

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CIVIL RIGHTS LISTENING SESSION

ALBANY CIVIC CENTER
ALBANY, GEORGIA
JANUARY 6, 1997
10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

LISTENING PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Earl Cosby	Robert K. Duncan
Congressman Sanford Bishop	Secretary Dan Glickman
Pearlie S. Reed	Laura Meadows

CIVIL RIGHTS TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wilbur Peer	Mon Yee
Joyce Willis	Robert Whiting
Karen Messmore	Bruce Weber
Samuel Thornton	John Bottum
Floyd Wheeler	Leonard Hardy

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P R O C E E D I N G S O F S E S S I O N

1
2 MR. COSBY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and
3 thank you for your attention. I'm Earl Cosby, the State
4 Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation
5 Service here in Georgia. We welcome you to this Civil
6 Rights Listening Session today. We have people here from
7 a number of states; many of the surrounding states, of
8 course, including Georgia. We thank you for taking time
9 out of your busy schedules to be with us today. We're
10 looking forwarding to you providing input to the Department
11 of Agriculture, and of course, Secretary Glickman, and the
12 Civil Rights Action Team that is present with us today.

13 We're pleased with the commitments of the Department,
14 Secretary Glickman, and the Action Team to get customer
15 feedback. And of course, those customers are you. We're
16 also pleased that we have the signal that necessary changes
17 will be made as comments and concerns are brought to the
18 Department. We have a panel of distinguished guests here
19 today, and will start the dialogue with you.

20 At this time I will go through and make some
21 introductions. I will also call on a few other people here
22 to make some introductions, as well. First, I will
23 introduce a couple of people that work with me from day to
24 day as agency heads here in the state. First, is Laura
25 Meadows, who is the Director of the Rural Development

1 Agency, formerly the Farmers Home Administration. Next to
2 her, we have Robert Duncan, who is the Acting Director of
3 the Farm Service Agency, formerly known as the ASCS.

4 At this time, I'm going to call on one of our strong
5 supporters who helped us put this listening session
6 together, that is the Executive Director of the Federation
7 of Southern Cooperatives, Mr. Ralph Paige, to make a few
8 opening comments.

9 MR. PAIGE: Thank you so much. I want to welcome
10 everyone here on behalf of the Federation of Southern
11 Cooperatives, and especially our Albany, Georgia, office,
12 headed by Mrs. Sherrod, for coming, for helping us put it
13 together. This is a historic occasion. Never before, that
14 I can remember, and I've been doing this work for over 27
15 years, that we've had a Secretary to come out and agree to
16 put forth listening sessions throughout the South.

17 I believe this is the first of eight different
18 sessions that will listen to complaints, civil rights
19 complaints, and will listen to problems that farmers have,
20 especially minority farmers, specifically those of African-
21 American farmers. This is tremendous.

22 To you, Mr. Secretary, we commend you for doing this,
23 and we thank you. And hopefully, this will lead toward
24 some very, very, long-lasting action that's very much
25 needed to correct some of the problems that USDA affects

1 minority farmers, that affects the ones who have been hurt
2 most, who have been hurt most of all by the problems like
3 credit, like marketing, all types of civil rights
4 complaints. This would be the, this would -- this is a
5 type of action. We encourage you to go forth today and put
6 forth, not a quick-fix, but long-lasting action that would
7 lead to some permanent solutions to the many problems that
8 most of you, or all of you, face here as minority farmers.

9 With that, I want again, to thank Mr. Bishop, the rest
10 of the panelists for coming and helping to put forth this
11 session. And to the farmers. Please, go out and talk and
12 say the things that you've said to us, the complaints that
13 you have put forth. This is again, I reiterate, this is
14 the very first time that this has happened. It's historic,
15 and we want to take a, take advantage of this opportunity
16 where something can happen in a positive nature for you.

17 After this session, and after these hearings are over,
18 I personally hope never again that we would have to go
19 through this with the Department of Agriculture. I hope
20 never again to see another complaint of discrimination at
21 USDA. I hope once and for all these type problems we can
22 fix. After all, this is the greatest nation on the
23 continent, and agriculture is a prime example of what it
24 should be worldwide. We should have an opportunity to
25 participate in it. We should have the opportunity to stay

1 on our farms, to make a living in rural communities. And
2 this would -- I think this is a first step to what -- that
3 lead toward a holistic approach to land loss and to the
4 problems of minority farmers.

5 Again, we thank you, and welcome.

6 MR. COSBY: Thank you, Mr. Paige. At this time, I
7 will continue with the introductions. And we have some
8 people that will make introductions, as well as brief
9 comments. The first one I will call on is a 28-year career
10 employee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service,
11 formerly the Soil Conservation Service. He acts in his
12 capacity, at this time, as the Associate Chief of the
13 Agency from Washington, D.C. He's also the chairperson of
14 the Civil Rights Action Team of the Department of
15 Agriculture, Mr. Pearlie Reed.

16 MR. REED: Thank you Earl. And good morning to all of
17 you. It is indeed an honor and a privilege for me to be
18 here with you today. I would like to ask the members of
19 the Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team to just stand for
20 a moment so that you can see who they are. So, would all
21 of you please stand?

22 (The members stood.)

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause)

25 My task here this morning is to introduce the

1 Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, congressman from the great
2 Second Congressional District of the great state of
3 Georgia. I have a long biography of him here. I won't
4 read it. So, what I will simply do is to ask you to join
5 me in welcoming Mr. Bishop.

6 MR. BISHOP: Thank you very much Pearlle. And let me
7 say what has already been said by Ralph Paige and many
8 others, that we are grateful for the Secretary's taking the
9 time and having the interest and the concern. I'm to
10 address some of the perennial nagging issues that have been
11 plaguing USDA for many, many years. We have a Secretary
12 who, when having these issues brought to his attention,
13 decided that he would take the bull by the horns. That he
14 would uncover whatever had been swept under the rug. That
15 he would objectively, fairly, carefully, examine,
16 investigate; but more importantly, listen.

17 And, as you are all aware, this is one of eight
18 listening sessions that the Secretary has scheduled across
19 the country. To listen to people who are the customers of
20 USDA. To try to hear your concerns, your problems, your
21 issues. To record them. To have the Civil Rights Task
22 Force to listen to them so that they can take what you have
23 to say, the issues that you raise, the solutions that you
24 propose, put them in the form of recommendations for a
25 permanent resolution of these all too long-standing issues.

1 persistence in helping me deal with this issue. Which is
2 basically, that USDA has an obligation, a responsibility to
3 treat its customers and treat its employees with dignity,
4 with fairness, with equality. And I can say, that in some
5 cases, we've done a good job at that. And, in some cases,
6 we've done a bad job of that.

7 And what we're here today is to, under the leadership
8 of Pearlie Reed, who has been introduced to you, is to
9 listen to folks around the country to try to get a
10 first-hand feel of the facts and of the character and
11 texture of problems that people go through when they deal
12 with the Department of Agriculture.

13 The way I look at it, and the way the President looks
14 at it, how we treat our people and how we treat our
15 employees, and how we treat our customers -- farmers,
16 ranchers, people in this room -- is more important than any
17 dairy program or wheat program or corn program or
18 conservation program or anything else that we do. Because
19 if we don't treat our people in the way that's right, then
20 the substantive programs don't make all that much
21 difference.

22 So, what we are trying to do is to look at the areas
23 that we have failed in, and to try to determine how we can
24 do it better. And look at the areas that we have succeeded
25 in, and find out why we have done it.

1 As many of you know, we've been in the news a lot
2 lately. And while I love publicity, some of the news that
3 we've had lately is not the type news that I particularly
4 like. News about complaints about discrimination, black
5 civil rights enforcement, and inadequate outreach of
6 service to any farmer, and to minority farmers in
7 particular. That is simply unacceptable. However, I think
8 it has provided us with an opportunity to address the issue
9 and to make changes in the Department. Make changes in how
10 we serve people; make changes to try to improve American
11 agriculture.

12 So, my goal is to take a situation and to make
13 lemonade out of lemons, so to speak, is to take it and do
14 some good things with it. The Department of Agriculture --
15 give you a little bit of background -- is a huge
16 decentralized bureaucracy, about 100,000 people work for
17 this department. Many of the decisions that affect farmers
18 are made in hundreds of county offices around the country.
19 In fact, the Department of Agriculture is the most
20 decentralized of all federal agencies.

21 True, most of the decisions that are actually made,
22 that actually affect farmers are not made in Washington;
23 they're made locally. And the situation is made more
24 complex because many of the staff that work for, on farm
25 problems, actually work for the state or the county, and

1 are not actually employees of the Department of
2 Agriculture, even though they're out here working in county
3 offices. And so, they don't answer to USDA directly, in
4 many cases. However, they help us stay close to our
5 customers, and put a human face on the federal government.
6 And that's the way Franklin Roosevelt set it up, because he
7 recognized the benefits of a local presence.

8 However, the history of civil rights shows that
9 certain decisions, particularly those affecting the most
10 basic rights of our citizens, should be made according to
11 national standards. That's why we have civil rights laws.
12 We -- Washington does not let county commissions make its
13 own civil rights decisions. We have learned that we have,
14 that there are certain basic national principles that we
15 have to establish. So, what we're doing today is to try to
16 figure out where we need to do better.

17 I established a Civil Rights Action Team under the
18 leadership of Pearlle Reed. And these folks, these men and
19 women who are down -- who stood up with you, represent all
20 different agencies of the Department of Agriculture, from
21 rural development, to the forest service, and everything in
22 between. I've asked them to, to help advise me. They're
23 the ones that will actually be coming up with a report to
24 me some time within the next 30 to 40 days, which we will
25 then act upon, to make these changes. During January, this

1 team will hold 13 listening forums nationwide, all over the
2 country, and they will come up with recommendations, as I
3 said, before mid-February.

4 In addition to that, I have ordered our Farm Service
5 Agency to temporarily halt foreclosure sales on delinquent
6 farm loans, until a determination can be made on each case,
7 as to whether there is evidence of discrimination or
8 inconsistency in program delivery.

9 Third, I directed each USDA agency that serves farmers
10 to establish an outreach office. These outreach offices
11 will work directly with the public and constituency groups
12 to improve the Department's outreach and service to
13 minority and socially disadvantaged producers.

14 Fourth, I requested our department's Office of
15 Inspector General to investigate allegations of
16 discrimination at the Farm Service Agency, and recommend a
17 plan for promptly resolving complaints that are there. Let
18 me just close by saying this. Abraham Lincoln created the
19 Department of Agriculture in 1862. He called it the
20 "people's department"; that's what it was named. Its
21 function was to disseminate seeds to farmers around the
22 country, seeds and information about seeds and planting
23 decisions.

24 This basically, was kind of the forerunner of our
25 extension programs that we have right now. What I want to

1 make sure is when people think of USDA, they think that we
2 are, in fact, the people's department; all the people's
3 department, not just some of the people's department.

4 So today, we begin the process of our listening
5 sessions, where we want to find out from you how are things
6 going. What can we do better on? Where are the problems?
7 What kind of program should we be doing in the future?
8 Help us to make this place a better place because you're
9 the owners of the Department of Agriculture. You're the
10 taxpayers in this room. You're my bosses. You're the
11 bosses of everybody else that are up here. You're the boss
12 of Sanford Bishop here; you pay his salary. All right?

13 So, you're our employers and we understand that. And
14 we hope today that you can help us make this agency a place
15 that's productive. And as it's long-lasting goal, to
16 encourage younger farmers, smaller farmers, minority
17 farmers, to stay in agriculture. And to come back into
18 agriculture to reverse the trends towards consolidation and
19 concentration agriculture, which is happening all over the
20 country. Thank you-all very much.

21 MR. COSBY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

22 At this time, I will go through a few ground rules, if
23 you will, that we will follow as we conduct this listening
24 session this morning. As I indicated, just a couple of
25 seconds ago, that this is a listening session, it's not a

1 debate. So, your comments will be taken, and of course,
2 used throughout this process.

3 Let me ask the speakers, if you would, to come to the
4 microphones. And there are microphones scattered
5 throughout the audience. And speak into those microphones.
6 As you start, I would ask that you would state your name
7 and where you're from, and begin to do your presentation.
8 The sessions will be videotaped as well as audiotaped. We
9 also have transcribers that will be taking your
10 information.

11 I will call the speakers, as I indicated. And we
12 would -- I have a timekeeper here. When you're out of
13 time, Cynthia will hold up a card when you have one minute
14 left, or hold up the next card, which is a zero, when
15 there's no time left.

16 If you still have information that you would like to
17 present when your time has expired, we're going to ask that
18 you would follow one of our ushers and begin to give that
19 information to them, or to an appropriate person in
20 writing. If you could remember that for me, you would help
21 me to do my job this morning and keep this session on
22 schedule.

