

Good morning Chairman Lucas, Distinguished members of the House Ag committee, house staff, the other invited panel members and all others here in attendance today we all share one commonality this is OUR AMERICA. I wish to welcome everyone to my America, as I only live about 30 miles from this site, and to describe this I will use a line from the song by Irving Berlin; "God Bless America, Land that I love. Stand beside her, and Guide her". I have come here before you this morning to tell you of how I stand beside my part of America, not only to provide for my family but to provide this country with a plentiful, healthy, sustainable food supply and hopefully raise enough extra that I can share my bounty with others around the world.

I come before you this morning to share from my perspective, a perspective that recognizes the importance of a strong equitable 2012 Farm Bill. This perspective does not want to rewrite Farm Bill policy totally, but rather celebrate its successes and build upon and those successes and hopefully craft a new 2012 Farm Bill that addresses the needs of the next 5 years and reviews and retires no longer pertinent addressed items. This bill has many Titles expressed under its banner, but I feel that they are all intertwined and dependent upon each other for successful implementation of this Farm Bill. I do not feel that any Title within the Farm Bill is any more important than another title; it is only with fair deliberation, implementation, and adequate appropriation that any Farm Bill effort will accomplish its goal. That goal is of GUARANTEEING the same goals that I have set for myself, to provide this country with a plentiful, healthy, sustainable food supply and then produce enough extra that I can share my bounty with others around the world. I recognize that this task becomes a little more complicated at the national level. I also realize that numerous, different segments of the populous want to have inclusions in this Farm Bill; but I feel strongly that the goal here in the Farm Bill is to do what government can to make sure that every American has adequate access to something to eat and then to have access to the food, energy and fiber materials that we need to exist and prosper.

The area I would like to focus your attention to right now is the Conservation Title. This title often understated in its importance to the overall Farm Bill but I feel it is one of the most critical to its overall mission. I have had the opportunity to serve the association that speaks for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts here in Illinois as its president and as part of my duties was to write a monthly column for the organization's newsletter. I closed that column every month with this closing, "As always, Remember that this is God's handiwork we are entrusted to watch over. Let's make him proud".

I am a Christian, but maybe for sake of this day more important is the fact that we are all just stewards that are allowed the privilege of being the caretakers of the land we work on during our lifetimes. American agriculture is being tasked with a mission never seen before during modern history, that of a need to feed and protect more people with limited and in some cases dwindling natural resources. Every day in this country more land is converted for non agricultural uses all the while trying to feed a growing population. I am not advocating a moratorium on non ag uses of the productive working land of the USA but refocusing on what is of greater importance; cropland, animal production, forestry needs rather than development for social uses.

We only need to look back into our country's history to see how important conservation has become. It began as a desire to protect things that were unique or in someone's opinion important to protect. Our National Park system and other federal public lands as well as state and local public land holdings recognize that resources need preserving for future generations. Now as it becomes apparent that the working lands of this country are finite and that we need to protect them. The challenge here is that we cannot just lock them away but have to use them sustainably. The conservation accomplishments that have been achieved by this country are nothing short of spectacular, but vigilance and continued efforts are paramount to the survival of the human species as we wish it to be. Once our natural resources are lost our prosperity also will be lost. Conservation for me on my farm means this: Preservation of the natural resources not only for my benefit but to preserve the ability to utilize those by future generations and by using the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill in conjunction and along with other Titles within the Farm Bill to secure and preserve a stable, sustainable food, fiber, and renewable energy supply.

To understand the working lands let us look back to the 1930's This country was trying to rebuild itself as for the first time in our country's history we had a large segment of the population that finally did not have to work the land for themselves but could have someone else furnish those needs for them while they enjoyed prosperity through the financial markets. Then that bubble burst in 1929 and sent many scrambling back to feed themselves. A result of that was accelerated damaging of new marginal lands in production. The lack of understanding that marginal lands means just that marginal, the Dust Bowl resulted and many more people found themselves struggling to just survive. Throw in Mother Nature creating a drought. Hugh Bennett came along and championed for working land as some say Theodore Roosevelt did for public land preservation. The result being the formation of the Soil Conservation Service. As I look at drought indicators today I realize that the results of the formation of SCS are what separates the Dust Bowl Days from what we experience today. Thus this Conservation Title is very important in the protection of the working lands of the USA. We do not need to extensively rewrite this title in the next Farm Bill but continue to focus on what are the critical needs. In my estimation NRCS and the EQIP program needs further funding and expansion. This is a very efficient and effective way to get conservation on the ground. I believe many other programs needs can be accomplished through EQIP and allowing prioritization to fit financial budgets. There is an attitude currently that since EQIP is receiving funding those funds can be redirected to underfunded special interest programs and this has to be curtailed. The NRCS EQIP system already is set up to allow states to cater the funding to localized needs thus improving effectiveness of monies spent.

