

March 21st, 2012

Subcommittee Ranking Member Sam Farr

"I want to recognize:

- Dr. Catherine E. Woteki, Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics, Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Edward Knipling, Administrator, Agricultural Research Service, Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Acting Administrator, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Mary Bowman, Administrator, Economic Research Service, Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Cynthia Clark, Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Department of Agriculture
- Mr. Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture

"I want to thank you for being here today, and for the work that you do for the American people.

"Our nation boasts the most productive agriculture industry in the world.

"Americas' farmers are not only growing the food that fills millions of dinner tables in the United States, but around the world.

"From Georgia to California, our farmers have access to the latest science and the best practices in the industry. And they are putting it to good use.

"In no short part, this is due to the cutting edge research that has increased productivity and improved safety.

"USDA research has also helped improve nutrition standards and fight the important battle against childhood obesity and disease.

"Investments in research have a great rate of return, and the proof is in our robust agriculture industry.

"But if we are to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we cannot quit now.

"Our agriculture industry still faces the challenges of producing our food and fiber safely and sustainably every day.

"And Americans still suffer from bad dietary practices that are landing them in emergency rooms.

"At the root of facing these challenges is research and education.

"Research is not a luxury, but a necessity.

"But in these difficult budgetary times, we do have a responsibility to scrutinized and question spending.

"For that reason I applaud the work that the USDA has done to restructure its research programs to ensure effectiveness, and find efficiencies.

"I am also pleased to see your efforts to partner with Universities and other research institutions to leverage resources and maximize tax payer dollars.

"I understand that none of this easy, but I think we can agree that research is an area that we cannot afford to lose ground on for the sake of our economy and the safety of the food we consume.

"I thank you again for being here, and I look forward to your testimony."