23 We will take a break at about 10:30. And I say about
24 -- excuse me, 11:30; we'll take a break about 11:30. And
25 I say about, because I'm not exactly sure where the minutes

1 will fall as speakers are here talking. And we will come
2 back right after the break and finish up by 1:00 p.m.

3 At this time we're ready to begin our listening
4 session. I will call the first speaker. Many of you
5 indicated this morning, as you registered, that you would
6 like to speak. Our first one is Mr. Willie Head, Jr., from
7 Pavo, Georgia. If you will step to the microphone and
8 indicate who you are and begin your presentation for five
9 minutes. Yes, sir.

10 **COMMENT BY: MR. WILLIE HEAD, JR.**

11 Willie Head, Jr. Good morning. To the Secretary of
12 Agriculture, to Congressman Bishop, and the panel, we bring you
13 greetings from Brooks County. My name is Willie Head, Jr. I'm
14 a third-generation farmer from Brooks County, Georgia; the
15 county seat Quitman.

16 My -- I didn't realize I'd be first, but, I'm here.
17 My complaint with the Farmers Home, or FSA now, I received a
18 letter in the mail. It said that the Agriculture Department or
19 USDA wanted to correct their decade of wrongs. And they are
20 correct. Since 1986, we haven't been able to get anything as
21 minority farmers. We worked diligently and we realized that
22 hard work doesn't get it. You have to have opportunity.
23 Opportunity must be present along with hard work. We certainly
24 work hard.

25 Since 1986, we haven't been able to get anything from

1 Farmers Home. We've survived until this point. Earlier this
2 year we also received a letter saying that within 45 days, if
3 you were delinquent with Farmers Home, you had to pay up.
4 That's impossible for us to do it, since we haven't received any
5 financial assistance from Farmers Home since 1986. I talked to
6 the Secretary in Kentucky at Farm Aid last year, and I asked him
7 about a provision that was in the previous farm bill, before the
8 1995 Farm Bill. I asked him was there any provision in there
9 for the minority farmer. He said that there was, but they had
10 been voted down. I asked him would they be reentered into the
11 1995 farm bill. And he said they would; they'd probably vote it
12 down again.

13 So, that tells me something; that it's some
14 discrimination, to me in my mind, that there is some
15 discrimination. You're telling me that there are policies that
16 go in for a minority farmer, and they're going to be voted down
17 even before that they're voted on. So, I feel strongly that
18 there is some discrimination that involves the black farmer.

19 Since 1986, we hadn't been able to get anything. It's
20 approximately 60 or 65 black farmers in my county. And only two
21 to three of them get assistance from Farmers Home. And we're
22 looking, in 1997, for those two or three not to get anything,
23 unless the policies are changed. So, we're asking the Secretary
24 to put these groups out there. To really put watchdogs, or
25 groups out there, to watch these local communities. Because

1 they're the one that helps make the decision to decide whether
2 we get anything or not. And that's part of the problem; there
3 hasn't been any watchdog groups over these local committees.
4 Because the same people on the bank committee's on the ASCS
5 Committees; they're on all committees within the system there.
6 And if you're not going to get any financing from the bank,
7 you're surely not going to get any from FSA, because the people
8 that's on that committee is on the bank committee. He's turned
9 you down at the bank, and you go down to the ASCS office and
10 apply, and he's on the same committee. Certainly, you're not
11 going to get anything down there. So, the government will have
12 to put somebody over these committees, or instrument some kind
13 of plan or program, and see that these committees are fair.
14 Because they're certainly not fair, and that's part of the
15 problem with these local committees.

16 They won't let us have anything in my county. And I
17 would like to reannounce the name of my -- Brooks County; Brooks
18 County. Somebody need to come down there and see how they can
19 carry on the programs in that county. That county's 62 percent
20 minority or 62 percent black. And they've controlled
21 everything, especially in the agriculture department. We can't
22 get anything; anything. I mean, we can't get anything. And
23 it's just not fair. We are taxpayers also. We have wives; we
24 have daughters that want to go to college; we have sons who want
25 to go to college. And that's the way we make our living there.

1 Our name is also written in the lane. And we need somebody come
2 in and assist us to put watchdog groups over these places, so
3 they can see that we're treated fairly.

4 Thank you.

5
6 MR. COSBY: Thank you. I will call the next speaker.
7 And please indicate who you are, and where you are from, as
8 you approach the microphone. Our next speaker is Tirso
9 Moreno from Apopka, Florida. And, please, forgive me if I
10 mispronounce those names.

11 **COMMENT BY: TIRSO MORENO**

12 My name is Tirso Moreno. And you did a good job in
13 pronouncing the name. I'm from Apopka, Florida. And I
14 represent the Farm Abuse Association in Florida and I'm also
15 part of several national organizations that are looking for
16 improvement of their lives of farm workers and their families.

17 And I would like to start by saying that farm workers,
18 even that are not enough information about the numbers, there
19 are probably over three million farm workers in the U.S. And
20 just in Florida, we have over 300,000 people who don't own any
21 land, but are workers in the agricultural industry and for
22 farmers. And most of them work for very large corporations that
23 are -- employed thousands of them. And the situation of the
24 farm workers, it is worse when they work for larger farmers than
25 when they work for smaller farmers. And, I mean, that is

1 reality.

2 Also, farm workers do have families who are affected
3 directly by the situation they have at work, at the work places.
4 It is important also to mention that the death rate for farmer
5 workers is about five times higher than your rate of any other,
6 you know, all the other occupations combined. The life
7 expectancy of farmers is still about 49 years old. It is less
8 than 20 years, compared with people who work in other
9 industries.

10 There are about 300,000 cases of illnesses, and over
11 1,000 deaths every year related to pesticides as exposure. Many
12 of the problems, many of the -- these kind of problems are not,
13 or have not been documented. So, the numbers can be much
14 greater than what I'm talking about.

15 The poverty is a strain in our communities. The
16 industry has kept salaries at the very, you know, very, very
17 low. To the point that the farm workers' buying power have been
18 reduced to just about half than what we had about 15 years ago.
19 The way the farm workers are paid, they're paid by the piece,
20 which is not -- I mean, as much as they -- I mean, they, they
21 improve their skills, and they improve their capacity to
22 produce. But with the low wages they pay, there is no way you
23 can keep up with the cost of living. So, our people is poorer
24 than 15 years ago. That is a big problem.

25 Many of the owners of the industry do not hire the

1 workers directly. They use the labor contracting system which
2 take away the responsibility of the employers. We want to say
3 also, that our communities would not know of any direct services
4 to the farm workers. And the Department, I mean, we -- when I
5 was invited to this event, I didn't even know what to talk
6 about, what to ask for. Because we don't have -- it might be of
7 service to farmers, or to the big corporations who are our
8 employers, but our communities do not know what the Department
9 is doing for our, for our people. I might be ignorant about
10 this. There's a, you know, I think it's important to consider
11 that. We do recommend that the Department have more focusing to
12 the farm workers' communities.

13 I have, I mean, some more recommendations, more
14 specific, but I think the time is over.

15 MR. COSBY: I have a recorder for you. James Ford, if
16 you would come and take this gentleman to one of the
17 recorders, we will -- would like to have that information.

18 MR. MORENO: Uh-huh (yes.)

19 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

20 MR. MORENO: Okay.

21

22 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker is Alfredo Bahema, from
23 Apopka, Florida.

24 **COMMENT BY: ALFREDO BAHEMA**

25 Hi. My name is Alfredo Bahema, and I represent the

1 Farm Workers Association in Florida. I would like to talk about
2 the living conditions of the farm workers, and especially the
3 salaries. For the last 10, 20 years, the piece rate in salaries
4 continues to be the same for farm workers, when the cost of
5 living is 100 hundred percent higher today. And the lack of
6 guarantee of work makes the farm workers to be the most poor
7 workers in the United States. I feel that the lack of
8 responsibilities from the agricultural industries and farmers
9 makes the situation worse.

10 Related to housing, the farm workers are living in the
11 worse conditions, worse housing conditions than in the last 20
12 years. And this makes the many farm workers is that's renting
13 their own -- renting houses in higher costs.

14 On the other hand, I want to mention that there is a
15 lack of enforcing the law related to field sanitation. Tirso
16 Moreno was explaining about how pesticides are dangerous to, to
17 all farm, farm workers that are in contact with pesticides. And
18 field sanitation is a real need for farm workers. And on the
19 other hand, the workers' protection of standard law is not being
20 enforced as well. We feel that farm workers needs to be better
21 trained, related to pesticides, not by videos. We feel that
22 farm workers needs to be trained by public education in their
23 own language, in language that they, they can understand.

24 We always complained about more scientific studies on
25 how pesticides damage the farm workers' health. We have been

1 making a lot of recommendation on how farm workers suffers from
2 short-term symptoms, as well as long-term symptoms. We complain
3 that many lack of their own -- they don't know about how to
4 treat farm workers when they have pesticide symptoms. And if
5 farm workers are well educated about pesticides, it's going to
6 be a long job on them.

7 I want to mention that we need, farm workers need a
8 lot of more better housing projects and better economic
9 development projects, include alliance. We need as well, child
10 care, because there is a lot of childrens in the fields as well.
11 And if I did mention pesticides, childrens has been exposed to
12 pesticides as well.

13 I have a lot of other things that I would like to
14 mention, but I was not prepared real well. But if I have -- I'm
15 going to try to write the living conditions and circumstances of
16 the farm workers. And I can send it to you as well.

17 Thank you.

18
19 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. I should mention at this
20 time, and I failed to do so at the beginning, is that on
21 the way in, or at least when you registered, you should
22 have picked up a comment form, or the people at the table
23 should have given you one. And please feel free to use
24 that comment form to address those -- to list those
25 additional concerns, if you would, please.

1 Our next speaker, Suzanne Shingler, the Georgia
2 Ratite Association.

3 MS. SHINGLER: Excuse me. It's Shingler, and it's the
4 Georgia Ratite Association.

5 MR. COSBY: All right. Thank you.

6 **COMMENT BY: SUZANNE SHINGLER**

7 My name is Suzanne Shingler. I'm from here in Albany,
8 Georgia. And ratites are ostrich, emus and rheas. And it's a
9 growing industry across this nation. And right now, we're
10 having to pay \$33 an hour to have our meat inspected and get it
11 to the market. Because it's a nonamenable meat -- most markets
12 don't even know where to look at what nonamenable or amenable
13 mean. But, if we're to be an alternative industry in this
14 nation, and if we're to be able to get our meat to the market,
15 we have got to have help on getting the price of inspection
16 down.

17 Right now, the state of Georgia has declared ostrich,
18 emu, and rhea livestock, so that we can process it in red meat
19 facilities where they do beef and pork. But to get this to the
20 market, we have to pay not only to have it slaughtered, but also
21 to have the meat inspected while it is slaughtered, while it's
22 being packed. We have got to have some assistance in this from
23 USDA. We have got to have standards set. These birds are a
24 very marketable item. It's a healthy meat. It's an alternative
25 choice for people who have heart problems or cholesterol

1 problems.

2 The birds produce an oil. The emus produce an
3 oil, the rheas produce oil that can be used in medicine, as well
4 as in cosmetics. Standards need to be set on that. Standards
5 need to be set on inspection. And, if nothing else, make that
6 time that we're in the slaughter house slaughtering and
7 processing meat be prorated, because, at the same time, they're
8 doing pork and beef in some other department in that, in that
9 same slaughter house.

10 This industry is quite big in the state of Georgia.
11 We have over 600 farmers. It takes a small amount of land to do
12 ratite farming. Fifty acres can produce over \$100,000 a year
13 income for one farmer. A bird will lay 50 to 75 eggs a season,
14 where a cow only has one calf. So, it is an alternative farming
15 issue that needs to be addressed.

16 There are a lot of minorities. I'm a minority because
17 I'm a woman, and we've been doing it for 15 years. But, unless
18 we can get our product to the market at a reasonable price that
19 can be competitive with other meats on the market today, we
20 can't survive. And we can't support those people who are in
21 this industry right now as producers.

22 So, we would like this to be addressed on a national
23 level, if we have to go to the House and Senate in Washington
24 and get it an amenable meat. We did, in the state of Georgia,
25 we went to the House and Senate and got it declared livestock.

1 If we have to do that on a national level, tell us. Let us
2 start now. Because there are a lot of people who have invested
3 in this. There are a lot of people who are raising the birds.
4 But unless we have an end market and we can put it at the meat
5 counter at a reasonable price, those people will lose all of
6 their investment. So, we would like to have this issue
7 addressed on a national level.

