

As Prepared

**Opening Statement
Chairman Robert Aderholt
FY 2015 Budget Hearing
USDA Research, Education, and Economics Mission Area
March 26, 2014**

Good morning. Thank you for joining us for the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee hearing to discuss USDA's fiscal year 2015 budget request for its research agencies.

In preparation for the fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill, the Subcommittee has been focusing on the themes of ensuring the proper use of funds through oversight, ensuring the appropriate level of regulation to protect producers and the public and ensuring funding is targeted to vital programs. We will be reviewing this budget request with these in mind.

I welcome to the Subcommittee Dr. Cathy Wotecki, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Joining Dr. Wotecki, we have Dr. Cynthia Clark, Administrator of the National Agricultural Statistics Service; Dr. Mary Bohman, Administrator of the Economic Research Service; Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service; Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture; and Mr. Don Bice, Associate Director, Office of Budget and Policy Analysis.

This Subcommittee has a strong tradition of supporting agricultural research. USDA is proposing a \$63 million increase over the fiscal year 2014 enacted level for its research programs. This does not include the additional \$277 million included as part of the President's Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, which we cannot consider because it is outside of the established budget cap for fiscal year 2015. The budget request includes a significant investment of \$75 million to create three new Innovation Institutes. We will explore this proposal in detail as it appears to take us in a direction not provided by the 2014 farm bill.

There are also many other increases, decreases, consolidations and transfers in the budget proposal. The hearing today will allow the Subcommittee to thoroughly examine them, which ultimately helps us determine whether USDA is effectively administering its programs and activities and meeting its broad mandate for agricultural research consistent with congressional intent.