There does need to be a conservation compliance component to complement production safety nets. Production agriculture is changing and there needs to be compliance to guarantee sustainability and to protect the accomplishments that the millions of federal assistance dollars that have already been spent on have achieved. I have noticed that as farms get bigger, operations become more specialized, with farmers many times not even seeing the land only the tractor operators. These operators only have one mission, that is to do what they are instructed. The farmer producer may not even be aware of a problem occurring until confronted by some outside entity or agency. Conservation compliance is the strongest tool in the Farm Bill to ensure good stewardship and wise use of federal funds.

A strong underlying safety net is priority one to creating a sustainable food supply. The tools of choice are a strong Commodities Title along with a crop insurance program utilizing current programs and funding with a few tweaks. All crops need to have a insurance program developed around them, including livestock. This underlying support should come from federal farm program funding to ensure that any raw input commodity producer receives enough support to ensure that they will try again the next year if their production falters because of weather or financial conditions. This level should cover variable costs and protect against significantly lower commodity prices and little more to limit government exposure and allow efficient producers to determine who farms the land not who has the best crop insurance protection. Livestock producers could be included by a similar insurance plan limiting coverage to cost of feed inputs. Producers should be allowed to buy up insurance protection to higher levels but that risk should not be financed or underwritten by the federal budget but rather an unsubsidized function by private insurance companies and risk assessed and rated accordingly by the insurance industry.

Farm Bill provisions are intertwined and working together will be much more successful than any title individually. A comprehensive, robust Title 1 for Commodities ensures a continued sustainable domestic food supply. A vibrant Renewable Energy Title can not only provide energy sources here at home but create environments for natural resource conservation while allowing producers to generate income and provide an outlet for excess production. This extra production will always be in reserve in case there is a need to use it as a food source. But if that crop is never raised it will never be available if needed. A secure, adequately funded Conservation Title will create opportunities and preserve and protect natural resources for continued future utilization.

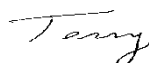
Once we have created this plentiful food supply we need to be able to allow all Americans some kind of access to it. Current food aid provisions are sometimes abused and probably need attention to weed out fraud and abuse. If there were only certain types of purchases that could be made would help ensure proper use of funds. Stories like those of persons buying soda with federal food aid assistance and then recycling unopened soda cans in automated can recyclers for the cash generated by the cans is an example of misuse of a valuable system to society.

Thank you for allowing a taxpayer to comment on this subject. To achieve these goals we only need to keep refocusing on what is first priority and what financial resources we are willing to commit to achieve those goals. Current Farm Bill programs have accomplished so much for the safety and prosperity of the United States. Hopefully the 2012 Farm Bill will further allow America to be the proud beacon of hope for the rest of the world.

I close my testimony as I did for my informational column:

“As always, Remember that this is God’s handiwork we are entrusted to watch over.

Let’s make him proud.



Terry Davis bio:

BACKGROUND – Terry, his wife, Cindy, and their children, Emily and Adam, farm 1200 no-till acres of corn and soybeans in southern Warren County IL. 100% no till since 1985. He is a strong conservation minded farmer with a strong conviction that it is farmer's responsibility to feed a world population while preserving and protecting the natural resources necessary to feed future generations as well. This conviction includes the desire to educate those that are taking food production for granted. Terry operates Terry Davis Trucking as a sideline business to his farming enterprise. Terry has a strong desire to become involved, and then share that information with others.

CONSERVATION INITIATIVES - Terry was a cooperator with IL Dept. of Agriculture's S.O.I.L.S. and W.A.T.E.R. plots for IDOA. These two projects give an excellent opportunity to showcase conservation farming and show the non-farm public that farmers are land stewards as well as food producers.

Terry has been a major participant in an organic, sustainable agriculture project on the Allison Farm in cooperation with Western Illinois University, C-FAR and ARS.

