probably the best way to do it, because you lock people into doing it.

MS. MARTENS: Yes.

MR. GOEHRING: But to Ron's point before, producers don't want more thing to do. But certainly outlining some things so that they think about what they could do to mitigate risk would, would take us down a path along ways of doing a lot of good in many respects. And I, and I think you hit on that point beautifully when you talked about planting a hybrid willow that grows quickly and can act as a buffer. That, again, is a local issue, and it works so well because I have counties in my state where they can do that, and other counties, they can't even support the growth of an old elm tree because even though it's as drought tolerant as it is, it's challenge is just getting established and staying alive, let alone a willow tree. But there are so many things that we can look at. And at the local level, you can consider so many different options, again, to put barriers and buffers up. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Alan.

MR. KEMPER: I just, Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to reinforce what Doug said. I mean, a lot of farmers are doing a lot of plans where, and most of it is driven around economics. You know, that's caused survival mode, whether that's financial or, or others, with FSA or with if you have
highly erodible land, you need your conservation plan for it.

    Mr. Chairman, I also have, you mentioned somewhere, and I'll misquote this. Changing the mindset of the farmers. I almost resent that because you're not changing the mindset of most farmers. You're changing the mindset of a few bad farmers that are not maybe following best management practices. So don't, let's not lump all of American agriculture into the bad guys or trying to change their mindset.

    Let's maybe say we're going to encourage everybody to strive to do better, and maybe the bad apples in agriculture will do a lot better to do that. But there are so many people out there doing the right thing for the right reasons. I mean, they are the American dream of a lot of people. If you look at most of society, and we all have a contract with society in agriculture to provide them good food and give them choices. But if you look at most society and you ask them about American agriculture, as we do out in the Midwest, they think we're pretty wholesome people. So let's just create the, the tools necessary to get the bad apples up to the best management practices that a lot of us are already practicing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

    MR. REDDING: Yes, Alan, but just for the record, I mean it wasn't, it wasn't good, bad, evil. I mean, I'm
just trying to say this, as we look at our task is that I think even for all of us on the committee is sort of looking at, looking at the, the issues of ag and how do we address those. And there are those clearly who on this, on this spectrum of adoption of good management practices you see around water quality, you see around production, I think this is one of those spectrums of agriculture where you have folks doing exceptional work today or well-informed, some generally aware. And others, you know, may not be.

I mean, a very simple question of biology and science is do you know how far that pollen will drift on the crop that you're planting. A very good question for everybody in agriculture who is growing crops as one example. And that's not to point out that that person who doesn't know is bad necessarily. But it's really, trying to really help ag think what is it that I need to do. Right? Do I know what I'm doing? How do I talk about that?

A piece we haven't really engaged on here is the narrative that goes with this, this coexistence guidance document is as important as the content. Right? Like a lot of things. Right? How do I present this? I mean, why am I presenting this? Why do I have an interest in this? And, you know, there's not a lot of context on most farms for, for this conversation. So part of, part of this I think
we've got to think about what is it that we're saying? Why am I even in this conversation around coexistence?

And that brings us back to who those stakeholders are and where that level of responsibility, that relationship is really going to be critical, if that's an Extension, if that's a trade association, if that's my, you know, service line individual somewhere will be really important as we go, go forward here. Okay? But I appreciate your, your point.

So we're at 11:45. So, what I, what I heard, again, a great conversation, sort of three pieces. One, the joint coexistence guidance document and some key points around what, what has to be in that guidance document, and how we set that up is for, for further conversation. Secondly, there are a number of models that need to be explored, and we should look at what those models are and wherever they exist. We've identified some, but I'm sure that there will be others. And a third is around sort of future work, and particular agenda items of the committee. And, and Josette mentioned one and others have here as well. So at least in terms of the three points that --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Could you explain the third one?

MR. REDDING: Well, the third I think was, was, Josette, you were simply looking at, and Lynn, another, I
think looking at, I think your point was around Minnesota, right?

MS. LEWIS: As one example on the --

MR. REDDING: As one example --

MS. LEWIS: -- grower toolkit.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, could be toolkit related.

Lynn, you mentioned several agencies and private sector as areas that would inform the guidance document. Right? That's our focus is really getting the content and the model piece. Does that work? Okay. Other sort of big pieces that I've missed in those three? Does everything we've talked about sort of in the last hour and even this morning sort of fit into those three categories? So guidance document, content, model, models for delivery, models for approach, and looking at future considerations for agenda items, or at least folks that we'd want to hear from. Greg.

MR. JAFFE: And I do think, Lynn and I both talked about the idea of some sort of federal policy statement or some federal, some federal overarching viewpoint on this to help encourage people at the state and local level to do things. Right, Lynn?

MR. CLARKSON: Yeah.

MR. JAFFE: That would be --
MR. REDDING: Right. So having that sort of presence as we, as we develop what we're doing is the federal, the USDA piece of that?

MR. CLARKSON: Yeah.

MR. REDDING: All right. Okay. Okay. Any, any clarity on the last hour? I always feel like I'm in this position to try to, to process, you know, what I, what I've heard. And I don't want to pretend that we've got it all right. But I'm trying to at least get the categories to say we'll come back to the table, when we start talking about work groups or assignments or where to from here that we can have a little better idea of what, of what we're doing and what we've heard. Michael. And then Jerry.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Yeah. I think just the one other thing that I heard sort of interspersed with some other things is maybe there's need for some specific discussion of just, just, just looking very deliberately at how we try to bring everyone to the table. I think that was mentioned by a number of people I know. Doug was talking about in sort of broadening the discussion. And so I think I heard that from a couple of people, but I wonder if that's something that needs on the agenda is how specific, explicitly looking at how we entice everyone to join in the conversations.

MR. REDDING: Jerry.
MR. SLOCUM: Jerry Slocum. Mr. Chairman, I think that part of the preamble to our work needs to be a USDA piece to talk about where we see agriculture going in the 21st Century, more and more specialty crops offered, more and more opportunities for niche productions and why a more formal coexistence structure or strategy may be required. I think, you know, I think coexistence is alive and well in American agriculture. And it's worked at by the people that practice it. And, and I don't think we want to do anything to diminish that or to suggest that it doesn't exist. But the opportunities that, that agriculture holds in the future may require more formal plans.

And then there's this reality, Ron, that when we write a coexistence plan with our neighbor, we are entering into a contract of sorts. Whether we sign anything officially, or whether we just shake hands, but we are, we are entering into a contract of sorts. We talk about this contract we have with society. Well, when you have a coexistence plan with your neighbor, when you agree to practice certain practices, and you agree not to practice certain practices, you have entered into an unwritten contract that if you practice long enough becomes a written contract and courts will recognize it as such.

So I think, I think, I think as we have this discussion with this universe of growers, some of us that
are not familiar, some of us that are more familiar than others, we, we need to write a pretty good narrative. We really do. And we need to pretend that we are writing to an audience that, that knows very little about it because there's a huge array of people out there that know very little about it. Thank you.

Mr. REDDING: That's a good point. Excellent point. So on that note, let's break. Let's grab lunch. Back here, you know, quarter of, 10 of 1:00. The Secretary will be here at 1 o'clock, and, and then again, don't lose the conversation. We're going to pick it up for this afternoon and goal will be to, to really define sort of the work plan and future actions of the committee to include meetings. Okay? Thank you.

Whereupon, at 11:51 a.m., a brief recess is taken.)

MR. REDDING: Good afternoon, everybody, and a special welcome to Secretary Vilsack. We, first of all, appreciate very much your service to agriculture and public service. You've done a great job for ag, and continue to admire the good work that you've done.

We want to say thanks as well to reconvening the AC21. I've said it before, but coming back after several years of, you know, work being done by the USDA on recommendations, hearing those recommendations and the
report out yesterday, really impressive work. But also
knowing that this, this group here that you appointed really
is a great group of people, good thinkers, great, very
diverse. And the staff as well have done a great job.

We have spent the last day, you know, talking
about the recommendations but, but also --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Here. You want to use this
one?

MR. REDDING: Also picking up the charge that has
been put forth here about the joint coexistence plans. A
lot of good conversations, spirited conversation as you
would expect. But all in the furtherance of coexistence,
which we know personally is a priority of you, and that has
shown in your commitment both to the reappointment of these
folks and relaunching, but also just personally staying
engaged. And that engagement certainly has been noticed and
valued. So welcome. Thank you.

MR. VILSACK: Well I want to, I want to -- do I
have to hold this?

MS. LEWIS: You can leave it on the table.

MR. VILSACK: Okay. I want to thank the Secretary
for those kind remarks and certainly want to acknowledge his
personal commitment to this process. I think all of you
have done incredible work. But obviously it requires that
someone who is chairing this effort, and I want to thank
Secretary Redding for his tireless work in connection with this, this committee. And I'd like to thank Michael and the team at USDA for, thank you for the work that they have done collectively through this process. I think they have been invaluable and certainly have been working hard to try to make sure that folks got the information that they needed to feel satisfied about the process.

And last but absolutely not least, I want to thank all of you. I know this is not easy work. But I will tell you, I think it's some of the most important work that is currently being done in terms of looking at the future of agriculture and the diversity within agriculture, and figuring out creative ways to respect that diversity and to allow it to continue to move forward.

I have some prepared remarks, and I want to deliver them. And then I have a personal note at the end that I'd like to share, and then I'd be happy to try to respond to questions in the time that, that's left.

You know, I'm really very grateful personally for your continued engagement in this issue of coexistence, which I honestly do believe is a topic that is critical to the future of agriculture, and agriculture's responsibility for feeding the citizens of this country, and frankly people around the world. Despite the differences in production methods, at the core, the reason I think all of you are here
is because you care as well deeply about the future of farming and agriculture in this country.

