

Cattlemen Provides Testimony for Senate Field Hearing

With Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) hosting a field hearing in Wichita last week, Linn county cattlemen Paul Acton provided testimony for the official record.

“During the oral testimonies...you heard from over a dozen people with interest in agriculture. However, you did not hear from a representative of the largest Kansas organization that solely represents independent cattle producers, the Kansas Cattlemen’s Association (KCA). On behalf of the KCA, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express my perspective on programs and policies regarding the reauthorization of the Farm Bill,” Acton stated.

Acton opened his policy discussion with the Livestock Title, stating that it provides many initiatives needed to promote and enforce the laws designed to protect producers from unfair, deceptive, and anti-competitive practices. Acton expressed the importance of maintaining the Livestock Title within the 2012 Farm Bill and encouraged the Senate to support and pursue funding for the continued process of the GIPSA rule.

“The GIPSA rule was created from the 2008 Farm Bill where legislators acted on the injustices that occur in production agriculture and directed USDA to follow through with the process, and the language is also necessary in the 2012 Farm Bill,” he explained.

Other policies Acton addressed were country or origin labeling and trade. However, he didn’t stop there. With the state of the economy and with many program cuts, Acton talked about the Farm Bill budget.

“When evaluating Farm Bill policies and programs, budget is always a factor. 69% of the Farm Bill budget is used for nutrition assistance such as food stamps, and only 11% is used for commodity programs. As well, rural develop programs receive less than 10% of the Farm Bill budget. Rural development is essential to agricultural production, and cuts in those programs could lead to more exits from the industry. So, when you are deciding where cuts should be made and what programs to promote, I encourage you to support agricultural programs. A healthy ag budget in the Farm Bill is critical.”

Acton concluded by saying, “We need the policies in the Farm Bill that support U.S. agricultural production and foster an environment that promotes economic growth in rural communities. These are the communities and the people that raise and grow the animals and the crops that feed our nation and the world. That should not be underestimated, underappreciated, under supported nor under budgeted.”

To view Paul Acton’s full testimony, go to www.kansascattlemen.com.