8 Thank you.

9
10 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much. Our next speaker,
11 Carl Parker, from Ashburn, Georgia. If you will please
12 come to the microphone. State your name and where you're
13 from and begin. Thank you.

14 **COMMENT BY: CARL PARKER**

15 My name is Carl Parker, with just a couple of
16 questions. And I'm from Ashburn, Georgia. And I speak on
17 behalf of me and Gary Parker. As a matter of fact, we're from
18 -- well, we're in Worth County. The county of Worth, but
19 Ashburn, Georgia. We're kind of on the line between the two
20 counties. And we are -- we used to be borrowers of Farmers Home
21 Administration, which is now ASSA Service. And, and in the past
22 we borrowed money and farmed. But, as of 1988, we was not able
23 to borrow any more because of the dry years that put us in bad
24 shape. And then again, in 1990, federal crop insurance, with
25 the help of federal crop insurance, we are totally out of

1 business now.

2 So, we -- but yet, we've been living on the farm. And
3 a couple of years ago, or a few years ago, they came to serve --
4 we were sent a letter saying that we were more than 45 days
5 delinquent. And so, we would -- it was suggested that we pay up
6 at that time. But there was no way possible at that time to pay
7 up, due to the fact that all of them dry years. And, well, with
8 the help of federal crop insurance, and not -- a nonpayment to
9 federal crop insurance that, that we couldn't pay them.

10 So, we went back to Farmers Home at that time, and
11 resubmitted an application. And we was going to change our
12 farming operation. And we'd grow flowers and we, we tried
13 everything trying to survive and make it. And, in the later
14 years, I thought that Farmers Home Administration was an
15 administration to help farmers, that I couldn't borrow money no
16 where else. But when we got there, we were discouraged by the
17 people that were in charge. I won't call their names at this
18 time, but if you want to know, I got them.

19 And I only attempted one or two times to enter a
20 complaint. Because I felt like that if I enter a complaint,
21 then that would just speed up foreclosure process on me. And I
22 didn't want to do that, because some farmers, they already have
23 complaints in with Farmers Home and it didn't do them any good.
24 I didn't see where it would do me any. Therefore, I put in a
25 complaint.

1 But in later years, a couple of years ago, as a matter
2 of fact, we wanted to diversify our farming operation into a
3 grass farm. And we was told that, by the agent that, that if we
4 even, even if we applied, there wouldn't be any money available.
5 Trying to discourage me and -- the way I felt about it, and --
6 but yet, I still gave, submitted the application. And sure
7 enough, he did just like he said he would. He was going to turn
8 it down. And so, but we kept on, and appealing. And one thing
9 about the appeal process that I feel I understand is that if you
10 appeal FMHA decision, and it's conducted by FMHA people, you,
11 you're bound to lose. And that's something that needs to be
12 changed. (Applause.) I mean really.

13 And here lately, I'm right now in the mediation
14 process. And, I mean, I feel I've got a mediation scheduled for
15 next Monday at 8:30, if anyone can attend. And you're welcome
16 at the Worth County Library. But, but I don't know whether it's
17 going to, going to speed up my process or -- when I heard the
18 Secretary say that all foreclosure would be, would be frozen
19 temporarily.

20 So, in my closing -- I've got one minute, so I'll wrap
21 it up. I would like to meet one-on-one with one of your
22 representatives, if there's any way possible, to resolve my
23 case, if there's any way possible. And it's very necessary for
24 us to meet with them. But, if not, then I'll fill out this
25 papers and turn it in in the suggestion box. And those are my

1 concerns.

2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Laura, can you -- Bob, it's one of
3 yours?

4 MR. DUNCAN: Yes.

5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Can you meet with him
6 today before you leave us?

7 MR. DUNCAN: (Nodded head).

8 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Mr. Duncan will meet with you
9 before you leave.

10 (Applause)

11

12 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

13 Our next speaker, Fred Daniels from Blakely, Georgia.

14 **COMMENT BY: FRED DANIELS**

15 I'm Fred Daniels from Blakely, Georgia. Many of the
16 things that I had listed to be addressed, the Secretary in his
17 speech said that those things would be looked into. That made
18 me feel happy. One of the things that we notice, all of the
19 government agencies, from federal government, of the state, and
20 local government, and a lot of consolidation and downsizing took
21 place in some of the local agencies. In combining some of the
22 work load did not increase the staffing to provide the kinds of
23 efficiency service that the farmers in my county need. I'll put
24 it that way.

25 Secondly, the addressing of the advisory boards, or

1 the advisory councils, or committees, especially with the ASCS
2 office. The structure of it, no black can ever be elected to
3 serve on that board and make any decision. Sometimes they allow
4 us to sit in as a minority representative, but you have no vote.
5 So, you see, you're just representing your people, but you're
6 not in the decision-making policy. I don't know if anything can
7 be done to address that issue as well.

8 Thirdly, we know as we look at future outlooks,
9 population growth between now and the year 2000, the experts
10 tell us that from Virginia -- Virginia, the state of Virginia,
11 to Texas, will be where most of the population will be. For 35
12 years I've noticed the black farm population continue to
13 dwindle. Not only the black, black farm population, but farm
14 population period. But immensely the black farm population. And
15 I was wondering, maybe, what kind of incentive can we come about
16 to encourage young black farmers. Because I've taught a lot of
17 young people. And a lot of the young whites go into farming,
18 father-son partnership, and other means by which -- but as I
19 look at the black population, most of those, when they end it,
20 that's the end of it.

21 Agriculture has been the backbone of this nation
22 through many wars. The tribute of the success of the wars
23 fought was based on agriculture being the foundation and the
24 success of it. And there's an old saying, that if rural America
25 is destroyed, or forsaken, or denied, grass will grow in the

1 streets of Washington, D.C. But if you maintain rural America,
2 you can destroy the big cities and they will be rebuilt greater
3 than what they were before.

4 I thank you.

5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Can I -- Earl, can I ask Mr.
6 Daniels a question?

7 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

8 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: You talked about how minorities
9 can't get elected to county committees; is that correct?

10 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: And is that -- give me some
12 background of that. Let's say, for example, you have a
13 county that has a third of the farmers in the county are
14 minority farmers. Just from the numbers, should they not
15 be able to elect people to that county committee? What is
16 there that precludes people from being elected to a county
17 committee?

18 MR. FRED DANIELS: Usually three individuals are
19 listed on a ballot. And the ballot is sent out to all of
20 the farmers that are eligible to vote. And they vote for
21 that individual. So, if you got a third of them, of the
22 voting black, two-thirds are white, most times. Well, up
23 to -- at this point, we have not been able to get a black
24 on the ASCS committee.

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah. Now, what were you saying,

1 Mr. Duncan? Normally, if they're --

2 MR. DUNCAN: Normally, if we have --

3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Use, use the mike.

4 MR. DUNCAN: Normally, we should have -- if it's 5
5 percent minority in a county, normally we will add a
6 minority on the ballot. And that does not necessarily say
7 that, you know, they're going to be elected. But that is
8 a process that we've had in place for several years.

9 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir. That's still -- that takes
10 place in my county. They're on the ballot. They, they be
11 entered on the ballot, but what we're saying, that's giving
12 you an opportunity to run, but you won't be elected.

13 Thank you so much.

14
15 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

16 Our next speaker is David Barnhart from Monticello,
17 Florida. If you would restate your name and location for
18 the record, I would appreciate it.

19 **COMMENT BY: DAVID BARNHART**

20 My name is David Barnhart. I'm from Monticello. My
21 question is for forestry. Three years ago we were able to get,
22 I think the government had a 60/40 percent share cost, with also
23 herbiciding. We wanted to redo 80 acres this year. I needed to
24 know how come the program is obsolete now. It's no longer in
25 use. We don't have the money for it; they've discontinued it.

1 And they've done this for years planting trees.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. PEER: I didn't get his question clear.

4 MR. COSBY: Sir, could you come back to the microphone
5 and restate your, the question. I think there's a --

6 MR. BARNHART: My question is why is it there is no
7 more money, there is no more funding for it? At least
8 that's what I'm told.

9 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Do you know the exact name of the
10 program? Is it ACP program? Would you know the particular
11 program you're talking about?

12 MR. BARNHART: I don't know the exact name of the
13 program, and that's another problem.

14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Forestry incentive program, is
15 that a NRCS or a forestry-funded program?

16 MR. COSBY: That program is ran through NRCS at this
17 time. And that program is funded, but under a limited
18 amount of money.

19 MR. BARNHART: But not in Monticello. Yeah, at
20 Monticello they say that it's no longer there. That was
21 in --

22 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: We can look into that.

23 MR. REED: Are you from Georgia?

24 MR. BARNHART: Monticello, Florida.

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Florida; right?

1 MR. BARNHART: Florida, Florida. Right across the
2 water -- or land.

3 MR. REED: Niles, could you follow up with him and
4 find out exactly what the story is?

5
6 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is James
7 M. Perry from Union Springs, Georgia.

8 MR. PERRY: My name is James Perry. I'm from Union
9 Springs, Alabama.

10 MR. COSBY: Union Springs, Alabama; thank you.

11 **COMMENT BY: JAMES PERRY**

12 MR. PERRY: I live in Bullock County. My county
13 adjoins Montgomery County to the east. I've farmed most of my
14 life. I plant peanuts, soybeans, and corn, and I have 65 share
15 of brood cows. My father let me start making day-to-day
16 decisions in 1968.

17 My problems started with FHA in 1988 -- I received a
18 letter from them stating -- when I received this letter from
19 FHA. It's about, it's Public Law 100-223. It says that FHA is
20 required to release proceeds from crops or livestock, anything
21 that I would use to, usually sell, for family living or farming
22 expenses. And this letter was sent out during disaster years.

23 So, as I said, that's when my problems started. When
24 I went to my supervisor to ask for a release of these proceeds.
25 My supervisor told me that I didn't read the letter right. He

1 also told me that no other farmer read the letter like I read
2 it. So, they let me and another farmer require for these
3 service.

4 I had a cash crop after '88. So, I made the request.
5 I got all the forms that I need to fill out for District 12. I
6 filled the forms out; I was denied. I sold the calves and told
7 the supervisor what I did with the money. Because I was denied
8 by the supervisor, I had to appeal the decision after I had sold
9 the calves, because that's when they had bad faith against me,
10 for the calves against me. And I won this appeal.

11 The next year, we had another disaster. The next year
12 we had another disaster. I got the same letter again. I went
13 back to my supervisor, that year of '89, to ask for a release of
14 the calves again, for that year. Again I was denied. This, I
15 realize, I made a mistake. I didn't get the form to fill out
16 that year. I also sold the calves. I told the farm -- I told
17 my supervisor that the calves were going to be used for farm
18 expense and family living.

19 Because I sold the calves without my supervisor's
20 permission I had to appeal again. I won the appeal again. But
21 the hearing officer stated that FHA had, had 12 days to appeal
22 to Washington to the National Appeals staff, and they did. My
23 state office asked Washington to review the hearing officer's
24 decision. This was -- it came from OGC the state office
25 lawyers.

1 When the National Appeals staff ruled, they ruled in
2 my favor. They advised my state office to continue service
3 without delay. This ruling was made April the 29th, 1991. It
4 was December, '93, before I got any service from FHA. I was
5 told that the national appeals staff could not overrule my state
6 OGC. So, the bad faith for selling the calves still stood
7 against me.

8 On the other hand, OGC asked for this review, and then
9 it came back saying the National Appeals staff couldn't overrule
10 it. So, I would like to ask at this point -- that's when my, I
11 know my rights were violated because my appeal rights has been,
12 have been taken away. If my state office does not have to
13 listen to the National Appeals staff, there's no need of having
14 a National Appeals staff anyway.

15 And my problem also started with my supervisor with
16 FHA regulations. At some point, I saw the regulation one way
17 and my supervisor saw them another way. And I understand that's
18 where the appeal process come in. Both parties must abide by
19 the rules, whatever. You can't have one accepting one rule and
20 another, another rule. So, this is a -- this is one of the
21 problems I've had.

22 We've had other problems that other farmers had in the
23 county. They would have problems getting loans, and when they
24 get them, they're late. They'll have to plant late. But this
25 one farmer in my county, and his name is G.W. Talber, I will

1 always believe that he was done wrong. He was harvesting his
2 crop that FHA had a lien on. His combiner broke a belt. He
3 went into his county FHA office to get money to replace the
4 belt. He was told that he had used up all his repair money.
5 Repair money is an estimate that you give to your county
6 supervisor at the beginning of the year on your home and farm
7 plan. This supervisor had some checks from the crops that this
8 farm had already -- had gathered earlier. And Mr. Talber also
9 had a crop in the field. So, I ask you to put yourself in this
10 farmer's place. It's harvest time, you need to get back to the
11 field. You have taken your supervisor some checks and you will
12 be taking him the rest once you get your combine repaired.