You all are passionate, and you are all passionate about the shared responsibility that you've assumed to work to try to provide the American consumer and billions more around the world with safe, affordable, accessible food. To allow agriculture to innovate in the face of a changing climate. To care for the land and the water and air that serves all of us, and to build up and reinvigorate our important rural communities. And frankly, this requires a necessary drive toward innovation and exploration and a need to respond to evolving consumer needs and tastes in the shadow of increasingly taxed and limited resources.

And last but certainly not least, to ensure that we indeed have a strong next generation, a diverse group and generation of farmers and ranchers. And we have great diversity in American agriculture in terms of its size, in terms of its products, in terms of production methods and technology. And that's one cornerstone of the rural and agricultural economy in this country. Embracing diversity has helped, in my view, to make American agriculture resilient. And I think that same attitude hopefully will ensure that American agriculture remains resilient and preserves in the future.
The United States I think continues to evolve when it comes to agriculture and when it comes to our attitudes about food. And we know that agriculture is constantly and consistently trying to meet consumer demands. And we really have to make space for all forms and all types of agriculture, so long as the science tells us they are safe, in order to maximize our ability feed a growing world population in the face of constrained resources.

It's been nearly seven years that I have been Secretary of Agriculture. And in that time, I have seen a vigorous expansion of our agricultural sector, in terms of value, productivity, and a level of innovation. As much as an enterprise is dependent on the forces of nature can be described as robust, I would say that American agriculture continues to be robust and resilient.

And as a result, American consumers are blessed. You know, they trust the products that they find at the grocery store shelves. They trust them to be wholesome, safe, and of the highest quality. And that in part is the result of the need for and embracing of innovation in the agricultural sector.

The topic of coexistence and in fact the role of technology in the future of agricultural production and consumption has never in my view been more critical to achieving the goals of feeding Americans and world
population. And candidly, nor has it been ever as controversial as it is today. Since you all last met, there have been some significant advances in breeding and production technologies, and many new products have come to market that weren't even available a few years ago. By this time, 13 months from now when this administration leaves office, I have no doubt there will be additional new innovations that will present opportunities and challenges.

As an industry, agriculture is in a different place than when you last met. And will be in a different place five years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now. But one thing remains the same, and that is there is a public perception challenge surrounding new agricultural technologies. That challenge is not just here in the United States but frankly around the world.

In just the past month, I have traveled to China, Japan, Belgium, France, and Cuba. I've been in discussions on trade, on climate change, and on sustainable development. And it didn't matter where I was or who I was meeting with, one topic was on everyone's mind, and that is what is indeed the appropriate role of innovation in all forms of agriculture. The issues that we discussed internationally at the micro level -- or, excuse me, at the macro level, all intersect with the work that you've done here and will continue to intersect with the work that you're doing.
Your role for USDA is to help us provide a path forward that's going to help all farmers and consumers here and around the world balance the need to use technology and innovation to meet production demands while also meeting consumer needs to know more about their food, where it was grown, the impact of its production on land, and how it might impact their health and how it was cultivated.

Back in 2012, you gave a report that offered USDA a host of recommendations to address some of these challenges. I am pleased to say that we've responded to many of the recommendations. And I think you've heard about many of those actions at a session yesterday. I want you to know that I am committed personally to continue working on implementing the recommendations in order to bolster coexistence.

You gave us a wide range set of challenges, and we have taken action. In the terms of research in the next few months, we will publish a report that broadly examines economic issues relating to coexistence. Now this report will build off of the information we've gathered recently in the 2014 organic survey. We need to find a way to lessen the frequency of situations that potentially compromise organic production. And hopefully this report will help expand the knowledge base as well as allow us to work towards a solution.
We're going to continue to prioritize research that looks at ways in which we can mitigate or inhibit gene flow. And perhaps the most important thing we have achieved in terms of research is working with the American Seed Trade Association as they further efforts to make a wide variety of seed available to meet producers' needs. We've also taken a look at our own seed banks to ensure that we maintain a wide variety of seed. We've also made new risk management tools available to farmers not growing commodity crops, many of whom have not had access to crop insurance or to risk management tools in the past. They now do.

You also asked us to do some things that today we lack the legal authority to do, particularly surrounding compensation and incentivizing neighbors to work together to minimize unintended presence issues. Now, we still lack those authorities, but this debate and conversation has been helpful as we begin the process of, yes, working towards yet another Farm Bill. And yeah, it never ends.

And for some of what was recommended, we obviously will need to gather additional information that will allow future secretaries of agriculture to inform Congressional leaders and potentially formulate additional requests to Congress for legal authority. These are activities that are taking place on different fronts, and there are other activities that are also operating simultaneously with our
efforts here. The APHIS effort to revise its biotechnology regulations has been launched, and the White House recently announced an effort to modernize the coordinated framework with reference to biotechnology and to look to the future to better understand what is on the technological horizon as it relates to biotechnology.

All of these efforts are going to continue, and there will be opportunities for you as interested citizens as, and as stakeholders to offer your views and expertise. And as this administration comes to a close, the work will continue. I really need from you to know how best we at USDA can empower states and localities to more effectively reinforce the farmer-to-farmer cooperation, the neighbor efforts that you've identified in the past.

I think we've made some important and necessary progress over the last three years, but I would like to leave you with this caution. We truly need diversity in agriculture. We need diversity in production methods, crops produced, and in the farming community itself. And failing to recognize and act on that fact, in my view, compromises agriculture's future, and I would argue the future of our country.

It's imperative from my view for us to find common ground on coexistence. To do so, we have to listen hard to one another, as you all have done over the years. We have
to think big picture about how to advance a diverse agriculture that's ready to meet the multiple challenges of the future, not the least of which is a changing climate. We must fix this in a way that respects the needs of everyone involved and ensures that agriculture in its most diverse forms can thrive so that food supplies, meeting consumer demand can remain abundant, affordable, and safe.

In the long term, we also need farmers and stakeholders to be forthright and forthcoming about the problems agriculture faces today and how together we can fix them in a way that respects everyone's needs and ensures that all forms of agriculture can thrive.

Now, during the last almost seven years as secretary, I've had a unique responsibility, and not necessarily the option of focusing on one aspect of agriculture, one method of agriculture, one type of agriculture producer. Many people who articulate certain needs and desires related to agriculture have, in my view, a luxury of being able to represent a particular point of view, to advocate passionately for that point of view. The real hard work comes when trying to respect and identify ways in which all forms can move forward.

The work that you're doing is the most difficult work that's being done in this administration in terms of agriculture because each of you has been asked, in part, to
in essence check your particular individual or personal focus and try to find the collective wisdom within agriculture in the U.S. That is really a hard job, and you have done an admirable job at giving us a set of recommendations that helps move this process forward.

More importantly, I think you've set an example. An example for all of us within agriculture, of the need for us to listen carefully, to respect other views, and to try to figure out where the common ground is. I have lived in this city for now almost seven years, and common ground is not easy to find. And it's unfortunate, because I think America works best when people do operate out of a sense of community and operate out of a sense of shared responsibility. So I am hopeful that over the course of this meeting and into 2016 that you can give us some very specific set of recommendations in terms of how we might be able to better formulate a sense of community within agriculture.

And I realize and appreciate that there are going to be divisive issues. We're dealing with several of them right now. And I realize that it's perhaps not totally fair to ask folks to check their individual feelings at the door. But you're the best of the best. You've been selected for a particular reason, because you're accomplished, you're thoughtful, you're creative, and I've dealt with just about
all of you in one form or another during the course of the last seven years.

As I traveled around the world the last 30 days, I was struck by the role American agriculture plays. I was struck in Cuba about the role that we could play in agriculture in formulating a closer relationship with a country that has been our enemy for as long, almost as long as I have been alive. I mean, I do remember as a kid watching Fidel Castro make the decision to turn away from the U.S. and more towards a communist approach. And I was a kid when the Cuban Missile Crisis hit this country, and we all thought that we were very, very close, and indeed we were, to World War III.

Agriculture has a unique opportunity to, organic agriculture has a unique opportunity to, to be helpful in producing more agricultural product so that the growing demand for that product, those products can be met in an affordable and accessible way. But they are not down in Cuba prepared for that. And they frankly don't even know how to start. America has the opportunity to provide that direction. That's exciting.

When I traveled to China, I was struck by the fact that they continue to struggle. They have anywhere from 60 to 100 million farmers in China. And they simply cannot feed all of their people. And they are, from a security
standpoint, concerned about the fact that they can't feed all their people. And they are looking for ways in which they can extend their reach beyond China, establishing relationships with countries in Africa, in an effort to try to become less dependent on the United States. At the same time, they continue to need what we grow. And they continue to look for ways in which we can work collaboratively together to meet each other's needs.

In Japan, the conversation was about trade, about developing an even closer relationship between our two countries based on agricultural trade, a way in which we could meet the needs of Japanese consumers with American products that we know the Japanese like because they've been purchasing them for years.

And the discussion in Belgium and Paris was about agriculture's role in helping the rest of the world get to a point where there was a collaboration and agreement on our collective and accumulated responsibility to do something about greenhouse gas issues. It was agriculture that allowed the U.S. in part to make a very significant commitment of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions so that it in turn could provide pressure on China and India to do the same, which in turn created pressure on non-aligned countries to ultimately reach an agreement.
Just think how difficult it was to get 196 countries to agree on something this controversial. Agriculture in the U.S. and its willingness to look at cover crops, its willingness to look at irrigation systems that are different, its willingness to embrace renewable energy, its willingness to look at creative utilization of wood products, its willingness to look at a rotational grazing and conservation on highly-erodible lands. All of that allowed us to make a significant commitment to the overall U.S. commitment, and it helped to lead the rest of our country to a better place.

