



Chairman Robert Aderholt

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee Markup

FY 2016 Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

June 18, 2015

Opening Statement As Prepared

Good morning. Before you this morning is the Chairman's mark for the FY 16 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The Subcommittee's discretionary 302(b) allocation is \$20.65 billion. This bill meets that allocation. Discretionary spending in this bill is \$175 million below the FY 15 enacted level. When the Subcommittee began the FY 16 appropriation process, I asked my colleagues to keep in mind three guiding principles. They were: (1) Improving the Management of the Agencies and Programs within our Purview; (2) Targeting Funds to the Most Important Programs and Functions; and, (3) Promoting U.S. Agriculture, Free and Fair Markets, and Safe Food and Medicines. These three principles guided us from the first review of the President's budget request to the content of the bill in front of you. This basic framework helped us set priorities during the 11 budget and oversight hearings this year, which covered all of USDA's mission areas, as well as the Food and Drug Administration and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

They also formed a framework for us to consider the many bill and report requests we received from our colleagues. I'm pleased to report that interest in this bill is higher than ever. We received more than 4,000 requests from 306 Republican and Democratic Members to support, deny, or amend funding levels in the numerous accounts in the Bill and to include new bill or report language. We have tried to address these requests in a bipartisan manner by providing programmatic funding or by including language in the bill or report in accordance with House rules. As such, there are no earmarks in this bill.

There are a few issues I would like to highlight this morning. First, I wanted to briefly address an issue that we spent much time on since the beginning of the year – the Meat Animal Research Center, or MARC for short. In January, all of us read a disturbing article in the paper about poor animal welfare practices and research at this USDA facility. We have done two primary things in the Bill to confront this issue: (one) we have withheld five percent, or \$56 million, of ARS' funding until they meet certain requirements, and (2) we have added funds in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for the agency to provide oversight of ARS' animal research locations.

Second, this bill includes critical funding for Rural Development programs. I, like many of you on the Committee, come from a rural district. Despite a tough allocation and proposals by the Administration to reduce funding for certain Rural Development programs, we have ensured funding for such programs as the Mutual and Self-Help Housing Program and the Business and Industry Loan Program. We also provide for a seven percent increase for the Rental Assistance Program to serve very low income residents.

Third, this Bill provides targeted increases for animal and plant pests and diseases. In particular, we have added funding to help address the devastating effects of citrus greening as well as the crisis in the poultry industry as a result of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. At the beginning of the month, this disease had already killed 47 million birds and there are a number of communities that are hurting out there. We have to fix this and be ready to address this disease if it moves south later in the year.

Fourth, we have provided \$41.5 million for food safety through FDA to help implement the pending regulations associated with the Food Safety Modernization Act. FDA's budget informs us that they will spend approximately \$1.2 billion on food safety this fiscal year. We have added to this total in the bill and have provided approximately \$230 million for food safety since 2011. Also, we have provided an increase for USDA's extension service instead of FDA officials to serve as the sole educator at the farm level on FSMA regulations.

Lastly, we have provided increased funding for medical product safety measures in FDA and other USDA agencies. The bill provides critical funding for the National Strategy for Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria in a couple of places. USDA has been actively involved with many other Federal agencies, including FDA, on antimicrobial research and currently spends more than \$17 million on these efforts. With the increases provided in this bill, USDA will have nearly \$25 million to continue and expand their work.

FDA is also a key player in the National Strategy for Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria. The bill provides an increase of \$4.2 million for medical product safety initiatives, of which \$2.5 million is for antimicrobial efforts. FDA is expected to spend approximately \$35 million combating antibiotic resistance in FY 2016. Too often animal agriculture gets the majority of the blame for contributing to antimicrobial resistance, but we must remember the human use of these drugs and the consequences that result when antibiotics are over-prescribed or not taken according to medical advice. In total, the bill provides a significant investment of \$60 million for this initiative.

It is a pleasure to present to you a bill that will impact every American, every day of the year. We support America's farmers and ranchers, who are vital to our Nation's economy and our health and well-being. We are blessed with such a diverse and plentiful food supply that is partly made possible through programs in this bill which assist farmers and ranchers across the country. We help others around the world who face starvation and malnutrition. We support research and development in agriculture to improve productivity and stability. We support the oversight of commodity markets, providing confidence for businesses, traders, investors, and the public. We are fortunate that as a Nation we can support these vital programs. In closing, I ask for your support of the bill.

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