



United States
Department of
Agriculture

CNAFR: Wed. December 12, 2012 Public Comment Notes

Council for Native American Farming and Ranching

Joanna Stancil welcomed everyone and explained the public comment period. She referenced the Federal Register and asked everyone to limit their questions to 3-5 minutes maximum.

Mark Wadsworth encouraged written communications and also told the group that there will be another public period comment period in the morning.

Jay Fisher (ND) Getting common language out. Federally recognized Indian Tribe Extension Program. Asked the council to work together. Want to increase the number of Extension Specialist

JoAnn Warner - Risk Management Program. Started in 2001. Third of projects have targeted Native Americans. Most notably FRTEP. Record keeping project has been extremely successful. Unique capability to build capacity in Native American Programs

Trent - doing extension in Arizona working with the tribes. Commitment to the youth. Cautioned council to look at existing structure rather than inventing the wheel.

Brian Thomas- (Native American Producer) in Nevada. The need for record keeping. Main concern is Keepseagle. Many upset Native Americans that did not receive money. Native are passive people. 1981-1986 no information. Keeping records are crucial. Many producers received \$50,000. History of the price of diesel. However they were not happy because of the record keeping requirement for the \$250,000 amount. Some Natives are pissed at those who cashed their checks. Believe Keepseagle should be reopened to ensure all Native producers get a fair shake.

2:21

James Mcquin? This group. I have the most respect for you taking this job on. I feel sorry for the folks who didn't go to the meetings. I guarantee you that he couldn't have picked a better crew. The money that everyone is talking about. Support kids. When another tribe comes to apply for extension agent there is no money added. They chop the program off to apply to another program. I am proud to be an Indian. Think of what you are doing

Chris Beyerhelm asked for clarification on money.

2:25

Jesse LeFeure. Extension Service. Our funding is not being funded at an appropriate level. The original plan was to have 80 agents we only have 36.

2:27

Mitchell Spearman. As the 1st 4H intern. USDA may not have necessarily had their finger on the pulse. Please consider relevance. What does Ag mean to me. Food, Family and the environment are important. If there is money available I hope we consider relevance. Executive Leadership for farmers. Learn to market their programs. Look at 1890s original land grants and tribal colleges. Encourage students to learn how to teach.

2:30

Gayle Whiteman. I am real privileged to have been a rancher and a rancher's daughter. Hired to be the FRTEP agent. I read that there was an Indian committee that had just met with the Secretary. We need your voice. What do we do in Indian country about 4H? Indian country needs to set up 4H. An agent that is working in the community build the idea of how we do 4H. Let the Indian people build the programs from the ground up. Does it have to be 4H?

Jerry McPeak asked for qualification. Do you want the money from Extension but you don't want to call it 4H. Are you saying there is a negative connotation with calling it 4H. Response Yes I am.

2:36

Gloria Sbekoo? (Alaska). 7 tribes signed up in conservation district. The area that I come from is about the size of Iowa. We don't have hardly any government to help or businesses. We live in an impoverished area. One member paid 1200 for her oil bill. January is the coldest month. The bill will probably be \$1600. A bag of groceries from Wal-Mart is about \$120. That is what we pay for food. Gas is \$4.24 now. Other places it is \$7.25. I want to talk to you about the WHIP program. In the past we have been able to do Moose research. Moose is the main stable.

Sarah asked what Whip

2:43

Mark Andrew (Alaska) serves as President for his tribes. As of today two people froze in their home. Set up endowment fund to assist tribes in Alaska. Most of the state was shutdown for fishing. Fishing is what sustains us.

2:44

Rachel Lindall - Rosebud Extension (SD) Today I am representing all of SD FRTEP program. In SD, BIA data supports 1.2 million in agriculture. Youth is our agriculture future. We need more investment. I have been on the Rosebud Reservation. I have also been associated with one of the oldest agriculture extension programs. Very few places to get science based information. We provide the outreach that people trust. FFA not available on reservation. We would like to see more fund go to promoting the future.

2:49

Sabrina Tunnel

I want to support my co-workers in FRTEP. University of Arizona. There are some large differences on how extension works on reservations and how they work in counties. Many can't serve the reservations because of lack of staff or not the right attitudes. I have witnessed some terrible discrimination towards our

reservation kids.

2:52

Nikki Crouse. 35 miles south of Duluth, Minnesota. I like to talk about the Extension Program that I work through. I didn't know what FRTEP stood for. What I want to say that some of the educators that I met here you do some really good work. Having input from elders but also knowing about the culture and the history because this isn't necessarily thought at the public schools.

The Minnesota Master Gardener Program. The name doesn't matter. We have this junior master gardening program. We are teaching the kids about the 3 sister and heirlooms. Minnesota Naturalist Program. A couple of us will talk about the history of the treaty and tribes, seasonal events. Money should not only go to the larger institutions.