So, just in that 30-day period, I saw the power of agriculture and the power of U.S. agriculture. But the reason we were able to do that is because I was able to talk about the diversity of American agriculture. I could talk about organics in Cuba because we have a thriving organic industry here. I could talk about conservation in Belgium and in Paris because our farmers are now reaching historic levels of commitment to conservation. I can talk about meeting the needs of the Chinese population because of the amazing productivity of the American farmer. And I can talk about the opportunities and the challenges of a trade agreement that could allow us to meet an ever-increasing global population of middle class consumers in Asia and
Japan, all because of the way in which we approach agriculture in this country.

So we need to preserve that. And we need to educate our friends and neighbors in rural areas, our friends and neighbors who want to engage in urban agriculture, that they are not working at cross-purposes here. They are working in concert to advance sustainable agriculture. They are working in concert to allow America to continue to be an agricultural leader in the world and to allow us to be a more secure nation because we meet our food needs, unlike most other countries in the world. That's the importance of the work you all are doing. And we just need a way in which you can help us figure out how we can engage states and local communities in passing this message on.

And the last thing I will say is when you do this, and as we do this, the ramifications of this will extend beyond agriculture. It will reacquaint the United States with, and the people within the U.S. of how reaching common ground and searching for common solutions is actually a much more creative use of time than trying to figure out how to divide this country.

Now, I can't think of a greater gift to future generations. Not just future generations of farmers and ranchers, but future generations, period, than figuring out how to get America back on track in terms of focusing on a
common purpose as opposed to this divisiveness that we see all too often.

So with that, let me just simply thank you again. And I'm happy to take questions in the time that I've got left. I apologize. I am headed to the White House after this for a discussion about 2016.

MR. REDDING: First of all, Secretary, thank you. You have been consistent over seven years in the vision for American agriculture and your commitment to coexistence. I think that was our first conversation even prior to our committee being appointed and relaunched. So thank you for that commitment and consistency across time. I'm pleased to have the results of that work and really to see the results of the USDA over the last couple of years. It's really, really important. Thank you. Alan.

MR. KEMPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Vilsack, it's good to see you again, my friend. Thoughts, definitely some of my thoughts are, with the Chairman Redding's help, we're going to give you some pathways forward to help incentivize state and local governments and local organizations to have a dialogue on coexistence. The challenges in the next couple years, Mr. Secretary, unlike the three years prior, was when agriculture was in great shape and great economic shape, and nobody was fighting.
Everybody was happy. Coexistence conversations would have been a lot easier.

Unfortunately, even with ERS and other studies, net farming income is going to be down 40 percent this year, 40 percent next year. A lot of farmers are having their loans pulled from them. They're fighting over the land. They're fighting over different markets. So our challenge will be not only to get the right vehicle down there for them, but get the right climate for them to be able to discuss it. I just wanted to give you that thought coming from the heartland. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

MR. VILSACK: Well, I certainly appreciate the economic challenges. And, you know, there are, as everyone knows, Alan, many reasons for the current state, not the least of which is actually, I mentioned China. The Chinese economy is not growing at, at the rate it was once growing. That has obviously impacted demand from China's perspective. And for the first time in several years, Canada has now become our number one customer again. China was for many, many years, and now, because of the reduction in Chinese demand, we're seeing a realignment there.

But I'm optimistic in the short, short to medium term because I think we're going to continue to see trade. And I am hopeful that in 2016 it's a positive year for trade and trade agreements. We're continuing knocking barriers
down, and we're continuing to make progress on, on markets that have been closed.

You know, one of the challenges that we obviously faced in 2015, and, and maybe we'll face it again in 2016 is Avian Influenza. That certainly didn't help. But I think the, you know, I see a tremendous opportunity in, in the renewable fuel industry, not just in the domestic market but there's a very robust export market. Recent trade mission to India indicates a desire, a potential desire on the part of India to, to begin contemplating a purchase of American biofuel, and that's also true in China.

So I'm, I'm optimistic about this, but I'm not naive to know that it's not going to be, it's not going to be easy. But, you know, if we don't have this conversation, then there is very little way in my view in which new people, people that aren't necessarily fortunate to be born into a farm family in which new people can enter this, this way of life. And so what happens is we're getting, you know, potentially a smaller and smaller universe of people who know how to farm.

And I honestly don't think that's particularly a good thing for rural areas because there are certain, there's a certain level of population that has to support a school and a hospital and other social services and quality of life things. So I believe we want to keep those small
towns vibrant. So if we figure out ways in which coexistence works, well then potentially the smaller operator can get in business. Maybe they've got a local, regional food market that they can meet while the production guys are meeting the export markets and the demand for domestic consumption on a large scale basis.

So I think this is important to, to the, you know, to the ability of rural America to get back on track. And, you know, we're beginning to see, you know, while the farm economy is struggling, we're beginning to see the rural economy generally coming back a little bit. Unemployment is coming down. The bio-based economy, new manufacturing opportunities are being created.

So, it's not an easy conversation today. It may not be an easy conversation in 2016. But I think beyond that, I think our projections are that we're going to see a return. And, and at the end of the day, we're going to have to figure out how to feed all these people. Because one thing for sure is that this, at least at this point in time, there doesn't seem to be a slowing down of the global population increase. Somebody has got to feed them.

And I've been trying to tell our European friends that it's not a competition, that we're in this together because it, you know, it's not a, it doesn't have to be a
winner-loser kind of thing. It's, we can all win here if we, if we figure out ways to work collaboratively.

MR. KEMPER: Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Mary-Howell, and then Leon.

MS. MARTENS: It's not lost on us in the organic community that you are treading a very fine line between representing everybody. And we appreciate what you have done because it is challenging to not take sides and to speak for everybody without looking like you're taking sides. One of the things, and I think it's working thinking about is that more and more people coming into organics now are not coming in with a philosophical lifestyle approach but a more practical farming approach. We're seeing this with a lot of the young farmers that we're working with. And I think that's going to make coexistence a little easier.

A lot of them aren't coming from farm backgrounds. And again, that means that we're not carrying in baggage that we might, might make it difficult to speak with our, our neighbors. So things are changing rapidly in the organic community as far as the composition of the people involved and, and making decisions. This is going to make things challenging because assumptions that may have been made in the past may not be still pertinent. But it may make things a lot easier for you and for who comes after

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you. And, and there are those of us in the organic
community who would love to be able to help with Cuba if,
indeed, some of the expertise we have learned could be of
value.

MR. VILSACK: Well, the last point, there's no
question that you can, you can be of help. The challenge
right now is that the law prohibits us from using any kind
of USDA program to facilitate that dialogue. And until
Congress gets serious about lifting the embargo so that we
could use our programs, it's going to be a little bit
frustrating because people are going to go down there, state
ag commissioners and secretaries and so forth. They're
sending delegations down there, and they're ready to go, and
they are anxious, and everybody, and the Cubans are anxious.
I mean, they are very anxious.

But, but the reality is you've got this huge
barrier. Right? And the President recently, I think
yesterday or so, indicated that it's his desire perhaps to
get down there in 2016. So that, that will create a
continued impetus I think and momentum for change. But once
that happens, then the organic industry needs to be prepared
to be aggressive in terms of providing that assistance and
help because there is just an incredible opportunity. And,
and these people are hungry.
And, you know, they are, they must be like amazing mechanics. That's all I can figure. You know, they have, you know, it's not just our great tractors that were built in 1940, it's the Soviet tractors that were built. It's pretty impressive. And, and you know, they're, they're proud of that. And, but if they had access to up-to-date technology and information about organics, I mean, they could be the center of the organic production world in a very significant way. And, you know, they're beginning to embrace the notion of private ownership of land. I mean, it's obviously going to be a huge transition for them.

So that's one point. And the second point I'd make, you know, I sometimes debate with myself when you all aren't around. And I get in a room, and I, and I, and I think to myself, you know, is, is being someone who is trying to get folks to coexist, is being moderate, is that, is that a sign of strength or is it a sign of weakness? Is it a sign of, of, of, you know, being a realist, or is it just that you're trying, you're just punting the tough decisions. And, and I struggle with that almost every day.

But as I, as I, as I talk to people, intuitively I think people want to get along. And, and I don't think that they necessarily get helped in terms of the dialogue, in terms of, from, from leaders. I don't think we've helped them much. And, so I'm going to continue to stay the course
here, recognizing that it does, you know, it's, you know, there are going to be people who see this as something as a cop out and so forth. I don't think it is. I think it's much tougher to do what you all are trying to do than it is to stake out a position and say, by God, this is the right position.

I mean, I could do that. Anybody can do that. Not anybody can do what you folks are trying to do. And that's, to me, what, that's why I value so much the fact that you're willing to do this, because it's not easy.

MR. REDDING: Leon, then Doug.

MR. CORZINE: Leon Corzine. Secretary Vilsack, thank you very much for your comments and for the work you've done to represent all of agriculture. You've, you have really been a great voice for all of us. And I appreciate the opportunity to be on this committee because it's right what you've said. It is a strength trying to get along and coexist and take that pathway.

I think especially when you look at the times that, that we're looking at, especially in crop and, and livestock agriculture that Alan alluded to. My son, Craig, is looking a lot more at identity preserved opportunities, to increase the value of corn and soy and whatever else we might look at at the farm gate. And so the charge you gave us, I appreciate because it really, for this, really directs
us to take a look at local and state levels so that we can come to solutions that are developed there with some guidance with USDA. But, but we have, we're so diverse we have different issues and, and with technologies, not just seed technologies, but the equipment technologies that we have are awesome now and are going to help us do even better. But we all have to learn about that.

So some of the guidance that we can develop to take to those local communities, to our communities, will help us with added-value products I think that the consumers want. And it isn't one added-value over the other. I, but, that's what it's going to take, I think, for all of us to help our rural communities and, and our farms to be sustainable and, and do all the things that we need to do moving forward. So, thank you.

