

## Congress Daily

### **New Membership on House Panel Shifts Locus to Plains**

**January 23, 2009**

**By Jerry Hagstrom**

Power on the House Agriculture Committee is shifting slightly from the South to the Plains states in the 111th Congress.

House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson has tapped Rep. Leonard Boswell, D-Iowa, to chair the General Farm Commodities Subcommittee. With its jurisdiction over commodity programs, crop insurance and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and commodity exchanges, the subcommittee is generally regarded as the most powerful on the committee.

Boswell replaces Rep. Bob Etheridge, D-N.C., who won a seat on Ways and Means and has left the committee. Rep. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., is the subcommittee's ranking member.

Boswell chaired the Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee in the 110th Congress and will continue to serve on that subcommittee. Peterson announced Thursday that Rep. David Scott, D-Ga., will chair that subcommittee. Other subcommittee chairmanships remain the same.

The committee's ratio will be shifted from 25 Democrats and 21 Republicans to 28 Democrats and 18 Republicans. Of the 28 Democrats, 11 are freshmen. Two Democrats on the committee were defeated in the 2008 election, while four besides Etheridge left the committee, most notably Rep. John Salazar of Colorado, who got a seat on Appropriations.

Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-N.D., continues to serve on both Agriculture and Ways and Means.

Another man of the Plains, Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Okla., is the committee's new ranking member. He replaces Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., who served as committee chairman and ranking member for a total of six years and ran up against GOP House term limits for committee leadership positions.

Lucas gave Goodlatte his old position as ranking member on the Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research Subcommittee. Lucas also named the following as new subcommittee ranking members: Rep. Mike Conaway of Texas on the Specialty Crops, Rural Development, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska on the Department Operations Subcommittee and Rep. Jean Schmidt of Ohio on the Horticulture and Organic Agriculture Subcommittee.

Of the 18 Republicans on the committee, four are freshmen and there is one vacancy. Five Republicans on the committee in the last Congress retired or were defeated, while

Rep. Charles Boustany of Louisiana left to take a seat on Ways and Means and Rep. Virginia Foxx of North Carolina left for a seat on House Rules.

Lucas also announced that Nicole Scott, a key aide in his personal office, is the committee's new Republican staff director. Bill O'Conner, who was Goodlatte's chief of staff, will remain, but his title was shifted to policy director.