3:00 pm

Aaron Begay. Farmer and Rancher. In regards to the Keepseagle settlement. My father in law filed claims. He went through the process and had a denied letter. The request for denied letter we could find. We found it three days after the claim period. We were told this was too late. It took a long time to file this claim and we are three days late and we don't get a break. This isn't fair. Putting money into youth is a really good idea. We have a tribal college that is deteriorating. Where we live it is to hours to go to the grocery store. We would like to see Indian land developed put up some stores for us. We would like to see scholarships. I would sure hate to see this money go back to Washington.

3:04

George Kipp - (Black Feet Tribe)

Small operator. Echoing put the money into tribal colleges. One elder applied but was denied. There should be some special consideration. As far as I believe the committee gives us a voice in DC. I hear a lot of the government agencies. Grassroots ideas. The ideas are good. 1.25 percent set-aside for the specific use of the Native Americans. Should be one of the mandates as a council. Married couples who applied together was awarded as one entity. EEOC does not recognize on the basis of organizations. Each should be reviewed as individuals

Loans debt write off for claimants was good. As an operator and individual. Debt that was acquired prior to 2011 but cannot be paid off. Any debt that was made prior to that date should be reconsidered.

Youth loans need to be reviewed because of default on a youth loan jeopardize their education.

3:12

Bruce Cain. When I left home it was 55 below zero. When I arrived this week it was 55 degrees and there was a heater. It would have been nice to have back home. WHIP that was taken out of Alaska this year. We need to get our

moose back. The thing about that program is that we clear out areas and do control burns. We heard that was reallocated to help endanger moth, box turtles. We feel sorry for those creatures but we need food and we need firewood. Everything in Alaska is wildlife.

When I was young when I was in the river and the water was strong we had to paddle together because it was life or death.

Christy Cincoha (Alaska) Tyonek Tribal Conservation District

Main job is to work to promote USDA programs. One of the things I learned is that USDA does not consider subsistence activities as agriculture. Hunting and fishing are not hobbies. To purchase groceries you have to get on a plane. I guess that I would like to suggest the definition of agriculture be altered to include Alaska.

Lawrence Martinez (4 corners New Mexico). I am here to support youth agriculture. We have been working with farmers and ranchers at our own pace. If we connect and form a bigger group we can reach the larger markets. As we know we have some other Indian groups that have already connected. We want to listen to you but we also want you to listen to us.

Developing Indian Country beef. We are looking for board members. The door is open for us to put our youths into training. We have helped them to develop their knowledge. Start the students at the ranch and then send them to school so they will know what they are there for. Indian Country beef will be a pilot program but there will be others as well.

3:26

Randall Ware, Chairman of the advisory committee on Minority Committee. Today I come to you as a farmer and rancher. Today I bring the needs of our farmers and ranchers from Oklahoma. 39 tribes represented in Oklahoma. OAO programs have not funded any beginning farmer and rancher program in Oklahoma. We have nonprofit organizations qualify. We have 80 families that are waiting. Creating a Native American Heifer grant program. Another idea is credit unions. Let them start a coop. Help us to help ourselves. This will work. You all have a wonderful committee. We need farming equipment. We need tractors we need drill. You give us this and I will give you a great success story that will knock your socks off next year.

Put an endowment fund up. We are having a drought. Put some money up for hay. We have an opportunity community you have an opportunity to help us.

Remember the farmer and rancher out there.

Langston University works with us but they had to shut down their outreach program.

Bruce Savage (Private Farmer). Sometimes we take risks. We can't wait for interest rates. When you are paying 6, 7, 8 14 percent and you can be

paying .075 percent. This is the difference in me working until I am 80. Make sure that this money goes to Native American farming. I understand that extension wants some of this money but put it in Native peoples money.

Jerry McPeak:

The council is not going to be the one to making the decision. Response. I understand we are just asking you to advocate for us.

Joel Clairmont - one of the things that I think are important is Extension. They bring a lot to the table. Trust land and fee lands. You have Indian land and white land. Economic development. Education is the first building block before economic development can start. One of the things I find missing in the tribal colleges. I am not up to speed in the last 10 years. I don't believe our tribal colleges do research. Because they can't access dollars. We need to get tribal colleges involved in research. Pulse crops. Research will boost yields. World demand for pulse crops.

Is the foundation that we are talking about is it going to be private?

One of the things to do economic development is that we do not have any money for startup. Leverage hard dollar with state dollar and federal dollar.

Water development. 147,000 acres.

Erin Hoffman - Tyonek Tribal Conservation District

I am here today to reiterate two main points. The importance of including subsistence in the NASS data. The use of natural (moose big game fish) today we learn about the NASS agricultural survey data and we learn that this will influence USDA money that goes to our state.

Question:

Jerry McPeak, not being allowed to fish in your streams. How much drilling tax is being utilized in your state. I am thinking that your State is not doing a good job with Native people.

Tara Martinez. Just as Mr. Booth says Native American people will take the risk. Every chance we get people will help us plan but when it comes to taking action they leave and they say they are going to talk to someone that can change this but they never come back.

Kevin Welch. North Carolina. I am a dues paying member of the IAC I am also an employee FRTEP. I am not here to represent either of them. AS far as I know FREP is a representative of the USDA. I understand that the council is here to make recommendations to the Secretary.