MR. VILSACK: You know, you make an interesting point. And I, and as you were making it, I thought about the manufacturing business in this country. You know, when I was growing up as a kid, America basically had the manufacturing economy to itself. I mean, World War II devastated Europe. Asia, and Africa and South America were not particularly developed. And we just sort of had it to ourselves. And we built a lot of stuff. And, and all of a sudden, along came a few countries that figured out how to
build a lot of stuff a little bit less expensively. And we, we saw our manufacturing base decline. And now we're beginning to see it come back, but it's coming back not based on trying to compete with that low-end sort of commodity item, but the high value-added, quality product. And that's why there is so much emphasis on education and STEM and all that because it is what's going to be necessary for us to take that next level.

If you look at agriculture and you start thinking 10, 15, 20, 30 years down the road, you know, at some point in time, China is going to figure, figure out what we figured out. And they're going to be more productive. And at some point in time, there are a lot of African nations that are going to figure this out. So how is it that in addition to the growing world population, how is it that America maintains profitability in farming? And I think over a long period of time, it is that value-added proposition. It is the, the efficiency that we create with precision agriculture, and it's the, it's the high-value proposition.

So, you know, as you think about this, what you're doing is you're laying that foundation, I think, for identity preserved, value-added, organic, more efficient production of commodity-based crops that will provide the
competitive advantage that the U.S. has to have in order to sort of maintain people in the farming business.

You know, the worst thing that could happen would be for us not to figure this out and be overwhelmed by other producers in other countries, have our guys go out of business, decide to do something else, have that land now be owned by a relatively small number of folks, and, and be, you know, concrete over as our cities extend. And then all of a sudden, we find ourselves on the other end of the stick asking China to supply us with the food as opposed to the other way around. I mean, that's not too outrageous an idea.

So again, figuring out ways in which we can make sure that we move forward, that value-added proposition is very, very important.

MR. REDDING: Commissioner, you get the last, short question.

MR. GOEHRING: Okay, sure.

MR. REDDING: We're about --

Mr. GOEHRING: Yes, sir. Doug Goehring. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I have appreciated how consistent you have been from the very beginning talking about embracing diversity, embracing choices, and respecting that. You have also been supportive of technology and techniques as, as you've stated so well today, and I think it, it says
something about your knowledge of American agriculture, how resilient and how tenacious farms are in this country, and where we came from.

When I think back, historically when you think about some of the challenges we've had with the extremes in our, in our business, go back to the '30s for example. Some of the highest temperatures that were ever recorded in the United States and what farmers had to deal with were during the '30s, '33 and '36, droughts, extreme heat. And yet, look at how they, working with USDA, with NRCS back then in the soil conservation districts started to look at planting wind breaks and do conservation tillage and while thinking along those lines, anyways, doing things to conserve that resource and enhance it. I think it speaks volumes of where USDA and American agriculture was then. So I appreciate that you continue to strive towards that and build on top of that.

My, my question goes back to, and we were having a conversation about Cuba. And I appreciate the fact that those people are resilient. Having been there a few times now, yeah, it's amazing how they can put a Chinese motor into a '53 Chevy and a Russian chassis. I mean it's --

MR. VILSACK: And make it look good. They make it look good.
MR. GOEHRING: Yeah. And it's, it's amazing. Can you tell me, because we do need Congress to address this issue, when you were down there, I thought it was so enlightening and encouraging that they were now talking about decentralizing business and agriculture, and they talked about, in their words, verbatim, giving the land back to the peasants. And depending on what type of system you were going to adopt, they were going to take that approach.

But they brought up two things and points well-taken. They said they wanted access to credit, and they wanted the embargo lifted. And, and that's very real, and I think it's an opportunity to really help them change and, and move forward. Do you believe that Congress is engaged in this conversation? Do you see any timeline for when they may revisit this?

And I, and point taken that if the President goes down there, it's probably going to reengage us back in this. But is there some timelines that you may be aware of, or do you know where some of the thoughts are of some of those in Congress about this issue?

MR. VILSACK: Well, I would like to, I, you know, in a perfect world, I'd like to see folks act on this in 2016. But it is an election year, and the chances of that I think are pretty, pretty slim. So I think 2016 is about,
about educating the public and educating candidates so that in 2017 people get serious about this issue.

Because we're at a disadvantage when it comes to Cuba. I mean we've, they have relationships with South American producers. Right? That can provide them some information. And they develop a relationship with South America as opposed to with us, we're going to be at a competitive disadvantage. They also have relationships with European producers which is a little bit longer. But still, they value that relationship. So we're sort of behind here. But we have this 90-mile advantage. We're only 90 miles away from each other.

So I would hope that in 2017 that people would get serious about this conversation and would understand the long-term significance of the relationship in the region. You know, that's the under-appreciate thing about agriculture. It is a national security, you know, advantage that we have. You know, this TPP is about national security as much as it is about food security because we can balance China's influence in Asia.

If we end the embargo and we open up relationships and we are able to produce product down there in Cuba and begin to trade back and forth, guaranteed, guaranteed that, that we'll have a, ultimately an ally in that part, in the Caribbean, which will help us immensely in Central America
and South America in terms of our relationships with countries down south, which makes our part of the world a little bit safer and allows us to be a bit more secure than we are today.

So, agriculture is just critically important. And I think when that case is made, and aggressively made, and the generational shift that's occurring in places like Florida with the Cuban exiles, I think you're going to, you'll see a shift.

And clearly that same generational issue is ongoing in Cuba. If you talk to someone who is in their 70s in Cuba, they have a completely different attitude about the future than if you talk to somebody in their 40s. Right? And within their government, they have, they still have some of the old guard. But the younger guard who is going to be taking over, they're just biding their time. They know what has to happen. So, I think there's going to be a convergence of the, of that generational shift in both countries. And that's when the barriers are going to come down.

And I've just jokingly said I want to have the implement dealership down there, but, or I would take a hotel. You know, that coastline, Lord, I mean there's just going to be billions and billions of dollars invested down there. And, you know, they really have a tremendous
opportunity. And, you know, the folks, Laura can tell you, there's a great demand for organic supply, product.

And the real concern I have about organic is that that supply squeeze becomes so intense so quickly that the price of organics gets to the point where hardly anybody can afford it. And at that point, that just, that does damage to that important segment, that high-value segment of our agriculture. So it's, you know, it's that balance, that delicate balance of supply and demand.

Well, let me, let me let you get back to your, to your work. Again. Again. I'll just finish where I began with a big thank you. No, this is not easy, but this is really, really important work, and I look forward to your, to your recommendations. And I really appreciate the Chair's leadership on this.

MR. REDDING: Yeah. Let's say thanks to the Secretary for his good work and leadership. Thanks. We'll take a minute? Yeah, we'll take a two-minute break. Let's take a two-minute break, then we'll come back to the table.
Okay?

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

MR. REDDING: Okay. Thanks again. Always appreciate Secretary Vilsack being here, but also his just engagement generally and perspective about agriculture and
the challenges, but also the opportunity. So, just a note
of thanks to him. And also, we don't say it enough, but the
appreciation for the staff who support AC21, and certainly
Dr. SCHECHTMAN and Doug McKalip, and I really appreciate,
and Dianne who is there. Thank you, Dianne. Yeah. All
good work. So thank you.

So let's pick up -- yes, Lynn?

MR. CLARKSON: Lynn Clarkson. I want to make one
follow-up point to what the Secretary said. He painted a
future where there is a failure or a decline in U.S.
agriculture being fed from overseas, U.S. population. In
organic today, I'm not sure this is an issue of coexistence.
But the reality is we're importing more organic soybeans
than we produce in the land of soybeans. Within the last
two years, the annual increase in corn imports organically
certified in the United States went up 67 percent. That has
been happening too many years in a row because, before we
are on the short end of that stick as well.

And some of those things are associated with
policies, the way we defined organic, the way we allow
transition into organic. But it's a future when you can
see, if you're looking at the high-end markets today. So I
very much appreciated the Secretary's point.

MR. REDDING: Very good. Yes, Laura.
MS. BATCHA: When the -- Laura Batcha. When the Secretary was sort of laying out his vision around embracing diversity and, and making American agriculture resilient and well-positioned for the future and future changes, it really struck me that that could be our framework and concept for the preamble to the document in terms of setting the stage for the importance of this and how to make it important to the practitioners all over the country to sort of articulate why those conversations at the local and state level are important. And I think building that around diversity and resilience and opportunity for agriculture is perhaps a, a good way to sort of set the stage.

And I was struck when the Secretary was speaking, I think, Lynn, my mind must have gone in a similar direction as yours. There might be a positive, unintended consequence of this idea of joint coexistence plans. The Secretary spoke about it. We have concerns about supply pinches and the challenges with accelerating acreage adoption in the U.S. for certain crops versus overseas, and may be a derivative outcome of this exchange of information between farmers would be the opportunity for more folks to explore opportunities to diversify their own farms and take advantage of those value-added opportunities.
MR. REDDING: Very good. Any other comments, observations to the Secretary's remarks? Very good. Thank you. Yeah, Keith.

MR. KISLING: I'm going to make a comment about, you know, he talked a lot about Cuba. And he talked an awful lot about organics in Cuba. And I've been there four times and met with Fidel twice. Those people are hungry. They're really hungry. They'll, if they have credit or they can buy product from the United States, they just want food. And so I appreciated his concern. And I think probably that's the case maybe lately, but five, six years ago, they just wanted food, and they didn't care whether it was organic or traditional or whatever it was. They're hungry people.

And that's how we're going to, as soon as we open up trade with them, a lot of things are going to change down there because they are all wearing Western-fit clothes, they pay a lot of money to be looking like Westerners and, and I want to be down there and buy them '57 Chevrolets.