13 MR. COSBY: Mr. Perry, could I get somebody to come
14 and get the rest of your information, please. James? We
15 would like to have that. If you would give it to James
16 Ford, we will get it recorded by one of our recorders.

17 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Can, can I just ask him some
18 questions?

19 MR. COSBY: Yes. You have a question here.

20 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Sir, what is the status of your
21 case now? You said the OGC the Office of General Council
22 basically took precedence over the appeals division. So,
23 as of right now, has that matter being resolved against
24 you, then?

25 MR. PERRY: Well, I'm being foreclosed at this point.

1 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: You are?

2 MR. PERRY: Yes. They have taken half of my
3 equipment. Half is still on the farm. I reported that I
4 had been discriminated against. And this has been stopped
5 so far. So, we're looking to hear a ruling from
6 Washington. And I don't -- well, in my state, it's hard to
7 -- well, you don't really know how it's going to go. When
8 Washington make that decision, then I have to deal to the
9 state office again, also. So, I really don't know at this
10 point.

11
12 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir; we'll get that information
13 from you.

14 Our next speaker, Melvin Crumb from Rowesville, South
15 Carolina. If you would, repeat the name, and state where
16 you're from, I would appreciate it.

17 **COMMENT BY: MELVIN CRUMB**

18 Thank you very much. My name is Melvin Crumb. I'm
19 from Rowesville, South Carolina. I'm a local farmer, a fourth
20 generation farmer. And I had some comments.

21 I'm going to rearrange my comments because of a
22 comment that was made earlier by Mr. Fred Daniels. I think,
23 perhaps, we need to clarify this position of African-American
24 representation on the various county committees. And I don't
25 think that that was adequately explained. So, Mr. Secretary, if

1 you will allow me a few minutes, I would like to get into the
2 ins and outs of why we can't get adequate representation or
3 adequate African-American representation on these various
4 committees.

5 It was stated by Mr. Daniels that we can get on the
6 ballot. And that's a fairly easy process if you follow the
7 rules and regulations. The problem comes when you're in the
8 minority of the population. And we know that in America, the
9 majority tends to win. Representative -- Congressman Bishop is
10 here today as a result of reapportionment of the United States
11 Congress. And we were fortunate enough to have an African-
12 American elected to Congress from South Carolina because of
13 reapportionment. And of course, reapportionment has gone a long
14 way from the United States Congress down to state government,
15 county government and even local government.

16 But in USDA, as it pertains to the farm service agency
17 county committees, there has never been an attempt to
18 reapportion the election method. Therefore, we are still
19 electing members at large. And so, if you happen to live in a
20 county that is majority white or nonminority, then you simply
21 have to vote and be at the mercy of the voters.

22 I firmly believe that some effort should be made to
23 reapportion the districts within the scope of USDA's voting
24 authority, to allow for an adequate chance for an African-
25 American to have the, to have the privilege of running, and with

1 some chance of success of winning an election on these
2 committees.

3 Because, as was stated earlier, these committees are
4 the decisions that are made, to a large degree, by USDA, are not
5 made in Washington. They are made at the local level. And they
6 are made by the very persons that are elected at the local
7 level.

8 So, if our options are cut off at the door, and we
9 don't have anybody to represent us, other than a minority
10 member, who is appointed in most cases by the committee. And in
11 my particular county, there has never been any input from the
12 minority, or the African-American farming community, to suggest
13 a person to serve on this committee. And again, in my local
14 case, this person has no farming interest. So, I don't feel
15 that I am being adequately represented, even though it's a nice
16 person. I really feel that USDA should look into the method of
17 how these farming committees are elected. I don't want to
18 belabor that point, but I thought that we need to clarify where
19 the problem really is. So --

20 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Can I interrupt there, just a
21 moment, and make a little brief comment about -- you know,
22 you have identified a perennial problem. When we took up,
23 in the agriculture committee, the recommendations from Mr.
24 Glickman's predecessor, Mr. Espy, on reorganization, we
25 tried to, under the leadership and at the suggestion and

1 the behest, the behest of the Federation of Public
2 Cooperatives, Ralph Paige, and others, we tried to get it
3 put in that legislation, some provisions to make sure there
4 was some, some representation on the local committees. It
5 was the Department's recommendation, in fairness to the
6 Department. But when it got to the committee, it was
7 amended out of the proposal. And, of course, we were
8 outvoted because we were in the minority ourselves.

9 MR. CRUMB: I understand that quite well.

10 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: I think this is one of the areas
11 this task force is going to take a look at specifically.
12 There are a lot of ways to skin this cat, so to speak.
13 There's a lot of ways to deal with the issue of appropriate
14 representation, from the direct appointments from the
15 secretary all the way down to accumulative voting, the
16 different kinds of ways to deal with it. And I assume,
17 that's just one of the things they're going to look at and
18 make recommendations on.

19 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: MELVIN CRUMB

20 Very good. I certainly appreciate your commitment to
21 that effort.

22 I'll be real brief with the rest of my remarks.
23 Getting back to the Farmers Home Administration and their method
24 of collateralization of loans. This is the only lending
25 institution that I know of that requires more than a 100 percent

1 of collateral to secure a loan. Let me explain that just a
2 second. Not only do they ask for a 100 percent of collateral,
3 they ask for the permission to collateralize any future purchase
4 of assets that you might acquire.

5 That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of.
6 I know of no bank that would change the rules of the term, or
7 the terms of the loan after you had closed it. But they state
8 that we ask to collateralize any future purchases, or any future
9 acquisitions that you might acquire. And so, I don't understand
10 how the law could apply in that case. It's like saying I'm
11 going to name the baby before it's born, so to speak. And I
12 really think that that needs to be looked into.

13 It's been touched on, the difficulty of getting loans,
14 and the lateness by which these loans are acquired, and that
15 sort of thing. The one thing that I think USDA could do to help
16 African-American farmers would be to create a vehicle by which
17 we could have discriminatory cases reviewed by an independent
18 agency. And when I say independent, I mean independent of any
19 USDA personnel, a truly outside agency. And that would be
20 nondiscriminatory, no preferences given, no liabilities incurred
21 because they have no USDA ties. And I believe if you did that,
22 you would certainly serve the African-American farmers well.

23 Thank you for this opportunity.

24

25 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much.

1 Our next speaker is Lewis Peterson, Jr. from St.
2 Thomas, U.S. Virgin Island.

3 **COMMENT BY: LEWIS PETERSON, JR.**

4 Good morning, Mr. Secretary Glickman, all members on
5 the platform, all members of the task force, fellow mistreaters,
6 farmers, and friends of agriculture. My name is Lewis Peterson,
7 and I'm the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of
8 Agriculture in the U.S. Virgin Islands. On behalf of our
9 department and the farmers of the Virgin Islands, I bring you
10 warm and tropical greetings.

11 I've prepared a statement and summary, and if I don't
12 get to the end, I will submit it. While we, in the Virgin
13 Islands, are associated with the Southeastern region of the
14 United States, we wanted you to be aware that we represent a
15 uniqueness within that region. But perhaps other states can
16 identify with it.

17 The basis for this difference is the small land areas
18 on which farmers operate in the Virgin Islands, and the
19 diversified nature of the farm states. The size of most farms
20 is relatively small and drastically different from those here on
21 the U.S. mainland. For example, one farmer in the contiguous 50
22 states, he have a farm operation that is hundreds of thousands
23 of acres in size. A farm in the Virgin Islands may have a half,
24 one, or two acres of farmland. Naturally, by standards, by the
25 standards of others, these may be characterized as garden plots.

1 But the reality is that collectively, the Virgin Islands
2 represents a relatively small land area, compared to any state
3 of the United States.

4 Furthermore, the demand for this limited resource is
5 so great that a cost of purchasing land is extremely high and
6 prohibitive. The result is that we have many small farm owners
7 who are -- what a very -- we have very small landowners with
8 farm operations. Have only a few who are fortunate to inherit
9 large tracts of lands, sometimes include five to 600 acres of
10 land.

11 It should be seriously noted that although some of
12 these small operations, these farm operations are small, they
13 are, however, lucrative and productive, as the result of proper
14 crop and livestock selection, as well as cultural practices.

15 As stated before, a second in the aspect of our
16 farming is the extremely high degree of diversification that our
17 farmers practice. For example, on any given farm, there might
18 be fruit, vegetable, herb, livestock, poultry, and agricultural
19 productions. And for this reason, our farmers don't consider
20 production by the acre, but rather by the plot or fractions of
21 an acre.

22 Now, these concerns may seem trivial to some, but when
23 farmers apply for benefits to, for example, the AFD program,
24 these relatively result in long, cumbersome hours of work, and
25 excessive documentation following a natural disaster. On a one-

1 acre farm, for example, sometimes as many as 50 to 60 forms of
2 the same kind must be completed. At the same time, a devastated
3 thousand acre farm in Georgia might generate only a single sheet
4 of documentation to collect all the relevant information needed
5 to file the claim.

6 The point here, is that adjusters are not accustomed
7 to this extra work, which must also encompass calculations of
8 each crop on the basis of a fraction of an acre. Some take
9 crops with which they are not familiar. And they become
10 discouraged and do not demonstrate the extra effort necessary to
11 complete the process. Consequently, our farmers also become
12 discouraged.

13 This was very evident after the Virgin Islands farmers
14 were devastated after hurricane Hugo in 1989. However, I am
15 pleased to mention, that after hurricane Marilyn in 1995, as a
16 result of efforts on the part of our local department, and a
17 team of hard-working adjusters from right here in Valdosta,
18 Georgia, our experience have change for the better.

19 Time is running out. I would like to make three
20 recommendations at this point. One is that in addition to
21 federal adjusters, we should certify, train, and qualify, staff
22 of the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture as crop loss
23 adjusters. This would ensure input from federal and local
24 perspectives, while providing the necessary technical input,
25 awareness, and sensitivity to local concerns and issues.

1 Two, develop crop loss forms that, perhaps, can
2 accommodate multiple crops and multiple farm operations.

3 Three, combine federal and local resources to collect
4 data, to generate database information for crops of the Virgin
5 Islands, since this is a main problem as well.

6 We maintain also, that it's unfair to require that in
7 that area outside the U.S. mainland, have at least ten producers
8 for the crop for which they are -- must be designated eligibly,
9 while on the U.S. mainland, only five is required.

10 We also have other concerns, but since my time is up,
11 I'm going to submit the rest. Thank you.

12
13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. I would like to get one
14 of the ushers to collect the comments, if you would, from
15 Mr. Peterson.

16 Our next speaker, Lamar Corbin. And I do not have
17 here a location listed. So, I will not guess. If you
18 could tell us where you are from when you come, I would
19 appreciate it.

20 **COMMENT BY: LAMAR CORBIN**

21 To the Panel, Mr. Secretary, Congressman Bishop --
22 sir, I probably, I think I met you in the lobby -- to all
23 our good constituents able to be here today, I just wanted
24 to speak on behalf of the small minority farmers.

25 MR. COSBY: Would you tell us where you're from,

1 please?

2 MR. CORBIN: Yes, sir. And my name is Lamar Corbin
3 and I'm from Colquitt County.

4 MR. COSBY: Georgia?

5 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: LAMAR CORBIN

6 Moultrie, Georgia. Well, my concern today is, the
7 Civil Rights Listening Forum is about the opportunities to
8 expand a small farmer. Some of the rights that we've asked for
9 it to be expanded, to be able to expand, we've been denied.

10 When you go to some of the county agriculture
11 departments they are -- recommend other departments that you can
12 go to, and be able to get help from other county agency
13 assistance offices. But when you go there, they'll take all the
14 information there from you. They'll allow you to fill out
15 different applications. And then once they've received all this
16 information, they'll have you under the impression that you are
17 going to get help. But when you go back in, probably two or
18 three days, or a week, they'll deny it.

19 And then, I went to one of the farm credit offices in
20 Moultrie, where they were told my assets was close to a
21 \$150,000, and I was at \$92,000 to the good. And then they gave
22 me a few days, and then the next thing you know, I'm denied.
23 And they didn't give us, "Well, we're not able to help you right
24 now."

25 We're only saying, as a minority farmer, the only

1 thing we are lacking is an opportunity. An opportunity to be
2 able to have the same type of financial access as the majority
3 farmer. Because when the majority farmer is capable of going
4 down to a county farm bureau office, farm credit, to get funds
5 for his operation, he has the old, good old network, good old
6 boy network, that's what it is. Anyway, it's just like saying
7 to the minority farmer, if you go there and everybody here need
8 a cat to be able to operate a farm, to the minority farmer, when
9 he gets there to ask for a cat, all the cats are gone, you know.
10 So, that's what we're saying this morning is only thing we are
11 lacking is the opportunity.

