

House Agriculture Committee Member Day Testimony

Rep. Rick W. Allen (Georgia's 12th District)

- I want to thank the committee for allowing me to provide this testimony and to highlight agricultural issues that are critical to the 12th Congressional District of Georgia.
- Agriculture is our state's number one industry, and plays a key role in the economy of my home district and Georgia as a whole.
- Having served on the House Agriculture Committee for eight years, I appreciate the hard work that goes into writing the Farm Bill, which provides certainty for our farmers by authorizing farm policy for at least a five-year cycle.
- I was proud of the work that we did in the 2018 Farm Bill, like strengthening the farm safety net, expanding access to rural broadband, improving program integrity in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and protecting and

strengthening sugar policy, and I believe we must continue to prioritize these policies.

- I remain committed to ensuring that America produces the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food supply in the world as we continue our work on reauthorizing the next farm bill.
- The number one concern that I have heard from my Georgia farmers, these past few years especially, is that of tightening profit margins.
- They are in the fight of their lives to survive this crisis, primarily caused by inflation, supply chain disruptions, and rising input costs combined with depressed commodity prices.
- Food security is national security. We have lived to regret our overdependence on foreign countries for our manufactured goods; if we do not act to properly support our farmers, this nation could become dependent on global competitors for food, which is a national security risk.

- I have continuously heard from my farmers that it is crucial we increase reference prices for Title 1 commodities in the next Farm Bill.
- It is also imperative that we strengthen risk management options such as Agriculture Risk Protection (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). Specifically, I support allowing producers who are enrolled in ARC or PLC programs to be able to purchase Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX) coverage.
- In addition, I urge the committee to consider a provision to ensure our farmers have coverage should supply chain issues cause problems with planting or harvest like a requirement for including “lack of agronomic inputs” as covered under USDA’s Multi-Peril Crop Insurance policies.
- Many farmers in my area of the country experienced financial hardships when the unusual supply chain disruptions were not accounted for by insurance policies.

- Regarding market prices, I encourage the committee to address failing market prices due to seasonal imports. Many farmers are forced to compete with foreign-subsidized imports, causing a large decrease in the market value of many seasonally-grown commodities.
- Congressman Austin Scott introduced H.R. 4580, the American Seasonal and Perishable Crop Support Act, during the 117th Congress. I ask that similar language to this bill be included in the next Farm Bill to protect our growers against foreign markets.
- Next, we need to address our workforce issues. Programs such as H-2A are critical for many farmers in my district, but they need reforms to become more widely-used by American farmers.
- Included in the House-passed H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act, were provisions to conduct an agriculture workforce study. I ask that the committee fight for the inclusion of Sections 814, 815, and 816 of H.R. 2 in any immigration package considered by the House in the coming months.

- When it comes to our domestic labor policies, as a small businessman, I know the employment challenges our small businesses face. A top issue I hear throughout my district is the need for workers.
- We must discuss the income and employment requirements under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and get Americans back to work.
- I have one final point I'd like to raise for this committee's attention. State lead agencies for pesticides, who often fly under the radar, work hard every day to keep homes, businesses and schools pest and rodent-free.
- 46 states, including Georgia, have one lead agency for pesticides.
- We need to support and codify that each state should have a robust state lead pesticide agency in the next Farm Bill.
- This is an initiative I have continued to build support for over the last two Congresses, and I have seen first-hand how well the

Georgia Department of Agriculture works alongside key Georgia industries to keep our public safe.

- Having multiple regulatory bodies in a state does not work, and is not effective for protecting public health and the environment.
- As we continue the process of writing the next Farm Bill, I hope to work closely with the House Agriculture Committee on these issues that are vitally important to Georgia's 12th District.
- Thank you again to the committee for the opportunity to provide my input and I welcome the chance to further discuss these topics as we ensure our nation's food supply remains secure and sustainable.