MR. REDDING: Very good. Okay. So let's pick up our conversation from this morning. I've asked Michael, maybe he could, just to provide some comments on where we are, sort of next steps, and how we want to apportion our time here today just to make sure that everyone departs sort of knowing the game plan and has a sense of the calendar,
right, and how the committee's work is going to be
organized, and sort of expectations for us. Michael.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Okay. Thank you, Secretary
Redding. I think what I've heard at this meeting has been I
think a really productive conversation. And I hear folks
who come at these issues from very, very different places
coalescing around some, some common themes. And that is
refreshing on the first day, at the first meeting on one of
these, on a subject as difficult as this. So I'm, I'm
incredibly encouraged by that.

I think there are perhaps four, four things that I
have on my list to mention here as where I think we're going
or where we need more specific input from people around the,
around the table here. The first is that I think I heard
that there is a need for, for us to set up two work groups.
And one is one that is gathering and examining or, or
describing for the committee models that exist around, and I
think associated with looking at the models is providing
some options for the committee to consider on how, how any
of those models might be used to help bring all the, all the
relevant stakeholders to the table. So that's, that's one
work group.

The other one would be on putting together what
this guidance document framework, principles that farmers,
the things that farmers need to think about, both on their
own in terms of their farms, and conceivably in conjunction with their neighbors' as well.

I think there's an open question as to whether, as to how the information that the framework refers to is going to be populated into that document, whether that is a charge for USDA to gather available sources, whether it is a charge to states to figure out the best place to get the relevant, local information. I think that's another thing that, that group might make some suggestions back to the, to the full committee on.

The third thing, the next thing on the list is whether the committee has particular bits of other information apart from those two things that the work groups would be working on that you specifically want USDA to gather information on so that we can have that before the next meeting.

Now, let me go back to the first one on, on work groups. I think we've certainly heard from folks around the table, gotten some sense of different people's interest. I suspect that setting up these work groups may perhaps be a little less controversial than setting up work groups in our first go-around on all of this. If you will permit, I have a sense of people's interest from the discussions. If you will permit us, we will put together a first-cut at balanced work groups on each of these subjects for the people who we
would like to have initially on the call. And of course, the calls will be open to everyone if they want to join in. But we will set, we will set up a pair of work groups which we will start at a manageable size so that there's, we can have dialogue between a few people and not a lot. But again, if more people want to join in, that's fine, and we'll send those out to you probably very early in the beginning of next year. We'll send out work groups and start soliciting calendars for that.

The next topic on the list is speakers to bring to the meeting. We heard --

MS. HUGHES: I have a comment on the work group.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: We'll come back, we'll come back in a minute. I'll just finish, finish this list, and then I'll come back. Speakers to bring to the meeting. I think we've heard a bunch of different prospects from experts on critical control to experts on MP3 programs and other state activities, to public and private sector participants. We may have one or two meetings to bring people in. I think we have to be parsimonious about that because the more we have speakers, the less time folks have to discuss either the general dialogue here or reflecting on the work of the work groups.

So, that's something that we'd like a little advice on today. And then the last thing is just my sense
of sort of ideally when I think we could get three meetings, we don't have, we have not analyzed people's schedules except that Dianne looked at all the schedules and there essentially no dates that were free for everybody which is, which is not surprising. But I'll talk at the end or later on before we, before we leave about the reason we picked the range of months that we did in trying to get three meetings in place.

So that's the, the general concept. We can start off with, with the work groups. I guess Missy, you have a particular comment on that.

MS. HUGHES: Thank you, Michael. Missy Hughes. I guess what I heard you say on the first work group was a group looking at the models that we've talked about, variety of models. And then bringing, that, that conversation would bring together the stakeholders. And I, I just get a little, a little concerned that that muddies the water. Like the -- sorry. What I can see is a work group that's looking at the models. But I also wonder if there is a work group that is looking at nationwide who are the state and local groups that can help facilitate this conversation. And that might ultimately inform who we want to bring in and have conversations with and learn from. So I, I mean I can see how there is some overlap there, but I also feel like there is an opportunity for this group to really think about
who we can access to help make this whole process work. And is there an opportunity for a working group to be working on that.

MR. REDDING: Other thoughts relative to that stakeholder question? All right. I guess --

MR. KEMPER: Mr. Chairman?

MR. REDDING: Yeah, Latresia.

MS. WILSON: Oh, in that same -- Latresia Wilson.

In that same vein, not only knowing who but what they do, I notice we haven't spoken about what, what things are being done by, for instance the NRCS, where we can integrate what we're talking about into their programs if we don't know what programs or what things they're doing. So somehow, in that same vein, not only the stakeholders but what the stakeholders do.

MR. REDDING: Yeah. Laura.

MS. BATCHA: Just to clarify question. I think when I heard you -- this is Laura Batcha. When I heard you lay out the two groups, Michael, I kind of in my shorthand on my notes was the first one was process, which is the models and options for bringing stakeholders to the table. And the other one was more the product. And so I kind of assumed that that inventory of stakeholders happened in that first working group, which was process. But splitting it apart might shortcut getting that list out so that we could
engage people earlier rather than later. But, at least that's what I thought I heard.

    MR. SCHECHTMAN: Can I just get a little clarification? Is this stakeholder inventory or an inventory of who might be convening these discussions? I'm trying to, I was, I was writing and listening at the same time, so I want to make sure I understood what you meant.

    MS. HUGHES: In my head, it's the convening.

    MR. SCHECHTMAN: Okay. Thank you.

    MR. REDDING: Josette.

    MS. LEWIS: Just to pick up on those last two points. I think maybe having a workgroup think about some key organizations that we want to engage, public and private, could be a helpful third working group because for me, politically this is where we can promote the uptake of whatever best practices at the farm level and best practices at the convening level by getting them invested in this early on. So for me, that's part of our effectiveness as we're going beyond just speaking to USDA here. So having a third working group think strategically about who we want to engage proactively in this process so that they will be primed to be, and incentivized to put the stuff into action makes sense to me.

    MR. REDDING: Missy, do you have another comment?

    MS. HUGHES: No. I'm sorry.
MR. REDDING: Okay. No? I'm sorry. So making a distinction in that, in that first work group, right, so you've got, you would have someone, maybe a group looking at the different models, and they've been referenced here. And then looking at another group that really, you know, almost irrespective of what the models are and the guidance document, there are still, still an A list of, of organizations and such that you would want engaged in delivery of that, right? That's what you're saying. So it really is identification of the A list of organizations that, you know, local, state, federal, whatever, could be or should be involved in, in the delivery of, let's call it program. Right? But the development of that joint coexistence plan. Is that right?

MR. SCHECHTMAN: I think there may be delivery of a couple of different things. There's the delivery of the joint coexistence plan, and there's the delivery of the message of the importance of farmers plugging into this, into this process. So I think, I think given the range of organizations that you might be looking at, there may be two, two different --

MS. LEWIS: Or more than two.

MR. REDDING: Yeah.

MS. LEWIS: Possibly. We'll let that group figure out how many.
MR. SCHECHTMAN: Okay. So I'm, I'm fine with setting up three work groups.

MR. REDDING: Anything we've missed in the work group that you were expecting to hear out of our conversation on the last day? So you're okay with those three? So you've got, you've got an A list of organizations, you've got models, and, and then the guidance document structure. Right? Okay. All right.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Then perhaps just one other thing. I'll just note that some of the things that were mentioned have not yet gone into a work group. And maybe they are things that are better discussed in full committee. So this was the, sort of the scope of the issues around which one might want to have dialogue between farmers. I know Commissioner Goehring was talking about a broad range of things to, to have under discussion to bring, to incentivize having people wanting to work together. And I think that's a topic that may be ripe for having the full committee discuss when we get a little information down the road.

MR. GOEHRING: Value.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Okay. So, so then, moving onto the next topic, and that is the, the question of what other information you may wish for us to gather for you between now and the next, next meeting. Is there other, are there
other things besides what these, what these hardworking work
groups are, are going to do?

MR. REDDING: Laura.

MS. BATCHA: I think the, the two things that I'm
most interested in taking a look at, regardless of which of
the working groups I might participate in are some, just
some more information. It doesn't have to be a speaker, but
just to peruse in advance, point us in the direction of info
on the joint conservation plans. I'm very interested in
that, and also then the state pollinator plans. I think
that just, for me, wherever I land in a working group, I'd
like to sort of get familiar with both of those.

MR. REDDING: Angela, then Leon.

MS. OLSEN: Yeah. I -- Angela Olsen. I second
that as well. I'm very interested in learning more about
those. They're programs that, that I think we could all
benefit from, from knowing more about as part of our
discussions. So query whether those are part of the work
group, and again, I'm happy to participate even if I'm not
on those particular work groups. Or, if there is enough
interest, might one or both of these even be webinars that
we all are able to dial into and, and benefit from. That, I
know we did that in our first AC21, and that was very
effective. So, I just put that, that out there. But again,
if it's on a certain work group and I'm not in that work group, I'm still happy to listen in.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Well, I will say that since yesterday, NASDA has sent me information about the pollinator work. So I will be able to get you that, at least some information that has come from NASDA about that very shortly. You know, and if we can have information to everyone before the work group starts working on it, so much the better.

MR. MCKALIP: And Doug here. Yesterday we discussed release of planting intention or planting data. And I did get a definitive answer back that USDA is prohibited from releasing any of that information that is on an individual farm level. It makes perfect sense, but I just wanted to get a clear answer back on that.

With respect to more than one farmer or rancher getting a conservation plan together, by all means. We can get some background from that on the agency. My guess is that there are very few examples of it having happened around the U.S. It would be kind of like, you know, could you see a doctor, two neighbors go and get a physical at the same time. Yes, as long as you have two neighbors who are willing to do such a thing, the doctor is probably willing to, to make that happen. So that just might be an issue.
We'll get some examples of where it has happened, how it's worked, and, and get those back to you.