12 And I wanted to also touch on the youth farmers. When
13 you speak of a youth farmer today, they're going out. They're
14 not even in existence because the older farmers are telling the
15 youth farmers not to get into that. Because on every hand
16 you're going to be denied. Every door you go to is going to be
17 closed. If you don't have any assistance in the county agent's
18 office from USDA, when you go to the bank, like some of the
19 other speakers were speaking earlier, they're already had there
20 good old network in there. They call over there, you're going
21 to be denied when get there also.

22 So, like I said earlier, if you needed a cat, whenever
23 you go to the next office to get the cat, the cat's not there.
24 And so, all we're saying is we need an opportunity. An
25 opportunity, not only to expand, but an opportunity only to

1 operate. By not having the funding when you need the spray to
2 spray your produce with -- well, I'm a produce farmer -- when
3 you need the chemicals to spray your product with, you're not --
4 you don't have it because maybe your funding has ran low. Say,
5 for instance, if the chemicals come in a five-gallon container,
6 you only need a gallon. You can't hardly afford the gallon
7 because you don't have the funding.

8 And so, what we're saying is, there needs to be better
9 informatory information that we can get from the county agent
10 office when we go there. They're telling you that they have all
11 this information. And when you get there, it's not there. A
12 lot of the forms, they're not, they're not even there to give
13 the information you need to operate with.

14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker, James Mays, from Leslie,
17 Georgia.

18 **COMMENT BY: JAMES MAYS**

19 I'm James Mays from Leslie, Georgia, Lee County. And
20 my concern -- I've had all those problems with the Farmers Home
21 Administration. You apply for a loan in October, you get it in
22 May the following year. And, as a result of that, you finally
23 go out of business.

24 But there are other concerns that I see. And I work
25 with the public. I'm on the County Commission in Lee County,

1 Georgia. And I'm interested in the general welfare of people.
2 One of those situations is tobacco. I talked with the
3 Department of Agriculture about tobacco several years ago, I
4 think, up in Perry. And the people, because of the money
5 involved, and the people who are involved in it, because they
6 made it sound like that was a no-no. Disregarding the fact that
7 there are something like 250,000 people a year, in the nation,
8 die directly and indirectly from the cause of tobacco.

9 Now, maybe the Department might create a research
10 situation where they could develop a genetic type of tobacco
11 that wouldn't be so deadly. Or, the other thing they could do,
12 is to cut it out, and provide the farmers with crops that would
13 be productive, profitable and healthy to the nation.

14 I think Senator Dole got -- heard some problems on
15 that tobacco issue. But as -- this, these kinds of things that
16 we need to assist the general public in becoming productive, and
17 yet healthy, in its assets to the nation's wealth and to the
18 nation's well-being.

19 The other area that I was concerned about, that the
20 small farmers had been on the agenda in the Department of
21 Agriculture since the '60s. And it was a very important issue.
22 And the Department of Agriculture never -- well, I guess the
23 congress never actually defined what they -- they were
24 interested in family farms. And this issue, in fact,
25 departmental -- family farming really was, was never defined.

1 And therefore, family farmers never got help. And they have
2 been going out of business since, since the '50s. You know,
3 they just sort of -- whether it's attrition, or just slowly
4 smothering us, smothering the small farmers to death.

5 This -- in fact, the whole, the rural areas are being
6 deindustrialized by the major corporations. And the major
7 corporations are sending their operations somewhere else.
8 They're in Mexico and anywhere they can slave, or cheap, very
9 cheap labor to operate. And as a result, you know, I'm not sure
10 how long we are going to be able to buy those foods if we have
11 to, if we just had to pay freight on them, if all of us are out
12 of jobs, and if all of us are out of work, and with all of us
13 out of production.

14 I -- it appeared to me that, people, that there should
15 be some real effort put forth by the creative thinkers to do
16 some good things for the poor people; there's no problem in
17 doing things for the rich and for the big companies. You know,
18 they create a situation where the black -- with this kind of
19 war, and then we can spread a budget from -- we could increase
20 the budget from ten million -- ten billion dollars more than we
21 need to finance the war, and then poor people are going hungry.

22 And it appears, it appears that the situation is that
23 a lot of these programs were not designed to, to, to solve the
24 problem, to feed the poor, to assist the depressed, the
25 disadvantaged. They were designed so that wealthy people could

1 be more wealthy. For instance, the food stamp program. I went
2 out and make -- in the '60's, and helped create the situation
3 that got, that finally got that passed. But when they got it
4 passed, it was not to feed the hungry; they didn't seem to care
5 about them. It was to feed the supermarkets. And, you know,
6 and to make them, instead of giving the money for food to the
7 poor, they, you know, they called it funny money. So, when the
8 poor person got it, then he wanted to buy something with it.
9 Once they let the supermarket get it, they can buy everything
10 with it -- or anything.

11 These are the kinds of situations that are deep in the
12 roots of our problems. And if we don't get at them, we're going
13 to continue to have problems. And we're disinclined at first,
14 we're going to have a lot of people dying for the lack of
15 services.

16
17 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. At this time, at this
18 time ladies and gentlemen, we're going to take a ten minute
19 break. We ask that you be back in ten minutes and that
20 will be 11:35. Thank you.

21 (After a short break the session continued as
22 follows:)

23 MR. COSBY: I'm going to call the next speaker. Our
24 next speaker, if you will, I'm going to ask her to be
25 coming to the microphone as we get settled down. It's

1 Mamie Dawkins from Graceville, Florida. Did she make it
2 back from the break? You're here -- right here. If you
3 would come to the mike, and state your name and where
4 you're from, and make your presentation, I would appreciate
5 it.

6 MS. DAWKINS: Good morning.

7 MR. COSBY: You might want to speak right into the
8 microphone, if you would.

9 **COMMENT BY: MAMIE DAWKINS**

10 Good morning. I'm Mamie Dawkins from Graceville,
11 Florida, north Florida area. We are local contractors there
12 and --

13 MR. COSBY: Speak a little closer into the mike, if
14 possible.

15 **CONTINUED COMMENT BY: MAMIE DAWKINS**

16 I wasn't looking to get here first, be first. But
17 anyway, we are local contractors. And it's hard that, you now,
18 we are in with Farmers Home. We do Farmers Home grants and
19 things, but we haven't been able to do houses yet, build new
20 homes. I mean that, we put in, carry people in, and they tell
21 us that you have money, they have money. But when we get in
22 there, the paperwork is mountains. And when we get in there,
23 they don't have money, and we have to, you know, they put them
24 on hold. And next thing we know, somebody else has gotten the
25 job every time.

1 And another thing is my father farmed, you know, all
2 of his life until he was disabled. And after he died, Farmers
3 Home just called up his loan, in like, 30 days, less than thirty
4 days. And we had to pay it off, which we did. But we --it was
5 already up-to-date. But we, and, you know, just having to --
6 they just called up his loan, just like that. And it was
7 already paid up years. And so, it is a lot of discrimination in
8 Farmers Home against local contractors, against farmers; because
9 I'm on both ends.

10 We, like, we -- my husband and I are local contractors
11 and when we -- you know, what they are doing. We are registered
12 in Jackson County, Washington County, and Herndon County. But
13 the only thing we've been able to get is just grant work. You
14 know, we haven't been able to really build houses because, I
15 don't know, I guess all of the bureaucratic stuff. And so, I
16 just wanted to voice that complaint.

17 I feel that I was kind of caught off guard being next.
18 So, anyway, I just wanted to say that and I'm glad to have the
19 opportunity to come. And I've enjoyed listening to everybody
20 talking, you know, because I can identify with what they are
21 saying. So, this is a good forum. Thank you.

22
23 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is
24 Jerry Fields from Dixie, Georgia.

25 **COMMENT BY: JERRY FIELDS**

1 I'd just like to say good morning to everyone. Mr.
2 Secretary, my fellow farmers, my name is Jerry Fields, and I am,
3 too, from Brooks County. I want to reiterate, Brooks County.
4 I have here my farm loan. I'm a beginning farmer. I've never
5 borrowed from Farmers Home. I've tried. I got a book
6 containing \$13,000, which is nothing compared to -- to help me
7 to start to continue my farming. I don't know why it's so
8 difficult for them to help us. They make the -- they tell you
9 you can borrow the money, then they make the qualifications so
10 difficult, that you can't get any money anyway. The system is
11 there, but the qualifications for the minority farmer, you
12 can't, you can't qualify. So, they deny you.

13 At that time, you're starting to try and -- I farm out
14 of my pocket, through the help of my fellow farmers. Some of
15 the other farmers that squeeze a little bit of theirs to help
16 me. Now, we need help, an opportunity. We are probably the
17 best farmers in this nation, the minority farmers, because the
18 big farmer's going to get out there and plant anything. It's
19 the minority farmers that work for them that do. And all we're
20 asking for is an opportunity to, to help us to continue what
21 we've being doing for years and years and years.

22 I see people losing their farms. I have a son that
23 has to go to college. I want to see my son go to college also.
24 I want to see him go to college and possibly come back and take
25 over my farm. I want to be able to leave him a legacy. But

1 through the government, when they asked me to go and help fight
2 in Vietnam, I did. We're asking them to help us save our homes
3 and it's not being done, through discrimination. They can put
4 any kind of label on it they want, but it's just truly
5 discrimination when you can't go and get a few dollars to help
6 you along. And once you get this loan, they require you to pay
7 it all back under disasters and everything else. And once you
8 can't pay it all back, then they won't give you a loan again.
9 From what I understand, the reason it was set up, was to help
10 the people who were in -- you know, who were unable to go and
11 get a loan.

12 So, I'm just asking that we look into it as -- I'm
13 proud of this forum being put together and I hope some good
14 comes out of it. Because that's going to be the only survivor
15 for the minority farmer, the predominately black farmers.

16 Thank you.

17
18 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker,
19 Patricia Williams from Two Eggs, Florida.

20 **COMMENT BY: PATRICIA WILLIAMS**

21 Good morning. My name is Patricia Williams. I'm a
22 minority contractor from Two Eggs, Florida. I bring you
23 greetings from the fair city of Two Eggs. Giving honor to the
24 Secretary Glickman, Mr. Reed, Congressman Bishop and to each of
25 you in your respective places.

1 First of all, I have several things I would like to
2 share. My husband and I are past farmers and I want to share
3 some of the impact that the decisions previously made have had
4 on us, and particularly me as a minority female. We farmed for
5 17 years, and some of the things that have been stated here
6 happened to us. You apply for a loan. People tell you what you
7 need, as opposed to what you ask for. If you ask for \$10,000,
8 you get five, regardless of the paperwork you fill out. If you
9 ask -- apply for the loan in October, as what's been stated, you
10 get the monies in May. That's already past the time that you
11 should have already had your crops planted. So, we're being set
12 up for failure.

13 We went through that for 17 years. And it's not just
14 with those offices when you sell your crops. Even though you
15 have your government support prices, if you take peanuts to the
16 market, your peanuts are set three's, as opposed to the others,
17 are not -- so, you don't get the support prices that you've been
18 promised. So, how can you make your loan payment and all those
19 other things? If you take corn to the market, they say it has
20 alpha toxin. Show me. Well, they find one grain of corn, corn
21 with a dark spot, then they're going to penalize your whole
22 load. And those are the things that we were faced with.

23 And being young farmers, not having the support that
24 we needed in the county, you had a person working for the
25 county, and that's just what they are doing. They're not

1 working for the people. They're not going to sit down with you
2 and see, "Well, hey, there's -- got a problem here, how can we
3 help you?" Instead, they're going to help get rid of you.

4 So, after so many years, my husband and I have decided
5 well, we're not going to take this anymore. And, of course, I
6 was fortunate, because I had a career to fall back on. I'm a
7 registered nurse by profession. So, I was stuck with nursing.
8 Well, even so, now I'm more involved because of the things I
9 learned along the way, and am continuing to learn.

10 I've had an opportunity to meet Mr. Reed at another
11 function. And one of the things that he said which impressed me
12 -- and of course, I'm quite vocal and if I don't like something,
13 I usually say something anyway. But he made the statement,
14 never allow a person to treat you in a way that you feel is not
15 right. And if we're going to proceed, this is the idea and the
16 attitude that we're going to have to take. We're going to have
17 to be more vocal, more visible in the communities. And we're
18 going to -- we can let people know that we're not satisfied with
19 what is being done and/or said. Because many times people do
20 things to us, and they think it's okay because we don't say
21 anything. Well, it's not okay; and that's the reason we're here
22 today.

