



Chairman Robert Aderholt

*Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Subcommittee Markup – FY 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill
April 13, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Before you today is the Chairman's mark for the FY 2017 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

The Subcommittee's discretionary allocation is \$21.3 billion. This bill meets that allocation. Discretionary spending in this bill is \$451 million below the FY 16 enacted level and \$281 million below the President's budget request.

When the Subcommittee began the FY 17 appropriation process, I asked my colleagues to keep in mind four guiding principles. They were: (1) increasing oversight, efficiency, and the need for effective outcomes; (2) keeping rural America vibrant; (3) supporting American farmers, ranchers and producers; and 4) protecting the health of people, plants and animals. These four principles guided us from the first review of the President's budget request to the content of the bill in front of you. This basic framework helped us set priorities during the eleven budget and oversight hearings this year, which covered all of USDA's mission areas, as well as the Food and Drug Administration and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

They also formed a framework for us to consider the many bill and report requests we received from our colleagues. I'm pleased to report that interest in this bill is higher than ever. We received nearly 4,700 requests from 334 Republican and Democratic Members to support, deny, or amend funding levels in the numerous accounts in the bill and to include new bill or report language. We have tried to address these requests in a bipartisan manner by providing programmatic funding or by including language in the bill or report in accordance with House rules. As such, there are no earmarks in this bill.

There are a few areas I would like to highlight today.

First, this bill includes critical funding for Rural Development programs. I, like many of you on the Committee, come from a rural district. Despite repeated proposals by the Administration to reduce funding for certain Rural Development programs, we have ensured funding for such programs as the Mutual and Self-Help Housing Program, the Business and Industry Loan Program, and Water and Waste Disposal Program including technical assistance and the Circuit Rider program. The bill maintains funding levels for the Community Facility loans and Rural Utility Service electric loans and safeguards that lending is driven by the needs of the borrower. We also provide the necessary funding for the Rental Assistance Program to serve very low income residents.

Second, this bill provides targeted increases for animal and plant pests and diseases. In particular, we have added funding to help address the devastating effects and prevention of citrus greening, fruit fly infestations, and the crisis in the poultry industry as a result of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. The outbreak of avian influenza cost the economy well over \$1 billion and there are a number of communities that are still hurting out there. We have to be ready to address this, and any other disease, if an outbreak occurs. The bill also provides the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service with nearly \$10 million for on-farm surveillance and data collection to enhance the understanding of on-farm levels of antibiotic use and the impact on antimicrobial resistance levels. Too often animal agriculture gets the majority of the blame for contributing to antimicrobial resistance, but we must remember the human use of these drugs and the consequences that result when antibiotics are over-prescribed or not taken according to medical advice.

Third, we have provided an increase of more than \$33 million for food safety through FDA to help implement the pending regulations associated with the Food Safety Modernization Act. FDA's budget informs us that they will spend approximately \$1.2 billion on food safety this fiscal year. We have added to this total in the bill and have provided approximately \$340 million for food safety since 2011. Also, we have provided the requested amount of \$5 million for USDA's extension service instead of FDA officials to serve as the sole educator on FSMA regulations at the farm level.

Lastly, we have provided some key funding increases for those successful programs with bipartisan support. The bill provides a \$25 million increase for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, or AFRI, which is USDA's premier competitive research program. An additional \$19 million is provided for the purchase of commodities for the emergency food assistance program, or TEFAP. This funding will keep TEFAP commodity funding level with FY 2016. The bill also continues our commitment to ensuring low-income children receive nutritious meals throughout the summer months by providing more than \$628 million for the Summer Food Service Program. In addition, the bill continues funding for the summer electronic benefit transfer for children pilot program, or Summer EBT. We also include an increase of \$9.4 million for medical product safety measures in FDA.

It is a pleasure to present to you a bill that will impact every American, every day of the year. We support America's farmers and ranchers, who are vital to our Nation's economy and our health and well-being. We are blessed with such a diverse and plentiful food supply that is partly made possible through programs in this bill which assist farmers and ranchers across the country. We help others around the world who face starvation and malnutrition. We support research and development in agriculture to improve productivity and stability. We support the oversight of commodity markets, providing confidence for businesses, traders, investors, and the public. We are fortunate that as a Nation we can support these vital programs. In closing, I ask for your support of the bill.

Before I recognize the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Farr, for his opening remarks, I want to thank him for his dedicated service in Congress over the past 23 years. During your last subcommittee markup, I want to thank you, not only for being a close friend and colleague, but for being a passionate advocate for American agriculture. You will be sorely missed, and I think I speak for all of us when I say we wish you the best.

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