MR. REDDING: Okay, thank you. Leon.

MR. CORZINE: Leon Corzine. You know, Doug, to your point you might check on like some of the watershed districts. I know in Illinois, there's some things going on, and NRCS might be involved. And that would be where there would be collaboration between growers. So there might be something there.

MR. MCKALIP: Yeah. And I know, and I probably did a bad job of explaining it. With respect to certain, targeted objectives, sage-grouse, water management, there is probably many, many, many examples. I was thinking more of the whole farm management piece of it. And maybe there are ones in the water management district area that would be examples. But --

MR. CORZINE: Okay.

MR. MCKALIP: -- we'll certainly find those and get them to you.

MR. CORZINE: Okay. One thing, Mr. Chairman, to our point, what I was really going to bring up was, I'd like to, I, if we can keep our presentations to a minimum at meetings, and you kind of alluded to that, that it just takes a lot of time. And I don't know how much we need, but information, or maybe, I don't know if presentation, but we
talk about a lot of things that are, that we've been doing for a long time around the farm that, cleaning out a combine. Those kind of things are pretty easily to understand have been around a while.

One thing that hasn't, and when we talk about technology, what the technology piece in this, because not only in seed technology but in equipment technology with what we can do with site-specific things, you know, we're writing prescriptions for fields on nutrients as well as seed placement. So there might be a piece there, whether a contact with some of the tech companies in regards to equipment and how they are a management tool. You know, there is something new that we really could get some new information about and how that might, might have a piece as we look to the future and help our work groups or help us as a whole.

MR. REDDING: Good point. Josette, do you have another question, comment?

MS. LEWIS: Just in terms of background information that would be useful, in addition to the NRCS examples that might be analogous, I'd be interested in hearing or seeing work by the Risk Management Agency and the Ag Marketing Service, the Minnesota Organic Risk Manual that I referred to earlier was actually funded by the Risk Management Agency grant program. And then I alluded to an
AMS program. So I'd just like to understand those two tools that might potentially be exploited further to facilitate these issues.

MR. REDDING: Okay. Thanks. Laura.

Ms. BATCHA: Oh, no. Sorry.

MR. REDDING: Okay. Yeah, the one point we haven't identified clearly I think in our work group plan is around incentives. All right? So if you look at the charge, and we spent some time talking about what those incentives are, whether they're, you know, local, state, whatever, where does that fall in terms of the planned work groups. Does it need some, some special focus, or could one of the work groups identified here address that? Yeah, Alan.

MR. KEMPER: I was one --

MR. REDDING: Then Doug.

MR. KEMPER: I was one subject back, but you kind of missed my sign up, and that's fine. But for Doug, is there any reason why by the charter or anything at USDA or NRCS that prohibits the soil and water conservation districts from holding the meetings that could deal and address coexistence as one of their subjects? Because I know a lot of us attend those. We enjoy them. It's a neutral site, if you will, friendly to agriculture. Is there, could we do that?
MR. MCKALIP: Yeah. Soil and water conservation districts are authorized by state law entirely independently of NRCS's authorizing legislation. We work together through cooperative agreements, but there is nothing that would prohibit districts if they're willing and, you know, their county and state leadership were onboard from that happening.

MR. KEMPER: Thank you.

MR. MCKALIP: Yes, sir.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, Laura.

MS. BATCHA: On your question around incentives, it could perhaps be a subset of the working group looking at models and options for bringing stakeholders to the table that incentives could be part of that if we didn't want to separate it out into a separate group.

MR. REDDING: Doug.

MR. GOEHRING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Doug Goehring. Yeah, to that point when you're talking about incentives, where it could be studied or, or talked about, giving the previous conversation, I know it came up that either Group 3 or Group 1 could certainly discuss that. And to the, the point and the comment that you raised about incentives, I think recognizing that, first of all, USDA or the federal government doesn't have the authority to move forward in a place like this, probably, and they certainly
don't have the, the appropriation, and most states don't have it either. You know, that's quite frankly probably none of them. And they don't have the authority.

I think the biggest challenge we see in all of this is how do we find value for producers to be engaged in this. And that's really going to be about our message. It's really going to be about how we craft this. And maybe it goes back to the question or the comment you had earlier, you know, what is the narrative on this joint coexistence plan? It's going to be part of our document, and that's the part that we're going to have to use. And I guess going back to something I had stated earlier so that all of us can think about this is we need something that captures everybody, gives them a reason to want to participate and be there.

They may not be interested in the joint coexistence plan if it's just surrounding the conversation about organic. But if we pull everything else in about mitigating strategies on numerous issues that exist for farmers, it starts to give them a reason to be, to see value in it. And to that degree, I know it was mentioned to me earlier, too, about, it's all about diversity. So what about or agricultural, our animal agricultural producers, because they have biosecurity issues. They have things to consider, the management of, of manure which is so utilized
by those in the organic industry but also by other farmers. And what are things that we need to mitigate and be cautious of there, too? Not only about the handling and management.

I know it sounds complex, but it's just comprehensive. And I believe it can be captured to show value to all of agriculture to want to participate, or at least show up, listen when the conversation starts. Thank you.

MR. REDDING: Missy.

MS. HUGHES: Missy Hughes. Doug, I just, I want to respond to that. You have spoken a fair amount to this concept of soil and pathogens and including them in this conversation. And for the most part, I agree. It makes sense. If you're going to get farmers to the table, let's have them, you know, everything is on, on the table. But I just want to articulate a concern I have, which is that you, you get into the situation of two people sitting down and, you know, I think, I think typically this conversation is going to start with the organic farmer concerned or the IP farmer concerned about drift and concerned about this question of AP devaluing their crop.

And I would imagine, as humanity proceeds in these conversations, the other side of the table is going to be like, well you're doing this to me. And, and you get this kind of a, a tit-for-tat situation that I'm just, I'm, it
just makes me nervous that we're going to create more division than what we're actually trying to solve and heal. And I'm just, I'm wondering if as we go forward with this trial of, of making these conversations happen, keeping it to a narrower scope will lend to the success of it, and then hopefully maybe, you know, year after year, you're talking to your neighbor on a yearly basis may naturally broaden the scope of it rather than us saying, you know, everything is on the table. Duke it out, and, you know, we'll see how it works out.

I, I mean, I hear what you're saying. I just want to say that there's a little piece of me that kind of goes, oh, how's that going to work. So, I just wanted to say that.

MR. GOEHRING: If I could expand on that, Mr. Chairman?

MR. REDDING: Sure.

MR. GOEHRING: We're all guilty as farmers. Every one of us have done something that has probably impacted our neighbor. So it's not about pointing fingers. It's about recognizing, oh, yeah, I guess if I had considered this. It gets them to the table. And although there might be some concern that the issue about an organic farmer and a conventional farmer side-by-side isn't going to be the highlight of the topic, but that subtle approach to having
the conversation, because we're talking about mitigating strategies throughout agriculture, at least it's inserted and it's talked about because, chances are, most farmers aren't going to show up if it's just about being next to an organic farmer.

This gives you an opportunity in that venue to insert that, have that conversation. And all of a sudden, the light goes on. I end up doing this almost, I don't want to say on a daily basis, but so frequently because of the broad constituency that I end up visiting with, whether it's the public, researchers, the universities, the farmers, the applicators, getting them all in the room and start talking about certain issues. All you have to do is subtly bring up other things that they can relate to, connect to, and even things they've never considered because it's, it's out of their realm, they start to become more informed, more enlightened, and you start to change behavior, and you start to change approaches.

What I was thinking here is, I don't want to set up a venue where it's finger-pointing. This actually starts to diffuse that, disarms them a bit because we're all guilty. I mean, none of us have walked without sin. So quite frankly, they're in a better situation to identify with the fact that, you know, these are mitigating strategies on this issue, but in those presentations, the
other conversation comes up. That's also about being mindful of the seed producer, the identity preserved producer, and the organic producer that's in your community, in your township, or in your county. And it's just, I believe that would be a good way of approaching this and moving the ball forward.

MR. REDDING: We may be able to get at that, Doug, through the narrative part. Right? It's, I'm a little bit with Missy and just, it could be overwhelming, right, because you end up in, in, getting into a conversation that is, is certainly, could be beyond the scope of the charge to the committee and what we do. Right? Not in any way saying it's not important, because you're going to, you're trying to get that comprehensive approach where there's going to be coexistence, a need for coexistence conversations. The question is whether they are related to, you know, our work on the committee around sort of the, the interface of, of technology, biotech, and, and organic and IP and production systems related. So that would be my only point. But maybe there's a way in the, in the narrative we can get there.

Mary-Howell, and then Alan.

MS. MARTENS: I agree with you. I agree with you, Russell. We're not charged to deal with soil or water or pathogen issues. Our charge here in this committee has to
do with biotech issues. But I do think it should show up in
the narrative. It should show up in the guidance document.

The big thing that I think which will get us away
from some of the tit-for-tat is to be able to get enough
detail and enough specifics in our guidance document to
prevent neighbors, an organic neighbor or an IP neighbor
blaming their conventional neighbor for all of the
contamination. And that's one of the reasons why I, I keep
trying to not talk about pollen. Because from what I have
read and what I've seen, pollen drift is one way of, of AP
showing up. But in, in many cases, it's not the primary
one.

