

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, & FORESTRY
2018 Farm Bill Markup
“The Agriculture Improvement Act”
Wednesday, June 13, 2018

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Thank you Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow for your work on the bipartisan package before us. I recognize this was not an easy task and I commend your efforts and the hard work by your staff.

Agriculture is the backbone of Nebraska’s economy and it’s a big part of my own life. In fact, one of every four jobs in Nebraska is directly tied to agriculture. That’s why I’m thankful to represent Nebraskans on this committee as we craft such an important piece of legislation.

As each of us around this table is fully aware, there is a lot of anxiety in farm country. With current net farm income down by over 50% compared to 5 years ago, and uncertainty surrounding international trade and biofuel policy, farmers and ranchers are feeling scared and vulnerable. They are looking to us – this committee – to provide the certainty and predictability they need to support their families and feed the world.

Since my first day in Congress, I have worked with my colleagues to promote common-sense policies that enable our ag producers to prosper. This farm bill process gives us the opportunity to accomplish this mission.

Traveling around my home state, Nebraskans have told me they are looking for a strong farm safety net that upholds the integrity of the crop insurance program. This important program works in my state and I appreciate that the bill before us continues it.

I also appreciate the Committee for recognizing the importance of our trade promotion programs. Our farmers and ranchers have proven they can – and will – aggressively pursue global markets. Consolidating the four primary programs under Title III will eliminate the anxiety of expiring baselines, providing producers with more leverage as they look to expand into new markets.

It is also imperative that we give our farmers and ranchers the tools and technology that enable them to maintain their competitive advantage. This package builds off of Congress's existing commitment to expand broadband deployment to the most underserved and rural areas. By prioritizing projects that provide broadband to the most rural areas, we can boost connectivity, assisting in bringing the next generation back to the farm and enhancing our agricultural productivity.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Stabenow, I commend the committee for crafting a bipartisan farm bill that looks to provide our farmers and ranchers with the tools and certainty they need to feed our nation and the world. It is important to me that we remember these hardworking men and women.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to improve the bill today and as it moves forward in the legislative process.