Terry's farm has been a site for several conservation tours, including hosting a stream bank stabilization demonstration site.

Terry's farm has been used for research projects by the University of Illinois for fertilizer rates and application studies as well. Some of the research results helped change recommendations on nitrogen rates for IL corn.

Terry's farm was selected by NRCS and ARS as a baseline for long term no till for the Soil Quality Initiative.

Terry's farm has been a tour stop for CTIC's Conservation tour highlighting the benefits of no till for environmental as well as productivity benefits.

Terry was chosen as **Outstanding Environmental Steward by the Illinois Soybean Association in 2002.**

Terry was given the **Illinois Corn Growers Association Environmental Action Award in 2004.**

Terry in 2003 participated in House and Senate Staff Briefing ON AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Soil Carbon Sequestration: Benefits for Agriculture, the Environment, and Society. The purpose being a briefing on soil carbon sequestration, or the process by which agricultural soils act as a carbon sink. To help reduce atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases, and the potential impacts of this sequestration method on U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases as well as the many ancillary environmental benefits of soil carbon sequestration. These benefits include improved soil fertility and productivity, reduced soil erosion and improved water retention, reduced run-off of nutrients and chemicals, and reduced fuel usage by adopting farming methods that promote soil carbon sequestration and improve soil quality and agricultural sustainability, and identifying additional benefits beyond carbon sequestration experienced.

Big River Resources – Terry helped form Big River Resource Coop, a cooperative of now over 600 farmers in Midwest US joined together to develop, build and operate a dry mill ethanol plant utilizing corn. This plant and its three other sister plants now produces over 350 million gallons of fuel grade ethanol and over 1 million tons of DDGS annually. Terry is a director on the cooperative board as well as a director of the board of managers for Big River Resources, LLC. This effort has allowed Terry to be involved at the beginning levels of development and startup of operations and has afforded him a unique opportunity to express the sustainable, renewable aspects of fuel and DDGS feed production.

Alternative Power Generation - Terry conceptualized and was instrumental in the creation Alternative Power Generation, LLC. serving as an Executive Vice president. Alternative Power Generation, LLC, a venture formed to expand upon the ideological perspective of direct agricultural producer interests investing and developing markets for their products and securing the profitability of their own futures. APG's mission is to give Agriculture a more important and prominent role in the supplying the world with food and energy needs. Reduce fossil fuel needs by developing renewable fuel systems and using biomass utilizing agricultural production as its base. In, addition it is hoped that by utilizing the production of our industry, that the betterment of the human condition can be improved through better

food sources.

Renewable Energy Ventures – Terry helped create REV, LLC. as a vehicle to allow small individual ag producer investors the opportunity to invest in renewable energy projects. REV, LLC. helps these investors locate and then invest in promising renewable projects.

OTHER ACTIVITIES - Terry is active in the Roseville Methodist Church where he has served in many capacities on numerous committees. Currently he chairs the Outreach Missions Committee, and has taught high school Sunday school and is a Certified Lay Speaker.

Terry served as the President of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (2003-2008)

Terry is a past North Central Region Chairman of the National Association of Conservation Districts

Terry was a licensed EMT-B in Illinois (1983-2006)

Terry is a member of the RSP&E Fire Department (1985-present)

Terry helped create and develop and chaired the Warren County ETSB 9-1-1 Board (1995-2005)

Terry is a past member of the University of Illinois Crop Sciences Department's Advisory Board (2002-2008)

Terry currently is Chairman of the Illinois Department of Agriculture Governor's Advisory Board (1999-present).

Terry is a member of the Illinois Attorney General's Ag Advisory committee (2002- present)

Terry is a past Warren-Henderson County Farm Bureau board member and President (1994-2002)

Terry is a past Warren-Henderson Extension Council member and chair (1988-1994)

Terry is 1986 IL Jaycees Outstanding Young Farmer 2nd Place winner.

Current IL Soybean Association member

Current IL Corn Growers Association member

Current IL Farm Bureau member

Recent membership to US Grain Council

**Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form**

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2009.

Name: _____ Terry Davis _____

Organization you represent (if any): _____

- 1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2009, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:**

Source: _____ None _____ **Amount:** _____

Source: _____ **Amount:** _____

- 2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2009, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:**

Source: _____ **Amount:** _____

Source: _____ **Amount:** _____

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: _____

Signature: _____

** Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.