STATEMENT OF RICHARD FORDYCE

UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the meaningful work accomplished and underway by the Trump Administration to support our nation's farmers, ranchers and rural communities. I come before you not only as Under Secretary of the Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area (FPAC) within the Department of Agriculture, but as a lifelong farmer myself whose values were shaped by an upbringing in agriculture on a family farm in Missouri.

A few weeks ago, Secretary Rollins came before you to outline the importance of the programs we deliver and the people we serve. She spoke about cutting red tape, reforming and modernizing outdated programs and infrastructure, and restoring the integrity of our programs. At FPAC, our mission of putting farmers first is front and center for all these issues. We are getting back to the basics and improving the foundational systems to more effectively support our nation's farmers and ranchers.

Today, I want to discuss how we are modernizing delivery systems, strengthening our programs, and implementing the historic investments Congress entrusted to us so that we can deliver the farm safety net our producers deserve, the resources needed to keep working lands in working hands, and the help needed to recover from natural disasters.

Farmer First

Our Farmer First philosophy begins with recognizing that farmers and ranchers deserve timely support and exceptional customer service. As was shared by Secretary Rollins, the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area was running on over 500 separate antiquated systems, managed by more than 1,000 contractors, and costing taxpayers over $1 billion annually in IT expenses. To address these inefficiencies, we are modernizing a fragmented system through the "One Farmer, One File" (OFOF) initiative. OFOF provides producers a single, streamlined record that follows them across the agencies within FPAC – the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The Trump Administration's Farmer Bridge Assistance Program (FBA) was the first initiative to operate entirely on our new "One Farmer, One File" platform, and its performance has exceeded expectations. Through FBA, producers received more than $10 billion in payments during the signup period from February 23 to April 17. Within days of opening applications, producers who were facing increased production costs following four years of record high input prices received much needed assistance. It is the fastest-moving support program FSA has ever launched, demonstrating what is possible when program delivery is paired with modern technology.

Building on the FBA, the Farm Service Agency is currently accepting applications for the Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF) program which provides $1.625 billion to fruit, vegetable, and nut producers who are facing market disruptions, elevated input costs, persistent inflation, and market losses from foreign competitors engaging in unfair trade practices that impede exports. Producers are able to submit prefilled applications online or in person at their local FSA office.

Another foundational component of the “One Farmer One File” initiative is modernizing acreage reporting by transiting the process into the 21st Century. FSA has launched an acreage reporting modernization pilot across counties in 11 states. This pilot enables the use of digital, geospatial acreage reporting tools which reduces burden on the men and women who serve farmers in our FSA offices and enables better sharing and utilization of crop acreage reporting data within USDA. Additionally, producers nationwide will now have the option to conveniently schedule FSA appointments online or from a mobile device. They will get a direct link to the office near them and can schedule appointments for a variety of services with office staff. The system automatically sends them confirmation emails along with reminders for upcoming appointments. While the option to schedule appointments by phone or in person remains, FPAC strives to meet producers where they are from a technology standpoint.

Working Families Tax Cuts Act: Implementation and Update

When President Trump signed the historic Working Families Tax Cuts Act (WFTC) on July 4 of last year, a top priority of FPAC became implementing programs quickly and effectively to effectuate the meaningful investment in farm safety net, crop insurance, and conservation programs Congress provided. Collectively, the WFTC provided an additional $59 billion over 10-years (CBO estimate) for commodity programs and crop insurance. The suite of emergency programs was also enhanced in WFTC, including the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) for grazing losses due to drought and wildfire on federal lands; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) for livestock deaths from adverse weather and predation; and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) program that covers losses for feed, transport, and other above normal costs due to disasters.

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has implemented the vast majority of WFTC provisions, which expand benefits for beginning farmers and ranchers, increase coverage options, and increase premium subsidies, lowering the cost of participating in crop insurance. RMA implemented these changes at unprecedented speed—moving from bill signing to program availability in less than two months—to ensure producers benefited for the 2026 reinsurance year. We are striving to make the combination of crop insurance and other emergency programs efficient for farmers to reduce the need for supplemental disaster assistance.

The Working Families Tax Cuts Act rescinded IRA funds and increased funding for EQIP, CSP, ACEP, and RCPP delivering over $34 billion through fiscal year (FY) 2031, the largest long-term funding increase in NRCS conservation programs in decades. NRCS is committed to cutting red tape, making it easier for producers and partners to access funding. NRCS is also committed to directing the maximum amount of conservation funding to producers and on-the-ground outcomes, while minimizing administrative and technical assistance costs through more efficient program delivery.

To date, the Farm Service Agency has published two rules implementing 10 sections of the Working Families Tax Cuts Act. In January, Secretary Rollins announced the enrollment period for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program for the 2026 coverage year, an important safety net program that provides producers with price support to help offset milk and feed price differences. WFTC reauthorized DMC for calendar years 2026 through 2031 and provided substantial program improvements, including establishing new production history, increasing Tier 1 coverage from five million pounds to six million pounds, and enabling dairy operations the option to lock-in coverage levels for six years with premium fees discounted by 25%. Over 13,000 dairy producers enrolled in the program, which triggered in the months of January and February of 2026.

A rule published in January also implemented improvements to the Agriculture Risk Coverage Program and Price Loss Coverage Program, both of which will be realized by producers in October. Efforts to expand base by 30 million acres are underway with FSA announcing eligible landowners have from June 1 until August 31, 2026, to review and consider eligible acres. To be eligible for new base acres, a current covered commodity must have been planted or prevented from being planted on the farm during the 2019 through 2023 crop years. FSA farm total base acres cannot exceed the farm's total cropland acres. If eligible requests exceed the nationwide cap of 30 million acres, USDA will apply an across-the-board, prorated reduction to all approved new base acres. FSA also expanded payment limitation and payment eligibility provisions that affect farm support payments including allowing for the equitable treatment of business entities.

Reorganization of FPAC

Last week, the Farm Production and Conservation mission area announced organizational changes across its four agencies that will better position FPAC to serve America's farmers, ranchers, and producers for years to come. FPAC has always been a field-focused organization with nearly 98 percent of our workforce already living outside Washington, D.C., working directly with producers and local communities across the country. FPAC's reorganization builds on that strength by aligning leadership, resources, and support functions closer to where our customers live and work. The reorganization does not include any changes to county or state FSA and NRCS staff.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you how the entire FPAC mission area is delivering the programs that make a difference for our producers and the nation. We will continue modernizing our systems, expanding conservation, strengthening the safety net, and supporting producers across all sectors of American agriculture.

I look forward to answering your questions.