23 A couple of other things that I wanted to mention,
24 when I start looking at the stresses and all those things.
25 There's a lot going on here that's not just farming. We talk

1 about stopping people from being dependent and making them more
2 independent. Well, we're leaning away from that; we're making
3 people more dependent. If you take away everything that a
4 person has, how can he be independent? There's no way.

5 And to the committee, to each of you, I challenge you.
6 I urge you to come up with a plan to help provide some type of
7 support. It's like when we're training children, you don't want
8 to take away a negative behavior, you need something positive to
9 replace that behavior with. And we need something to replace
10 what people are losing in farming. And when you come up with
11 your recommendations, we need some type of technical support,
12 and we need someone that's going to follow up and make sure that
13 whatever decisions you make are being carried out.

14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. COSBY: Thank you. Our next speaker is Eddie
17 Slaughter from Buena Vista, Georgia. If you would come to
18 the microphone and state your name and where you're from,
19 I would appreciate it.

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: Good morning.

21 MR. COSBY: Sir, if you could get real close to the
22 microphone. Thank you.

23 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes. Congressman Bishop, Mr.
24 Secretary. I -- first I've got one question that I need
25 answered that I'd like to ask. I think USDA had an agenda

1 to take 50 million acres of land out of agriculture
2 production; is that right?

3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Are you talking about the
4 conservation reserve program? I'm trying to figure out
5 what, what exactly is what you're talking about.

6 MR. SLAUGHTER: I happened to have read an article
7 that -- where several years ago, it was a plan that came
8 up, that they was to take 40 million acres of land out of
9 agriculture to make it more competitive, and through
10 competition and everything about it.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Well, that -- in the 1980's,
12 Congress came up with a plan, which USDA has implemented,
13 called the Conservation Reserve Program, which pulled about
14 30 million acres out for a ten-year period of time. Where
15 farmers could take their land out of the qualified, as
16 highly erodible land, and would get payments to take that
17 land out of production for ten years. Those contracts are
18 expiring, or have expired. And the Congress, in the last
19 farm bill, authorized the continuation of that program.
20 Maybe not at that same level, but they authorized it to
21 continue.

22 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: EDDIE SLAUGHTER

23 Mr. Secretary, my complaint is that I really don't
24 want to fight my government anymore. I don't want to be mad
25 anymore, I don't want to be angry anymore. I have asked my

1 county supervisors, I've also went to Athens and Atlanta -- I
2 think that's the state office -- and asked them that -- forget
3 about writing down my note, forget about a debt recovery buyout,
4 and allow me to simply pay off my farm, instead of them posing
5 to me that I quit a \$60,000-a-year job to go into farming where
6 I'm at the mercy of racism and discrimination. That's just how
7 I feel when I deal with Farmers Home. I don't have nothing good
8 that I can say about it. There are some good people that are
9 there. But I asked them to allow me to pay \$1,000 a month, and
10 they simply get out of my business and I'll pay my farm off.
11 Right now, I'm scheduled to pay my farm off in 40 years. I can
12 pay \$1,000 a month, \$12,000 a year; I can pay it off in 17
13 years.

14 And I would like to know why can't I do this? I don't
15 want to be a part of this system that does not work. I do not
16 want to be a part of this system. I do not want to be -- feel
17 like I'm humiliated and degraded and I can't speak my mind when
18 I get there. And before I got up before you-all in here today,
19 he said, Slaughter, be careful what you say because the state
20 office is here. If I'm going to lose my farm, I'm going to lose
21 it fighting. I am tired of the system (Applause).

22 You know, they get up here and they speak nice. It's
23 159 counties in the state of Georgia. Exclude Fort Benning;
24 you've got 158 counties in the state of Georgia and you don't
25 have one elected black person on any county committee. If they

1 is, then somebody correct me. There's 158 counties here in the
2 state of Georgia. We don't have one; that is a fact.

3 And we're here -- I am so tired of fighting. I am so
4 tired of trying to produce a crop and they will go ahead on and
5 freeze my money in the bank. No other lending institution in
6 America, or the world, would be allowed to do these kind of
7 things. It's a good ole boy system out there and we can't win.
8 You can't fight it; you can't beat it. The only thing I'm
9 asking y'all, to allow me to pay off my farm off my job, and
10 they just simply get out of my farming business, and out
11 completely. And the ones of us that have jobs, that want to be
12 able to do this, why is there such a problem?

13 I don't want you -- I don't want nobody giving me
14 nothing. I'm not asking for welfare. I'm not asking for
15 handouts or give-me-down or give away. I don't want give away;
16 I don't want welfare. I simply want to pay for what I got. And
17 let me have my farm without constantly every 15 -- every three
18 to four months, I'm fighting Farmers Home for foreclosure or
19 something I done violated, or where I did -- stumped my toe, or
20 something I did, or didn't do. I am so tired of it. And I just
21 want to ask you, can there be something done for us, that the
22 Lord has blessed us to be productive members of society to pay
23 off our farms without having to go through all the hoops that I
24 have to jump through on a regular basis?

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Mr. Slaughter. Mr. Slaughter?

1 I think, I think if -- you've asked some questions and I
2 don't know the answer to your question because I don't
3 know, I don't know something about it. But I guess what
4 you're saying is, what you're saying is you'd like to pay
5 off your loan in fixed payments every month, but, and I
6 gather, as part of that, you would like to be alleviated
7 from the Farmers Home requirements that they currently put
8 on you in terms of farming requirements then. Is that
9 right?

10 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes, sir. Those things that are
11 simply, I figure that are subjective, things that are
12 double standards. There are so many things that I'm just
13 tired of fighting. I simply just want to pay off my farm
14 and let me and my family -- I have an aunt with cancer.
15 She, when she found out that it, my farm was being
16 foreclosed on, you-all but kill her; you-all will really
17 kill her.

18 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah. Let me ask you this. Is
19 your farm in a foreclosure status now?

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: No, sir. I -- Mr. Johnson out of the
21 state office has asked me that I work with the county
22 agents and they are suggesting that I get another loan. I
23 really just want them to leave me alone.

24 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Who is your -- is your
25 congressman, Mr. Bishop, here?

1 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes, he is. And I voted for him, too,
2 because (Laughter) -- I ran on the ticket and got elected
3 with you to the school board when we elected the Sheriff.
4 So you, you need to at least let that -- and again, I'm not
5 talking about welfare, Brother Congressman.

6 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Yeah, you and I talked about the
7 situation.

8 MR. SLAUGHTER: And I was trying to work through them
9 and I'm not trying to talk against them. I'm just tired of
10 fighting them.

11 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

12 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Thank you.
13

14 MR. COSBY: Just a quick announcement. There is a
15 green van in the parking lot, a green Mitsubishi van with
16 the lights on. If you would like to get that started, as
17 you head home, you might want to go out and cut those
18 lights off.

19 Our next speaker is Robert Hawkins from Newton,
20 Georgia.

21 **COMMENT BY: ROBERT HAWKINS**

22 Hi, I'm Robert Hawkins from Newton, Georgia. To the
23 USDA Civil Rights Action Team, I would like to explain. My son
24 did an FHA. He came up one year \$1400 behind. He put in the
25 loan for another year, it was turned down. And I had, my farm

1 was coming up for foreclosure. My son put in an application for
2 -- to buy my farm. It was simple -- turn it down. I want to
3 know was there anything could be did about it?

4 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Would you talk to him?

5 MR. COSBY: Mr. Duncan's going to talk to you.

6 MR. HAWKINS: Okay.

7 MR. DUNCAN: We'll have to get the specifics on it.

8 MR. COSBY: All right.

9 MR. DUNCAN: If you'll see me when the meeting
10 adjourns, we'll check into it.

11 MR. HAWKINS: Thank you.

12

13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 We're going to move on, and I don't have the exact
15 city or town listed here, but it says Portia Holmes from
16 Florida. Did I do that correctly? Please correct me.

17 MS. HOLMES: No.

18 MR. COSBY: Come on up, if you would, please. I don't
19 mind being corrected.

20 **COMMENT BY: PORTIA HOLMES**

21 Good morning; my name's Portia Homes. I'm from
22 Marianna, Florida, also. My complaint is also against Farmers
23 Home. I have not been involved with them as long as many of you
24 in here, but long enough. In 1994, my husband and I acquired a
25 plot of land from Farmers Home through a program that was set up

1 for beginning minority farmers. We were told -- given
2 information by Farmers Home in bits and pieces. We had to go in
3 on one day, we were told one thing. We'd go back another day,
4 we were told another day -- another thing. I have spent money
5 in gas, phone calls. Eventually, in about four and a half
6 months, we acquired the land. And it took a lot to get it. And
7 we were in Farmers Home almost three to four days a week,
8 sitting at the desk with a credit manager trying to get the
9 land.

10 In 1996, in January, we decided that we would build a
11 home on this property. We were not going to build a new home,
12 we were going to buy an old home, move it out onto the property,
13 have it remodeled and add rooms to it. That's the best way to
14 go, folks. In order to do this, we had to have land
15 subordinated.

16 Starting in January, we put in an application. We
17 filled out all that was needed to be done in order to get the
18 subordination rolling. We went to our local bank, we applied
19 for our loan. Our money has been waiting in our local bank in
20 order for us to be -- to build our home. The money was approved
21 by the bank in March of 1996. And finally, in October of '96,
22 we finally were allowed to get our subordination from Farmers
23 Home.

24 Our house should be already built. It's been a full
25 year. Contractors are the Dawkins family, who's already spoken.

1 The major problem is they do not want the Dawkins family to be
2 our contractor. They suggested names of people who were not
3 African-Americans.

4 In order to get our land subordinated, we owned a home
5 in town. This home in town is paid for. We had to take a
6 second mortgage out on that home. We own a 163.1 acres of land,
7 and it is over secured. Over secured. We have improved the
8 land 100 percent, and then they still needed our home in town in
9 order for us to get our subordination. So, if we don't do well,
10 we lose everything except the shirts on our back.

11 Another complaint I have of Farmers Home is that the
12 credit manager in our particular county, that's Jackson County,
13 Florida, has been in that position for 30 years. That is too
14 long for a person to be in a money position on a county level.
15 Other government agencies float their personnel in, out;
16 five-year stints, six-year stints, whatever. He has been in
17 position for 30 years, and someone needs to look at the record
18 books at how many African-American farms in Jackson County,
19 Florida, have been foreclosed on. They have been foreclosed on
20 since I've been in the county, just four years. He is
21 professional, he is smooth, he is nice -- he is killing us.

22 I want to bring all this up because I am also a
23 registered nurse. I consider myself an intelligent person. I
24 walk into the office, the paperwork, the language, the lingo,
25 just everything is foreign. It is nothing that you can

1 understand, and no one is trying to help you to understand it.
2 So, I can understand how someone who might have an education
3 that is below mine -- I'm not saying that they aren't
4 intelligent, but even intelligent folks can't understand Farmers
5 Home.

6 Thank you very much.

7
8 MR. COSBY: Thank you.

9 And our next speaker is Walter Franklin from
10 Graceville, Florida. If you would state your name and your
11 location, I would appreciate it.

12 **COMMENT BY: WALTER FRANKLIN**

13 My name is Walter Franklin. I'm from Graceville,
14 Florida, and I'm certainly happy to be here. And I thank the
15 council on being -- taking such a noble step toward looking into
16 these situations and allegations.

17 I would like to speak briefly on some of the things
18 that we have encountered. We have been blessed, the Lord has
19 blessed us. And our parents are deceased and they left the
20 family of eight children land. And we haven't been able, after
21 the death of our father and mother, it's still in debt. And we
22 was served a foreclosure notice. And given such a short time to
23 respond. But by the foresight of our parents, they, you know,
24 left a little something and we was able to, to work with that.
25 And we was going throughout -- we was going to the different

1 offices and they would tell us what we needed to do, that each
2 child could put up an acre of land, and thus and so. And they
3 had that all figured out and everything.

4 But to make a long story short, we had to really do
5 some hustling and trying to get around to get the remaining
6 monies. And we finally came up with a cashier's check and we
7 went in a little early before the deadline date and they almost
8 refused to take the cashier's check. And they said, Well,
9 they'd have to check it out to see whether -- you know. And
10 this is just one of the things. And we had a little, it was a
11 little over what the amount was supposed to have been. And they
12 said, Well, if it was, it had to be \$10 or more for them to give
13 us, you know, the change. So, we sat there a good hour. And
14 they said, Well, no one is in, and different things like this.
15 But we just -- so, after all in all, we just said just keep the
16 change, you know, but -- amen.

17 And we're working with the farm and I've been out of
18 farming -- I farmed, you know, growing up, grew up on a farm.
19 And so that, you know, it made us -- we worked real hard and
20 everything. So, I said, Well, when I get grown, I don't want to
21 see no farm. But eventually, we went back to that, to the farm
22 status. And we have the land, it is paid for, but we're so --
23 we can't hardly do anything with it because we don't have any
24 money. And we never -- you know, we go through banks and we
25 automatically know that's -- you know, so, that's turned down.

