

**Testimony of Scott VanderWal**  
to the  
House Agriculture Committee  
on the Farm Bill  
May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Mr. Chairman, Representative Herseth/Sandlin and other distinguished members of the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee.

My name is Scott VanderWal of Volga, South Dakota. I farm with my family in a diversified operation, producing mainly corn and soybeans and operating a custom cattle feeding enterprise. I have served as President of the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation since 2004.

I thank the committee for conducting this hearing in South Dakota and thank the committee members here today for your time, effort, and foresight in beginning the development of the next farm bill.

The 2012 farm bill should treat production agriculture as a strategic resource of this nation and be constructed to further enhance that resource. A healthy, prospering farm and ranch sector is of paramount importance for this country and its citizens. In my view, the health of the agriculture industry is a national security issue. We have all seen the consequences of our reliance on other countries for a major portion of our energy needs. The importance of avoiding doing this same thing in regard to our food and nutrition needs cannot be overstated.

Some of the challenges that lie ahead as the future farm bill is determined include.

1. **Fiscal responsibility** – We recognize that restoring this country’s fiscal integrity must receive the highest priority from everyone, farmers and ranchers included. Reduced spending by the federal government must happen in order to ensure economic opportunity and national security for future generations. We do ask that agriculture be treated fairly and not suffer disproportionate cuts in federal spending, recognizing that total spending on farm programs including food and nutrition amount to less than one-half of one percent of the federal budget.
2. **Funding allocation** – Farm Bureau supports the allocation of funding across the titles of the present farm bill. We will resist shifting funds from one title to another with one exception – potentially transferring dollars from commodity programs to the crop insurance program.
3. **Balance and fairness** – Farm Bureau is a general farm organization, with members who produce all commodities. Our overriding goal is to maintain balance and benefits for all farm sectors. Shifting benefits from one commodity to another is divisive and many times unfair.

4. **World trade** – There may be a need to include options to comply with existing trade agreement obligations and WTO litigation rulings. However, we resist efforts aimed at presupposing the outcome of WTO negotiations. To do so would reduce the United States negotiating leverage.
5. **Market orientation** – We favor a market-oriented farm policy with less reliance on government and more on market signals including adequate options for insurance and revenue assurance products to help producers better manage during times of market fluctuations and weather-related hazards.
6. **World markets** – The farm bill must enhance U.S. ag producers’ opportunities to access world markets on a competitive basis. Farm Bureau supports the administration’s call for a doubling of U.S. exports. We recognize achieving that goal would benefit ag producers, jobs and the overall economy.

We believe a good place to start export expansion would be enactment of the free-trade agreements with South Korea, Columbia and Panama. We watch with major concern as those three countries continue to develop and sign free-trade agreements with our competitors. We are no longer standing still in ag exports and the jobs connected to those exports; rather, we are beginning to retreat.

7. **SURE program** – If the shortcomings in the SURE program are not corrected in the next couple of years, an improvement will be necessary in the next farm bill. SURE payments are not available until a full year after the end of the crop year in which a disaster occurred. That needs to be corrected, so that assistance is realized on a more timely basis. A producer who is in danger of going out of business due to some sort of a disaster most likely does not have the financial ability to wait a year or more for that assistance.
8. **ACRE program** – This provision in the current farm bill is extremely complicated and the many unknowns cause producers to hesitate to sign up. In addition, the cuts in DP’s and MAL’s are more of a deterrent in some crops than in others.

In conclusion, we are committed to assist in developing the next farm bill and look forward to working with you in that effort.

Thank you.

Scott VanderWal  
730 N. Samara Ave.  
Volga, SD 57071  
605-627-5479

President, South Dakota Farm Bureau

Scott VanderWal is a third generation family farmer from Volga, in east central South Dakota. He and his wife, Michelle, have 2 sons, Kyle and Austin. Their operation includes corn, soybeans, custom cattle feeding, and custom harvesting. Scott manages the cropping operation, doing much of the planting, spraying, and harvesting. He also does the overall financial management of the operation.

Scott graduated from South Dakota State University, with a bachelor's degree in General Agriculture with a Plant Science minor. He was involved there with student Senate, Little International staff, and many other activities. Scott has served on many boards and committees, including county Farm Bureau board and local Cattlemen's board.

