

**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Robert Aderholt**  
**Oversight Hearing on Food Safety and Inspection**  
**March 13, 2013**

(Remarks as prepared for delivery)

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service work to ensure that our Nation's supply of meat, poultry and processed eggs are safe, wholesome, and correctly packaged and labeled. I want to welcome back to the Subcommittee Dr. Elisabeth Hagen, USDA's Under Secretary for Food Safety, and Mr. Al Almanza, the Administrator for the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

When we have had you before this subcommittee in the past, it has been to review the President's budget request for the Food Safety Inspection Service. The President has indicated that his budget submission is late [again], and may not be delivered until April 8.

Having said that, we still have oversight responsibilities to carry out, and given the state of play on current budget issues, we are in a position to discuss with our panel the activities of the Food Safety Inspection Service.

Dr. Hagen, the work that you and all of the men and women of FSIS perform on a daily basis on behalf of consumers and taxpayers is unquestionably some of the most important work that the Federal government conducts. Mr. Almanza, you started as an inspector, so you have seen first-hand the importance of the work

that FSIS performs. I want to thank both of you, and all FSIS employees that work to keep our Nation's food supply safe and wholesome.

Under Secretary Hagen, before I turn the microphone over to you, I would like to say that there is a lot of debate surrounding the impact of sequestration. I do not agree with the position that the Secretary has staked out on this issue while traveling around the country with his sky-is-falling mantra. FSIS' budget has increased by nearly \$75 million since 2008 to \$1.004 Billion. While I realize that this is a salary-intensive agency, I hope that there is a reasonable and responsible way to meet the challenges of sequestration while minimizing the impact on frontline inspectors and industry alike.

With that, I turn it over to you Dr. Hagen and then to Administrator Almanza. Without objection, the text of your full statements will be included in the record.

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