The primary one is the seed that the farmer
chooses to start with, and the degree of cleanout of the
equipment, including trucks. If you knew what I saw, what
came into our feed mill, and it's not that I'm looking at
genetic issues. I'm looking at quality issues. The, the
alerting farmers to producing quality is a huge job. And
the more information we can give them, the more specifics we
can give them about what they need to do, I think that
empowers people to make choices based on good sense rather
than on emotion. It's very easy when something goes wrong
to find somebody else to blame and not take responsibility
for yourself.
So, it's a good idea to get people sitting
down together, but it's an even better idea to get a third
party mediator or trainer or agency to make sure that
everybody is getting the right information about where the
issue is beginning.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Alan.

MR. KEMPER: Thanks. One thing, Mr. Chairman,
that makes this group so good is we can, everybody has an
opinion, and we can listen to it and not necessarily agree
with the opinion but they're entitled to that opinion.

As I looked at it today, and as I looked at our
new charter or new mission statement from the Secretary, you
know what it does not say? It doesn't have a word about
biotechnology in it. And the Secretary talked to us today
about diversity in agriculture. And he talked about animal
diversity. He talked about plant diversity. He talked
about organic, conventional.

I think folks were missing the boat if we don't
recognize that in our coexistence talks and thoughts. And
before you can get to a one-on-one discussion with your
neighbor, you really have to have workshops and forms that
kind of brings everybody to the same level. And that was
kind of my thoughts with the soil and water conservation
districts or something. To have those type of forums, or to
have those type of broad-based, it gets everybody, Mary,
like you're talking on the equal talking plane before we go into the one-on-one coexistence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. REDDING: Thank you. Angela, and then Laura.

MS. OLSEN: Angela Olsen. I also was going to bring up, you know, looking at our, our charge with, with a fresh, a fresh view, this doesn't appear to be just about biotechnology, it's about agriculture in general and the diversity of agriculture.

I think there's a lot of value, to David's point earlier, about thinking about agriculture. There is a lot of different aspects that will bring people to the table. And Doug was just bringing up that point as well. Points that are going to interest them, but also, given that there are a lot of models out there, there may be additional models in other areas of agriculture that could come to these, you know, if we decide that holding stakeholder meetings is the way to go, for example on a local level, that could bring some interesting approaches on coexistence.

So I just want to make sure that we're all looking at the charge and thinking about this broadly. I don't think this is just about biotechnology. It's about all forms of agriculture. And I think that's a healthy charge. And I think there's going to be a lot of good thinking that
goes into that. So we're really not siloed in just the, the biotechnology area.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, it sort of, it goes back to Latresia's point this morning. You asked about the definition, right, or, in our sort of table of contents as we referred to it at that time, talking about the, being clear about what is coexistence. Right? And we're going to borrow the definition we have in our existing document, right, which lays out that, you know, that it's multiple production practices, right? It's not, not a single piece.

Good, thank you. Laura. I always want to call you Marty. I mean, you did move into his --

MS. BATCHA: Laura Batcha, not Marty Matlock. I like Alan's suggestion about thinking about staging this in terms of bringing everyone up to the same level with the conversations with workshops and, and forums, Alan, so I think that's really great. And I would encourage the working group that looks at bringing stakeholders to the table to be thinking about that inoculation to, to get things started. So I like that a lot.

You know, I don't want to get too distracted by this discussion that we're having, but I think, for me, I look at the full name of our committee. And we could read that. And I look at the definition of coexistence that we're operating from, and we could read that. And that
might be helpful for the group to do so. But while it's referencing all forms of agriculture, it's about the coexistence of biotechnology with, with different forms. For me it's inherently rooted in our charge. And I think, I'm concerned about the distraction of I think what you called yesterday, Angela, boiling the ocean for, if we're, if we're trying to think that we're expanding beyond that. I think we're missing our opportunity to be helpful on the specific topic that we've been asked to ponder.

MR. REDDING:  Doug, and then Alan.

MR. KEMPER:  Oh, I'm sorry. I'm off.

MR. REDDING:  You're off. Okay.

MR. GOEHRING:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Doug Goehring. To me, this is simple. It seems simplistic what we're proposing to do. Take it from the approach of what a journalist would do. A good journalist would ask who, what, when, and where. So, with that, if we talk about the who, we have two there. Who are, who is your stakeholders, which would probably be the farmers. That's how I'd define it. Who would deliver, which would be another part of that. What, what are we talking about? Best management practices, mitigating strategies. And where would this all take place?

I mean, we've had this extensive conversation about it at the local level, state and local level. And those best management practices, those mitigating strategies
just ask questions that's considerations of what things
should I be looking at, and let that conversation take place
as to how they get there at that local level. That's my
whole point. By raising the issue about what certain things
are going to probably trigger a thought, and people want to
then know a little bit more about it, that's where I was
going with all this. I'm not going to die on the sword for
it.

If you don't want to go that route, hey, go
forward. Knock yourselves out. But I'll tell you what. I
know one thing about what farmers are interested in. And
being a farmer myself, if you raise the issue and keep it
very focused and very narrow about mitigating adventitious
presence or pollen, no one is going to show up. You're
going to have a limited amount of stakeholders there
participating.

But I'm willing to work on this and help out to
the best degree possible. And I think having work groups
have this conversation will certainly help, because it will
vet it. It will bring it out. And I've put four of these
together. It's basic. Who's your stakeholders, what are
you trying to accomplish, who is going to help facilitate
that to that point that came out earlier, and where is it
going to happen at? But, it's about best management
practices. Thank you.
MR. REDDING: Yeah. And I guess, you know, the thinking is that the, those, those best management practices would be identified, I mean, they could show up in the model discussion. Right? They could show up in the guidance document, will show up there in some form. The question is just the scope on those BMPs, right? And I think that's where, if there's any, if you're sensing any sort of hesitation or pause, it's around, I could see this conversation, I'll just take Pennsylvania. I mean if I, if I have it too broad, then I'm into conversations that are well beyond the scope of what the committee I think is charged to do, not in any way saying that they aren't important to, you know, coexistence with a, with a small c, but just trying to, to figure out where do I draw the line.

I mean, I've got an issue with Pennsylvania around odor as the issue, right? And then all of a sudden, I'm into a completely different conversation that I don't have any, any jurisdiction on around, around for the USDA purpose, right? So what I would ask, Doug, is let us sort of frame that in the front side around the narrative, and, and, you know, I think we can, we can certainly have a document that, that points to the multiple issues that are important to coexistence. And the, the charge here is, say, specifically around this one of multiple production
practices. Here's, here's what we're looking at in terms of models and guidance. Okay? Does that work?

MR. GOEHRING: It works. I, I just point out that --

MR. REDDING: Yeah.

MR. GOEHRING: -- there are things that are good conversation pieces such as the equipment issue, because I can give you the other scenario to that, just under the Noxious Weed Law. Getting people to think about before they move a piece of tillage equipment to another field, go clean it off. Bind wheat is a great example. Bind wheat hangs up on there, you just transferred material to another field that you've got another issue with.

So it's a valid point to talk about equipment. You can talk about different things resulting from product being transferred to another field. Or seeds being left in a truck or in a combine and it needs to be cleaned up. See, those are just great examples of people all of sudden, oh yeah, I need to be a little more mindful about that. Just a component to it.

MR. REDDING: Right. But, you know, it does raise a good point about sort of the stakeholders and who we would expect or potentially could be helpful in, in disseminating the message. I mean, so you may well have, you know, crop advisors, any number, equipment manufacturers, whatever that
could help facilitate that conversation and connect them appropriately. I mean I, I think, yeah, it's just the, the question here is, in the content side is making sure that we're clear about the problem we're trying to solve. Right? And then if you can connect that to, for dissemination and education, we certainly ought to do that, you know.

MR. KEMPER: Mr. Chairman -- oh, go ahead.

MS. HUGHES: No, if you're going to follow-on that point --

MR. KEMPER: I was going to follow-on this quick point.

MR. REDDING: Yes.

MR. KEMPER: Just, because you're, you're having this little trouble with livestock, and you're having a little bit of trouble with diversity, that if --

MR. REDDING: I'm not.

MR. KEMPER: -- a livestock producer brings in through his manure --

MR. REDDING: Yeah.

MR. KEMPER: And the cotton seed feed through, then through the manure brings in a bunch of marestail, palmer amaranth, pigweed, now I've got a face with my biotech events that we're going to have a discussion real seriously about coexistence. So there, this all, there's a lot of pieces in this puzzle. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
MR. REDDING: Yeah. Thank you. Missy.

MS. HUGHES: I just want to hear Alan say manure all day long.

MR. CORZINE: It changes every time.

MS. HUGHES: Amaranth, the amaranth pigweed, I don't know what that was, but okay. Something that Doug said, I just, you know, maybe for the next meeting, Doug, you said, you know, if we do this, if we only focus on pollen, nobody is going to come to the meeting. What that made me think was this is, is probably going to be an evolving process, and learning what's working and what's not working. And as I look at the charge, you know, I see two, I see USDA and then the question, if so, how might the federal government assist in that process. Like, that's, that's kind of a big organization.

And so I think for the next, for the next go-around I'd be interested in the USDA's thinking on, on who is going to be waking up in the morning and thinking about this effort on a, on a staffing side, who, you know, who, where is this going to live as far as, you know, this effort to create these joint coexistence programs, and who is going to be -- and you know, ultimately maybe if it lands in NRCS, but it feels like there's, there's an individual or an office that's going to be focused on this. And you don't have to answer. And maybe that's just something we put on
our, our thinking caps about. But I'd be, you know, thinking about that.

MR. MCKALIP: Yeah. I think even just in this conversation, I've heard NRCS mentioned, RMA, AMS, Extension came up a lot yesterday. You know, they're going to be really a healthy part of this process is to help really identify. Certainly our agency will have some ideas about that.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Would you say it's also a possibility?

MR. MCKALIP: Yeah, possible.

MR. REDDING: Okay. I think all of that was under the title of work groups. I think.

MS. LEWIS: I don't want to be on that one. Too much work.