My proposal is basically this when you do make a recommendation on the disbursement of funds is to look at Indian country as a whole.

Donovan Archambault

This is my 14th year on the tribal council. I serve two years as the chairman. I am one of those people that sat in front of those people waiting for someone to ask what we wanted but they never did. When we did ask they said we should go to BIA. I would like to see, my proposal anyway. My grandfather he told my dad 1934 we were on this council. We gave you a full reservation. You didn't inherit this from your grand folks you are borrowing it from your grand children. The money should be earning interest. I had to give up my land and equipment. Let's go out and buy some land that they can lease at low interest rate. It is fine to help people out but we need to survive too. The reservations. This money is a good opportunity to be self sufficient. We started an insurance company 120 employees. We took it over in 1980. Today we have over 12 million. If you amortize over 40 years it could be a billion dollars.

Ms Martinez. In response to her daughter's emotional presentation to the Council. She came out a couple years ago with us to IAC. I will just read what she wrote.

Just as Mr. Bruce said Native Americans will take the risk for this system.

That is what my family and I are here for. I respect that and I ask you for help. So many people are out there ready to become part of this no one respects that. But I do. Every chance we get the people sent out to help us will listen and plan but when it comes to action we set our plans but no one listens. They leave saying they will talk to someone in charge and don't come back. Millions of people are asking for this. Nothing's happening. I ask for needs in smaller economies.

Christine Weber. I am one of the lawyers that represented Porter and Keepseagle. Making sure that USDA programs serve Native American Farmers and Ranchers. I want to take this opportunity to provide the counsel with some background information

Disposition take

100,000s of pages

Cases appealed to times

Determined groups of
plaintiffs

New administration settlement process

Historic because of the programmatic
relief.

Notice Process. Over \$2 million used to mail to Native American Farming
and ranching, radio announcements, internet ads, Oct 200- March 2011

250 folks who submitted written comments. Many of provisions in the
settlement were essential ingredient for USDA to come to the table and
settle with us. Important for USDA to have parity with other lawsuits.

Another \$2.43 million to announce claim period and advertise outreach efforts

Track A primary track typical plaintiff no records

Track B substantially higher burden of proof. Required to have evidence

that would be admissible in the court of law.

As in Pickford the vast majority of the folks chose to go Track A. Only 92 claims were pursued under Track B. 5191 claims filed timely. 82 percent of those claimants were successful. Track A claimants had an opportunity to switch. Ultimately 13 of those were successful. The total number of claims was lower than we expected. We had expected over 10,000. Sadly because some of them were no longer here to make those claims.

Statute passed by Congress required folks to have complained of discrimination to USDA prior to 1999

We have as many claims as the estimated loss of loans that should have been made to USDA.

56.4 million in outstanding debt relief

384 million dollars remaining that should provide service to Native American Farmers and Ranchers. Money is earning interest.

Q: What is the chance of a 2nd round?

A. Settlement does not allow for this. Only option is to go to Congress and that is not recommended.

Q. What is the role of the Council?

A. Only to advise the Secretary on programmatic issues

Keepseagle recipient. Throughout my life ranching has been an important part of my life. We were able to have a little bit of a relief. It has allowed me to complete on my education. What I am addressing the folks. There is a lot of talk about what to do with the left over money. I believe it should be put towards loans for the folks that were in the original claim. If we don't do this the true meaning of the settlement will be lost.

If it is going to education or a portion of it in education. It should be for agricultural education.

In conclusion there should be a moratorium on the spending of money so every claimant can vote.

Q. Gilbert Harrison. Earlier today we were told that a judge was going to make a decision. Is there a deadline or process that we can put together a recommendation?

A. There is no deadline. We are working with USDA. Our thinking is to put in a board of directors.

Maggie Curly Thomas. We met earlier today as Navajos. We are proposing for our youth. The idea for the board being here for farming and ranching. I am also a farmer and rancher. My husband is the one taking care of that. We are

going to document what we heard. One thing I wanted to hear today. I am so thankful for the Keepseagle. Trying to make a difference to improve our land. Keep the funding as it was intended.

Minimize overhead to maximize assistance to farmers and ranchers. I hope the comments are being captured. This is my third year attending this conference. I haven't seen

Matt Livingston. Arizona Extension Agent. 21 years working with Hopi ranchers and farmers. Programs aren't written for Indian people. It has been difficult for them to fit in the niche for NRCS and FSA programs. Programs are top down. Equity. 2007 agcensus data was taken and huge increase in Native American operators. USDA needs to be sensitive to traditional practices on Native American. I won't try to provide information to Hopi farmers on how to grow corn.

Is the 2007 AgCensus being paired with 2010 Census for program dollar distribution? Native American producers outnumber White producers in Alaska.

We have more than 288 farmers on Hopi.

Mike Jandreu. Christine. You ought to be a congressman. Where is the real information going to come from to influence the decision on what to do with the remainder of the fund?

One of the greatest things that divides us in Indian Country is money.

This was a conciliatory effort that got us to this settlement.

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