1 And the water preshared program came about, and we was
2 able to start doing some things on the farm, fencing in and
3 doing land work. And they made it so rough. And Ms. Williams
4 there, was -- her and her husband was doing the work. They
5 suggested and made, and suggestions at the office that -- they
6 said, Well, we can't tell you who to get. But at the same time,
7 they was telling us. And as long as they figured we was going
8 to get who they really recommended, they, you know, the guy
9 showed us all the things that, you know, in the program that he
10 would do. And when they finally find out that we was going
11 another route, they took it away.

12 And to make a long story short, we have just gone
13 through a lot. But we're still struggling there and we've also
14 formed up with the Farmers Cooperative trying to institute and
15 recommend that in hopes that we can save the black farmers in
16 the community. Not just this community, the communities in
17 Jackson County, but we're hoping it has a far-reaching effect.
18 And I appreciate this time that you-all have given us. And I
19 pray, and I certainly pray that all of this will come to some
20 good.

21 Thank you very much.

22
23 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

24 Our next speaker is Leon Crum from Ernsburg, South
25 Carolina.

1 **COMMENT BY: LEON CRUM:**

2 Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming to South Carolina
3 for Farm Aid. Also thank you for coming to Florence for its
4 tobacco meeting. It was four cars of us coming from South
5 Carolina over 500 miles. I would like for some of those folks
6 to stand now, if you could? Also, we've got 1890 from South
7 Carolina. Could you please stand?

8 (People stood.)

9 A couple of things that I wanted to present to you. My
10 brother and I farmed. We were sold out when Farmers Home was
11 Farmers Home, not FSA. We farmed vegetables and hogs. Now I
12 work for a federation; thank God for that. On the county
13 committee, we have a TV program that we do every Friday morning.
14 We spent three weeks talking about the county committee
15 elections. In a six-county area, over 10,000 ballots sent out
16 and less than a thousand got returned. A lot of those ballots
17 get sent to the wrong address, to the wrong people. Farmers are
18 afraid to send them back in; a lot of them don't even understand
19 what it's all about. We need more education for them.

20 African-Americans have the greatest -- the hardest
21 opportunity to get their yields changed. Often times, white
22 farmers can go in and not even have a proven yield, but they can
23 get yields updated. And it's also reflected in their cat.
24 coverage, in terms of how they get their money on those loans.

25 The current regulations are making it impossible for

1 African-Americans to get a chance to enter into farming. I'd
2 like to go back into farming. I know that would be impossible
3 because I know I'll need a quarter of a million dollars to
4 start.

5 It should be also -- each time we go in those Farmers
6 Home offices, FSA offices, most of the people we see in there
7 are often white people. We need some kind of commitment from
8 you or Farmers Home to improve, improve employment opportunity
9 for African-Americans on the local level. It's nice that
10 Washington can have these hearings and come down and hear what
11 we've got to say. But the buck stops at the county level. They
12 are the ones who are making the decisions.

13 Farmers tell me, and I know from the fact that my
14 duties on that application, that Farmers Home plan, unless you
15 have some real knowledge of how to fill out these papers, it's
16 impossible for you to get through it. Let alone a farmer with
17 a fifth or sixth or seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh
18 grade education. You need to do something about those loan
19 applications.

20 Those things -- if you really want to see where black
21 farmers are being discriminated at, look at when they receive
22 their loan servicing packages. Then you can compare -- I will
23 not -- if you got a check list, those counties got a check list,
24 they go down this check list and they say, Did you receive a
25 full application? All right. After you got that, you receive

1 a full application, and that's when we will see, when did you
2 offer that guy his loan servicing options? I believe y'all put
3 that in the computer; the date's on there. If you compare that
4 when you, when you offer the black farmers compared to white
5 farmers, you'll see that, that, as I say, been discriminated
6 against black farmers.

7 And the last statement I'd like to make, sir, is that
8 since, since Farmers Home Administration has done nothing pretty
9 much for black farmers over the last, how long they've been
10 started. Can you, today, make the commitment that you will put
11 some programs in place that will assist minority farmers?

12
13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 Our next speaker is Arthur Rhyers. And please correct
15 me if I'm pronouncing that wrong, from Cottondale, Florida.
16 Please restate your name and location, please.

17 **COMMENT BY: ARTHUR RHYERS**

18 My name is Arthur Rhyers, Cottondale, Florida. My
19 concern about is the FH -- okay. My concern about is Farmers
20 Home Administration. Back in 1980, I went in Farmers Home
21 Administration to get a loan. And Charles Lear was the
22 administrator down there. He didn't even let me get in the
23 seat. He said, "Well, Arthur, you're not qualified." He didn't
24 even let me sit down. So, I just got my little cap and walked
25 on out and forgot about it, you know. And I didn't think it

1 were right, but then he told me that if I went into the bank,
2 they'll loan me some money.

3 So, now I done got me times now I done borrowed it
4 out. So, I can't borrow no more money from the bank. So, I
5 just got to go along just the best way I can and borrow what I
6 can get. I worked through the state on low income, about
7 \$15,000 a year. And -- but I'm a North Florida Co-Op manager
8 and I'd like for all the North Florida Co-Op members to stand,
9 up please. (People stood to applause) -- we ran our co-op farm
10 and I hope we'll not need Charles Lear no more.

11 Thank you.

12
13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 Our next speaker, Kenneth Brown, from Buena Vista,
15 Georgia.

16 **COMMENT BY: KENNETH BROWN**

17 Good afternoon. My name is Kenneth Brown from Buena
18 Vista, Georgia. The last time I talked to you, Mr. Glickman, I
19 had a problem; it just moved to a different spot. I've been
20 fighting, I guess about two years, trying to get Farmers Home to
21 reappraise my equipment. It took them two years to get to that
22 part, but it only took Mr. Glickman two days. They reappraised
23 it in two days. At that point, they went on to near recovery.
24 I was -- I'm thankful for his authority. He called just as he
25 said, Mr. Glickman. And that's why I'm here today, because of

1 him.

2 If you-all weren't here, I wouldn't be here, because
3 I, I rely on -- we, as minorities, we rely on our leaders to
4 look out for us. We are not able to go to Washington, talk to
5 the people. But we vote you in. And we expect -- and we rely
6 on y'all to do something for us in return. We don't want
7 anything that's given to us. We believe in working; we grew up
8 working. As a black person you know work because that's all
9 you've done. But let us get something in return for it.

10 I know I only have five minutes, but like Mr.
11 Slaughter said, you get tired of fighting when you know you're
12 going to get knocked down. But something in the back of you
13 always pick you up and you move on. And I want to give thanks
14 to my father because if it wasn't for him, he's 60 years. I've
15 been with farming long, something would have changed by now, I
16 wouldn't be here. But thankful for him, he pushed me on.

17 To the point where why blacks can't get any money. A
18 lot of people push the responsibility and the blame to somebody
19 else. Nobody wants to be responsible for turning a black person
20 down. But where is the blame? If you go into Farmers Home, you
21 can't get any money there. If you go to the bank, you can't get
22 any money there. I just don't understand why nobody don't know
23 why we can't get any money. Because I don't feel like I'm the
24 only one out there that can't get any money. I believe that and
25 that's why I'm here today. There's somebody here who is a whole

1 lot smarter than I am, can figure out some of these problems
2 that can give us some help.

3 We, as minority farmers, need some help. Not because
4 -- the regulation are there, like you said, the money's there,
5 but when it gets down to Farmers Home, that's where it stops and
6 it goes to a different route. They've got certain people that
7 they won't loan money to. If you're not in that group, you
8 don't get any money. Now, it may seem racial; it is racial. It
9 may seem biased; it is biased. It may seem like the good ole
10 boys; it is the good old boys. If you don't belong to a certain
11 group, you can't get any money.

12 If I had money -- which I don't, but I work -- my
13 credit would be better, my yields would be better. But in the
14 process of the last two years I've been having to work and farm
15 out of my pocket. Now, how you expect my yields to be as good
16 as a man farming out of his pocket and a man's got an operating
17 loan? You can't compare my yields with him, because if you do,
18 they're going to look like I'm poor management; which I am.
19 Poor productive too.

20 If you want to help us, and I know you are because you
21 are here today. And I believe that you are a man of your word.
22 Give us some opportunity, not only just write regulation, but
23 put somebody down there to watch over them. Because just
24 because you sent it there, Mr. Glickman, it doesn't mean that
25 it's going to get to us.

1 Okay. I'd like to thank the -- I'm from Buena Vista
2 Georgia. My county agent is Macon County, Mr. Sammy Hall, he
3 moved to Byron, Georgia, it's now Byron, Georgia, that's my
4 county supervisor. I am -- I went past debt recovery, went to
5 -- I am in debt recovery. But at the same time, the lending
6 institution don't want to loan me money because of the amount of
7 money that the Farmers Home is going to write off. Because they
8 feel that Farmers Home is going to come back and say, "Hey, we
9 gave you that money, now we're going to tax it on you."

10 I cannot make the payments on the real estate and pay
11 all these back taxes and penalties. So, the lending
12 institutions are afraid to loan me money. So, right now, I'm
13 looking at -- matter of fact, you're looking at Chapter 12,
14 because that's where -- there's no way I'm going to allow them
15 to take my farm without a fight.

16 I'm relying on you Mr. Glickman to -- I know that
17 everything is on hold as far as the net recovery and all of
18 that, but -- I'm finished. Thank you.

19
20 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

21 Our next speaker, Alfred Walker from Monticello,
22 Florida. Is Mr. Walker here?

23 **COMMENT BY: ALFRED WALKER**

24 My name is Alfred Walker from Monticello, Florida.
25 I'm a member of the North Florida Farmers' Co-Op and I'd like

1 them to stand.

2 (People stood)

3 And our concern here Mr. Secretary, and Senator
4 Sanford, and both staff, both panels. We have a great concern.
5 I was on the farm from 1946 through 1966. My dad was a farmer.
6 And we always were running against the wind when it come down to
7 being a black farmer. I left and went to Vietnam in 1966. I
8 left my mom and my dad, running against the wind on the farm.
9 I gave my time in Vietnam. I came back home, my mom and dad
10 encouraged me to go to college, which I did. Finished college;
11 obtained four degrees, taught almost 30 years.

12 And I'm retired, I'm back to that same farm that I
13 left my daddy and mom on. Been sitting down since 1994, since
14 I retired. I'm trying to find something to do, but like I've
15 heard some of them said, I need money. And after hearing about
16 how much money you can make on a small piece of land, I have
17 enough to make me over \$75,000 a year. But thank God, my cousin
18 right here, sitting here looking right at me, he has squeezed
19 his time to farm our land to just keep it from growing up.

20 Mr. Secretary, the only thing I ask you this morning,
21 to let justice ring. We need money as black farmers and
22 minorities. We need help. I live in Jefferson County,
23 Monticello, Florida, and we have been denied many things as
24 black farmers. Not only on the farm, many other things we have
25 been denied of. And we are asking for help. I taught all these

1 years, retired, would like to do some small farming, like truck
2 farming. But I know I need money. And like I've heard some of
3 them said, it's no use in me going, because they're going to
4 disqualify me before I get there. And like they said, if you go
5 to the bank in a small place like where I live, everybody know
6 everybody. "When old Walker come, don't give him no money."

7 So, we're just asking for you-all to place
8 representatives in these counties that can make sure that we get
9 our piece of the rock. Everybody want a piece of the rock; I
10 do. And I don't like sitting down and I don't like freebies.
11 And like a young man from Colquitt County said, we're not asking
12 to expand. Give us something to work with what we have. If you
13 can make that much on a small plot of land, appropriate me some
14 money so I can get started. Just get me started, that's all we
15 asking. We aren't asking you to do it for us. Just give us a
16 start, give us a jump start and we'll go for it.

17 The black man has built this country, and we can
18 continue to build it with help. And we built it with our help.
19 We built it with our strength. We built it with our knowledge.
20 We made it out of nothing and I know we can make it with
21 something. I didn't make it -- I didn't come here this morning
22 just for a form of fashion. I came here, and I'm here because
23 I am concerned. I can go home and sit down. I don't have to be
24 a member of the North Florida Farmers Co-Op. I'm a retired
25 school teacher. I have enough to live on the rest of my life.

1 I have enough coming in, I have an income.

2 But I'm concerned about other farmers. I want to say
3 this too. I'm not only concerned about the black farmers, there
4 are white farmers out there suffering too. We, you know, we
5 have other people too. It's not only the black. We have poor
6 people who are suffering for funds.