MR. REDDING: Right, yeah, you want to be on that one.

MS. LEWIS: There's too much work in that one.

MR. REDDING: So we had, we had the three work groups. And we were, I think discuss sort of next, other individuals, organizations that we would want to have access to one form or another for future meetings and/or discussions, right? And what was the, oh, additional information that was needed from the USDA. All right. We talked about that. I'm getting this funny look from Leon.
All right. Because we had mentioned if there is information that was referenced that we wanted to make sure we had access to, and the speakers, oh, and then the schedule, right?

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Speakers we didn't quite finish up.

MR. REDDING: Okay. So we were in the speakers? Are there, are there speakers you want? I mean, a couple of these things go in different columns. I mean, depending on what you do with the Minnesota Organic Manual, whatever it's called, all right, what, what you do with that. I mean, there may be somebody in industry, Lynn, right, on the incentives side that I can certainly see that being, maybe from the seed trade. But if, if there are, I guess just asking the question, but let's try to identify them as soon as possible.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: If I could just add. One speaker that, that I see importantly through this is really to have NASDA come and talk here about, about how they can support this process and how they think they could be involved in this effort, because they have the outreach to, of all of the states. Do people think that that is a --

MS. LEWIS: Yes.
MR. REDDING: Okay. Are there any other sort of non-schedule related issues or questions around the charge, the structure, the plan forward here? Doug?

MR. GOEHRING: Unh-uh.

MR. REDDING: No. I thought you were, you had a question. All right.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Schedule?

MR. REDDING: Yes, let's talk about schedule.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Okay. So, so in terms of, in terms of schedule, my sense is that given how much you've set out for work groups to do, we need to be planning for three meetings. I'm cognizant of the fact that beyond September, we will get in, beyond probably early-September, we will get into harvest season, and heavily into political season. And it would be nice to be able to complete our three meetings by, by the first half of September if possible.

It is difficult to schedule, to have work groups meet to do all of the notice required for the public for meetings to get previous meeting agendas out, much under three months between meetings. That brings us to a rough calendar of from December, January, February March, April, May, June, July, August, September is sort of the approximate, what I would see as the sort of preferred windows for having our meetings.
I need to look at everyone's calendars and my own. I know I have some, some work travel that I need to do, but I, what I will be looking at in the, in the first instance is to see what the possibilities are with preferences for the March, June, September windows. And I know it's not perfectly convenient for everyone. Go ahead, Leon.

MR. CORZINE: Michael, if I may, it's not just a matter of convenience. It's a matter of livelihood. And if you want to have, and we've talked about this, United States Department of Agriculture ought to know what's going on when September hits in the Midwest. You know, this is our livelihood. And you aren't going to get the farmer involvement unless you pick out a rainy day.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Yeah. I mean, what I was talking about was the preference of the end of August, very early-September. You know, we'll try to see what everyone's, what everyone's calendars are, and we'll get everyone else's schedules as well. We'll try to accommodate as, as best we can.

MR. CORZINE: Okay. Just so, you know, it's not convenience, it's necessity as far as all we have going on.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: We understand. We'll --

MR. CORZINE: Okay.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: We will, we will try to take all of that into account.
MR. REDDING: All right. So they would be in-person meetings, right?

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Yes.

MR. REDDING: And then there will be work group --

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Yes.

MR. REDDING: -- activity in between.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: Yes. And work group meetings would again be via conference calls. And since all of the products of the work groups will come back to the full committee, those will be just, just committee members involved in those conversations. And they may have tasks to work group members to gather up information and bring to the phone calls. And we'll, we'll work on planning some of that soon so that we can get information out to work group members about things to think about before the first call. Is that okay with everyone?

MR. REDDING: Okay. So, we've got, we've got a plan. Right? We've got work groups. Some, some additional definition, yeah, which we'll have to work on around sort of the scope of the work groups, all right, just so we're clear about what is sort of parked in each of those three. But we know what they are. We know the time line that we're working with. We've identified at least initially, you know, some of the additional information that's required from the USDA. We've identified, and we will continue to,
to identify the sort of speakers we want to have engaged in one of the future meetings. Right?

So we'll just ask as, as you leave here to be thinking about and reflecting on the work that we've done. But think about, you know, the models. Think about your stakeholders. Look particularly as you go back home to look local. All right? Look in your state, both, both county and, and state organizations that would be important to have in the stakeholder conversation. And think of them in a future role around the facilitation of this coexistence conversation and the work of the guidance document.

We'd also ask you to think about the incentives. And we heard some, certainly there are, it's not a new fund, you know, to do that. But we did touch on some of the incentives that are in the marketplace incentives that Lynn has mentioned. There are incentives in terms of just, you know, the, the secretary mentioned today of just being able to, to grow and, and change and reflect the times and opportunities. That is an incentive. It's a little more intangible, but it nonetheless is an incentive.

But think about those incentives and, and where, where they are, how do we identify them, because I think ultimately they've got to be also part of the narrative, all right? There's got to be part of the call to action is
around the narrative. So please be, be thinking about, about that as well.

And then, what's the final point I was going to make about -- oh, the other thought, just around the technology piece. And again, I don't know where, maybe this is a, it will evolve as we move into the work group discussions and the role of technology, right, in both the deployment of information but the facilitation of coexistence and what role does that have. Where do you, what can you do with it? Right?

We see it every day. It's changed, transformed agriculture actually. But how do we use it for this purpose and this mission here to, to both engage but also inform and educate and raise the awareness. I think there's a question around technology. Maybe that's a model question. Right?

So maybe it ends up coming out of there. But I just want to make sure that we don't lose sight of it as we go forward here with our work. Okay?

Are there other comments, final thoughts? No?

Okay.

MR. MCKALIP: Just, just to think.

MR. REDDING: Doug, do you want to --

MR. MCKALIP: Count to three and have everybody say agriculture. No, no.

MS. MARTENS: What day is today?
MR. MCKALIP: Today is the 15th. Right? And everybody, you signed it incorrectly that I saw. Yeah. Thanks a lot. This was my first AC21 rodeo. And I wasn't surprised by the level of conversation, the level of content and commitment, but very impressed with the people. Just, you are really a great group of folks. And, and so I certainly look forward to working with this group over the course of the next year and beyond.

And, Secretary Redding, thank you for all you do, for continuing to volunteer to lead this effort. And the Department really, really appreciates your, your efforts. And just thanks everybody to come all this way and give up your time. I know you have to plow through 300 emails tonight probably and make up work to get back to where you were. So thank you for that very much.

MR. REDDING: Yeah, Doug, thanks. I think, you know, just a note of thanks generally to the USDA. And I mentioned it with the Secretary here and a couple of times throughout, but I was really impressed yesterday when you had the agencies here and saw, you know, the work that, that we put in for a couple of years to deliver what I think was a really substantive, meaningful report. Right? And it took us a lot of work to get to the point of getting that framed in a constructive way, knowing where those conversations started some years ago. And to see a report
that we could point to and I think really did advance the conversation around coexistence and build on the previous work.

And I'm always reminded when I look back at the history of the AC21 that it is a 15-year run. Right? And some of you have been around this conversation a long time. You think where technology was when AC21 was first created and where it is today and, and what has happened. Right? And what we have now, an appropriate question around this coexistence and the interface of that. So our charge when we started, you know, we were a little concerned about what that would look like. And not in terms of understanding the task. The question is whether we could really advance, advance that conversation, right, and really add some, both definition to it and, and then to hear yesterday from the USDA that, of what they're doing. And I, I was impressed with that.

It is never quick enough. Let's just admit that. All right? It is never quick enough. But when you look at the magnitude of these issues, and you look at them over the course of 15 years and what was and what even in the course of time that, that, of our initial work in the three years since, I think we can all be very proud of, of the work that's been done. And to do that and still have the relationships of this committee in place, all right, we can
disagree on things, and, and that's fine. And that's exactly how it's built. But to know that that work is being done by the USDA, which, which has this incredible challenge of trying to satisfy all of these diverse opinions and balance all of that, both internationally and domestically at multiple points. And the secretary has done that incredibly well. But knowing that we've contributed to that, I think we can, we can be proud of that point.

The work of the next year, it will be a hustle, just knowing the calendars, knowing the seasons, knowing our other obligations. But I feel like I can leave here today understanding what, what the charge is and, and now having some definition around that that, as we chair and USDA sort of work through, we need to process all of this and make some sense of it. And I think that is not an easy task, all right, because our challenge is to really try to listen to each of you and to say is that, is that what we heard, does that really resonate, does that make sense. I mean, how do we represent that to you and, and work back, right, and work plan. So, but we'll work hard at that.

We appreciate the engagement, the constructive thought that has gone into this and will continue to. So, as you, you know, move from, you know, 2015 to '16, I want to say thank you, you know, for staying involved and being, you know, willing to share ideas and thoughts and help us
work through this. But I would ask you, given the shortened
time line that we will be on, that we're going to need a
fairly quick response to things, right, so dates and those
kind of turnarounds, I'd just ask you to please be mindful
too.

So final word, just to say thank you on behalf of
the Chair. And I want to say thanks to, to Michael and Doug
and Denise and others who really make this, this work so
well. Thank you.

MR. SCHECHTMAN: And I'll just, just add my, my
words of thanks as well. We surprised you with a charge,
and I think you folks have jumped right into it and jumped
into it with a, with a spirit of cooperation. And I think
that really bodes well for the success of what we're going
to see in the next year. So I thank you, USDA, the
Secretary. Thank you very much. And we just wish you safe
travels and Happy Holidays. Thanks.

(Whereupon, at 3:01 p.m., the meeting was
adjourned.)
Digitally signed by Mary Rettig

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY
AND 21ST CENTURY AGRICULTURE

By:

Mary Rettig, Transcriber