Scott's agricultural background includes an exchange trip to Germany in 1996, a tour of the soybean "frontier" in Brazil in 2001 and Brazilian cattle country in 2006. He was a member of an agricultural trade mission to Cuba in 2004, and visited Geneva Switzerland as a member of the AFBF Trade Advisory Committee in 2009.

Scott and Michelle served on the state Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee for several years, and one year as chairman. They also were appointed to and served on the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee from 1992-1994, where Scott was elected second Vice-chairman. Scott is a member of Class III of the South Dakota Agriculture and Rural Leadership Program.

He has been a member of the South Dakota Farm Bureau board of directors since 1997, including three years as Vice-president, and has served as president since June of 2004. Other duties included with the state president's office are Farm Bureau Mutual and Life Insurance Company boards and the Farm Bureau Bank board. Scott was elected to the American Farm Bureau board of directors in January of 2006, and that has led to serving on the AFBF Input Cost Review committee, co-chair of the Industry Wide Beef Check-off Task Force, and chairman of the 2008 AFBF policy review committee.

Scott represented Farm Bureau on the Monsanto Grower Advisory Council, and traveled to China in November of 2008 with the council.

He served on the Sioux Valley School Board for 9 years, including 6 as president of the board, and has been treasurer of First Reformed Church in Volga since 1986.

## **Activities, Boards, Committees, Travel**

- \* Member of United States Collegiate Wind Bands – traveled in Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands - 1981
- \* First Reformed Church Treasurer - 1986-present
- \* Brookings County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee chr. - 1986-1990
- \* SD Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers comm. - 1987-1994, chr. 1989
- \* First Reformed Church Building Committee - 1989-1990
- \* Brookings County Farm Bureau President - 1990-1994
- \* East Central Cattlemen’s Assn. Board - 1991-1994
- \* American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee - 1992-1994, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chr. 1994
- \* American Farm Bureau Food Quality Protection Act Task Force - 1995-1996 (appt by Nat. President)
- \* Member of McCloy Agriculture Fellowship to Germany - 1996
- \* SD Farm Bureau State Board of Directors - 1997-2001
- \* Sioux Valley School Board - 1997-2006, president 1999-2006, committees: Negotiations, buildings and grounds, transportation, budget, board policy
- \* SD Farm Bureau Vice-President - 2001-2004
- \* Value Added Agriculture Development Center Board of Directors - 2001-2004 (representing SDFB)
- \* Member of *Top Producer* tour group to Brazil - 2001
- \* Member of Trade mission group from Value Added Ag Development Center to Cuba - 2004
- \* SD Farm Bureau President - 2004-present
- \* Farm Bureau Bank Corp. Board of Directors - 2004-present
- \* Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company Board of Directors - 2004-present
- \* Farm Bureau Life Insurance company Board of Directors - 2004-present
- \* SD Agriculture and Rural Leadership Class III - 2005-2006, traveled to Brazil on overseas study 2006
- \* Agriculture United for SD Chairman - 2005-present
- \* American Farm Bureau (AFBF) Board of Directors (national) - 2006-present
- \* American Farm Bureau Input Cost Review Committee - 2006 (appt. by AFBF President)
- \* Industry Wide Beef Checkoff Task Force Co-Chair - 2006 (appt. by AFBF President)
- \* American Farm Bureau Financial Resources Review Committee - 2007 (appt by AFBF President)
- \* First Reformed Church Addition Committee Chairman - 2007-2008
- \* American Farm Bureau Policy Review Committee Chairman - 2008 (appt. by AFBF President)
- \* Monsanto Grower Advisory Council member – 2008-2009 (appt. by AFBF President)
- \* Traveled to China on a study trip with Monsanto Grower Advisory Council - November 2008
- \* SD State University Animal and Range Sciences Dept. Head search committee - 2008
- \* American Farm Bureau Trade Advisory Committee – 2009-
- \* Traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, met with trade negotiators from several countries - 2009

**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, 2007.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ Scott VanderWal \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ 730 N. Samara Ave. Volga, SD 57071 \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ 605-627-5479 \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization you represent (if any):** \_\_\_\_\_ South Dakota Farm Bureau \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2007, 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:** \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

**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, 2007, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:**

**Source:** \_\_\_\_\_ RMA/Universtiy of Nebraska \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_ \$4,188.73 \_\_\_\_\_

**Source:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) 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.**