

**United States House of Representatives
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis**

**Hearing on October 30, 2019
“Solving the Climate Crisis: Opportunities in Agriculture”**

Questions for the Record

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The Honorable Garret Graves

- 1. As a farmer, you have the EQIP and CSP farm bill programs, co-ops, and other ways to get help and funding for conservation purposes on your land, so I’m curious as to why more farmers aren’t participating.**
 - a. What are the biggest barriers?**

A big challenge is the shortage of staff at NRCS, which are charged to put these plans together for the farmer. They are the only ones at USDA who actually have to visit the farms themselves. Here in Ohio, at least, are counties that don't even have a representative from NRCS to facilitate applications. I have heard of wait times for an NRCS rep to be as long as 2 years for a nutrient management plan, or a wetland designation. Perhaps using contract representatives such as Certified Crop Advisors could alleviate the backlog of requests for help. Also, it depends on what outcome you are looking for. For instance, the adoption of cover crops are not emphasized much at all, nor is there a specific program to incentivize adoption, as well as no-till practices. Also, why tie everything up with NRCS? How about considering offering discounts to those who use Federal Crop Insurance that use practices that make them less of a risk than status quo? It happens all of the time in the insurance world, granting discounts if the client demonstrates a reduction of risk by performing various tasks.

- b. Can you talk a bit more about the importance of precision ag technology, and then discuss the barriers to this technology being deployed? (like lack of broadband)**

Today, most new technologies coming with the newest precision tools are tied directly to access to broadband services as well as satellite and/or phone service. There are places in rural America that don't even have cell phone coverage. This can put farmers at a tremendous disadvantage based on where their farm is located. This can mean the difference of staying in business or being forced out of farming.

c. What have you heard from other farmers about their issues with broadband and internet access?

I have visited with farmers in places like rural Iowa, where the soils are rich and productive who complain they can't even purchase certain technologies because of lack of access of broadband or satellite coverage. If the US is to be the breadbasket of the world, and the leader in technology, this is embarrassing.

I would be glad to answer any other questions that the committee may have. Please let me know what those questions may be and I will answer them as best as I can.

Best regards,
Fred Yoder