7 Thank you very much and I pray that you do what's
8 right.

9
10 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

11 Our next speaker is George Hall from Boligee, Alabama.

12 **COMMENT BY: GEORGE HALL**

13 Good evening. That is George Hall from Boligee,
14 Alabama. To the Honorable Secretary and the rest of the
15 distinguished guests, to the commission, I would like to give
16 you a kind of history of how I feel about Farmers Home
17 Administration and the FSA office. I'm the sheriff in the
18 county that I'm from. I need to say that, I guess, to allude
19 back to it later. I experienced some difficulty with Farmers
20 Home Administration back in the early '70's.

21 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Which county are you from?

22 MR. HALL: Green County, Alabama.

23 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. I think I've heard about
24 you.

25 MR. HALL: You may have, but that's okay.

1 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: That sounds like a good story.

2 MR. HALL: I hope it's a good attempt.

3 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: GEORGE HALL

4 But I experienced some difficulty with Farmers Home
5 Administration back in the early '70s. Now, I too, went to
6 Vietnam and fought for this country. And I don't brag about
7 that, but I do like to see people treated fairly. And the
8 problem I had with Farmers Home Administration was that I had a
9 home and I acquired some additional lands. And, as some have
10 said here earlier, it will be a repeat of what other people have
11 said, I had to take what I had and post it against what I was
12 trying to borrow. And therefore, I'm at the mercy of Farmers
13 Home Administration.

14 They was in a position where they was going to
15 foreclose on me and I filed bankruptcy. Now, this is a bad deal
16 for most people to file bankruptcy I think, but it worked at
17 that point. And from that day until this day, I've been labeled
18 with that position after filing bankruptcy. If you go to the
19 bank or whatever lending institution to acquire money, that flag
20 is there. And it's bad.

21 So, it puts you in an awkward position to have to try
22 to maneuver and meet your obligation when you can't, like I say,
23 acquire the proper funds that you need to keep your business
24 operating. Well, the committees from the farm service agencies
25 control now, I understand, Farmers Home Administration. And if

1 your name is there, as some of them have said earlier, the flag
2 is up.

3 Now, I made a complaint against the farm service agent
4 in Utah for discrimination against me. Now, I would like to
5 encourage the black farmers here to continue to press forward.
6 There is somewhere, somebody that can listen to a complaint.
7 Now, I was fortunate enough to get my complaint through, but it
8 did take some time. As a matter of fact, this is what it took
9 (holding up folders). Now, I know most blacks don't like to do
10 paperwork, but that's part of the system, and we have to keep
11 records, and we have to do what we got to do.

12 So, I want to encourage black farmers to press
13 forward. But in the meantime, my suggestion is that this
14 committee has to be dealt with throughout the state or
15 throughout the region. These are the people that control. Now,
16 somehow, we have to have some minority in these positions, that
17 is to represent or look out for the black farmers, or the
18 minority, or the small people.

19 We went out in our region, in our county, to try to
20 acquire, to get some blacks elected to that committee. But we
21 were misfortunate, we -- that did not finalize; that did not
22 happen. And I think the reason being is that blacks have, as
23 has been said here earlier, if you go in the office, you're
24 probably going to be denied whatever benefits. So, they take
25 the attitude there's not any use in going. So, then when the

1 list come down when they send out ballots, your name's not on
2 the ballot, it's not on the list, so you don't acquire a ballot.
3 So then, you can't elect a person to the position without the
4 proper ballots or votes.

5 So, what we need is some mechanism to make sure that
6 the outreach program is out in outlying areas; to make sure that
7 blacks understand the procedures to know what's required; and to
8 make sure that they receive an opportunity to vote. This is the
9 main problem I think with the whole situation with Farmers Home
10 Administration or Farm Service Agency is the committee. We do
11 not necessarily do away with it. But it need to be a mechanism
12 in there to make sure it's doing what it's supposed to do.

13 Thank you, sir.

14
15 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

16 Our next speaker is Charles Harris from Leesburg,
17 Georgia.

18 **COMMENT BY: CHARLES HARRIS**

19 Good evening. I'm Charles Harris from Leesburg,
20 Georgia, and I come today to speak about the farming. Every
21 year along about this time, I don't go to sleep at night because
22 I'm wondering where I'm going to get my loan from. I think
23 every man sitting on that board know where is he going to get
24 his check from every week. But in the farming situation, we
25 don't know where we're going day by day. And I believe if every

1 man was sitting there, would have a changed heart this morning,
2 been born again, you ought to be crying. Because some of these
3 complaints that I hear, it almost make me cry.

4 But, you know, for -- I come in this business in 1983
5 from Sylvester, Georgia. And a man give me one broken down
6 tractor and no peanut pickers to pick no peanuts. I asked him,
7 "How I'm going to go pick my peanuts?" He said, "I don't know."
8 That's Farmers Home. And you know, it's bad, it's really bad,
9 that a man can do a job, and y'all won't let him do it. A man
10 can farm every day. Every day I get up and get out there and
11 try to do the very best that I can. And it ain't -- y'all don't
12 pay no bit of attention; say it's nothing. Well, it's something
13 to me because that's my life. I'm not asking you to give me
14 nothing. I'll work for what I get, every day.

15 But the onliest thing I'm asking for is a chance to
16 keep on farming for my family. I got five boys and don't nary
17 one of them want to see the farm. Got two living at home.
18 Don't want to even go out there. And then y'all say you put
19 people on five years and you've got five years' equipment. I've
20 been having equipment ever since '83. Now, what, you got to
21 gamble along for -- if it's been five years and you still paying
22 on it. Yeah, I'm still paying on five years. You can't get no
23 loan. I can't buy nothing else.

24 Still sitting in the same spot, spinning my wheels.
25 I've got a little old bitty farm. Say, Yeah, I'm in three or

1 four different counties. Yeah, I have to be there. Because I
2 can't get in one. I can't farm in one county. I got to farm in
3 three or four counties to get enough farm to farm with. I got
4 some farmers here that I rent from. They worried about their
5 money right now.

6 And it's bad man, it's bad. Now, some of y'all might
7 not think it's bad, but it's bad. And any time a man -- you go
8 tell a agency, a man will tell you, he don't know how you're
9 going to pick the peanuts. Then a belt break and you can't get
10 no money to fix it. It's bad gentlemen. And everybody sitting
11 on that board knowing where their check comes next week.

12 Thank you.

13
14 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

15 Our next speaker is Warren Daniels from Green,
16 Florida. Mr. Daniels.

17 **COMMENT BY: WARREN DANIELS**

18 My name is Warren H. Daniels from Greenville, Florida.
19 I really didn't come to speak. I really kind of be listening to
20 see what y'all going to do. Because when all of the money was
21 flowing, and all of the big people was getting the money to
22 plant trees and things, the program was going good. But since
23 it got out to us little people, they discontinued the program.
24 I want to know why. Can I get an answer?

25 MR. COSBY: Are you talking about the conservation to

1 preserve the CRP program?

2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Are you talking about the
3 forestry reforestation program that we were talking about
4 before?

5 MR. DANIELS: I think so. But I didn't understand the
6 answer to that. I want it now.

7 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: As I understood it, you said the
8 program was in fact still functioning. I don't know where,
9 whether it's functioning in terms of dollars in this state
10 or not. I don't know the answer to your question, to be
11 honest with you. I'm going to have to get you, get back
12 with you the answer to the question.

13 MR. DANIELS: Well, I appreciate it. Because without
14 me knowing the answer, I'll be very upset. And I don't
15 like that.

16 MR. COSBY: We will get you, sir, we will get you
17 connected with our people from Florida. You're from
18 Florida; right?

19 MR. DANIELS: Yes.

20 MR. REED: Niles Glasgow? Niles Glasgow, stand up.
21 He's going to fix you up.

22 MR. DANIELS: Oh, okay; good. Thank you.

23
24 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

25 Our next speaker -- all right; may I have your

1 attention please. Our next speaker is C. Bell from Selma,
2 Alabama.

3 **COMMENT BY: CECIL BELL**

4 I am Cecil Bell from Selma, Alabama. Which I already
5 have my complaint in Mr. Glickman's office. It's been there for
6 a year now. First, what my complaint about is, improperly
7 identifying the crop basis. I started farming in about '77. By
8 '82, I had rented about 4500 acres of farmland and crop land.
9 I rented from several different farmers. When I build a place
10 on it, I pull it together and make one farm out of it. When I
11 got ready to make the loan, the executive director down at the
12 ASC office, he improperly identifying my base when I get ready
13 to make a loan. On the other parcels of this land, when I build
14 the bases on the land, and go to put it together, the base
15 doesn't follow the land.

16 I went to complain to the local executive director.
17 And I asked them to give me a, I asked them to give me a --
18 wait, just a minute. I asked them to give me a summary of
19 reconstitution of my bases. He never would give them to me. I
20 went to the state director and asked him to give me a
21 reconstitution of my bases. He came down and looked at the
22 reconstitution of my bases. And we had a lien on several
23 occasions.

24 He told me that the local ASC director was correct in
25 the summary of my constitution. Him and his program director

1 and his program specialist gave me a summary of my constitution,
2 which they is a question. Neither one of them would give me the
3 right to appeal their decision.

4 In '94, I had a crop disaster, they denied my bases on
5 unworkable manner. Mister -- it's two adjusters came and
6 offered to pay me half of my disaster to cut the cotton up. I
7 told them that I refused to do that because the rain had
8 destroyed my crop.

9 So, I called Chipley Broad and Mr. Alexander Day came.
10 And he said I'm going to treat you just like anybody else. He
11 paid me the full premium for my cotton, but he didn't make a
12 record of the day he come. One man come on the 12th of July,
13 and he come on about the 24th. But he told me I had to wait
14 until my -- till the harvest season to come treat my base. So,
15 the local ASC used the first adjuster and used Mr. Alexander Day
16 final adjuster. And see, I didn't work no cotton.

17 I appealed it to the state committee. They upheld the
18 decision. But when I got to the state office, they told me not
19 to ask no questions. Because I was going to start to ask them
20 about my bases, which I had about 1100 acres of -- when I, when
21 I took my 4500 acres of cropland and farmland, it come out to
22 about 17 acres of cropland. Well, I had 1200 acres in the --
23 with the program land. And my program land just kept
24 deteriorating, just kept deteriorating. And I asked them to
25 give me a summary for some of, of my cropland. The local ASC

1 office never did give me one. The ones at the state ASC office,
2 him and his program specialist, and they put me something
3 together. But when I got to the state office, they told me not
4 to ask no questions. So, what I did --

5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Who told you not to ask any
6 questions?

7 MR. BELL: The state committee, somebody on the state
8 committee told me not to ask no questions.

9 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: CECIL BELL

10 So, it was appealed up to the National Appeals
11 Division. They held up the decision. So, I appealed it to
12 Memphis, Tennessee, Ms. Upchew (phonetic). I appealed the
13 discrimination along with my disaster program.

14 Ms. Upchew told, wrote me, told me that within that
15 jurisdiction that they didn't handle discrimination cases. Gave
16 me the right to appeal to civil rights. And now, so, I appealed
17 it to the civil rights. I kept asking them about it. And so,
18 they told me they were going to send it back down there to the
19 Department of Agriculture when Mr. Max Epton -- but Mr. Max
20 Epton was gone. So, I wrote you Mr. Dade, a personal letter,
21 and I asked you to carefully consider my case.

22 So, just before Christmas, I contact your office, the
23 lady told me that my case had been, had been investigated and
24 they would get in touch with me a few days. So, that's where I
25 stand now. I'm wondering, I cannot -- I did not go bankrupt.

1 I still got judgments. I wrote off about 710,000 to Farmers
2 Home and the People's Bank. And so -- to build those bases with
3 people like Gold Kist and different other farmers, I've got
4 judgment for a 100-, over \$100,000 with them. But I still
5 didn't trade bankrupt, with the help of my sister. She took
6 over my farm money.

7 So now, I'm waiting to see what you going to do.

8 MR. COSBY: I would ask, sir, if we could get one of
9 our ushers to come, finish getting additional information.
10 The question would --

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Before you do that. Randy, can
12 you get a report from our -- you're Alabama; right?

13 MR. BELL: Yes, sir.

14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Can you get a report on
15 this case from our Alabama State Office? I'd like to know
16 more about the case, because this sounds like a real
17 complicated case. And I want to know exactly what -- and
18 in addition to that, I'll check on the complaint. I don't
19 -- they told you that you were going to have a disposition
20 of this complaint right away?

21 MR. BELL: They told me that they had investigated my
22 case and they're going to send somebody to talk to me.

23 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: All right. We'll get, we'll get
24 on your case. I mean, I'll make sure that I, personally,
25 send the message that I want them to contact you

1 immediately.

2 MR. COSBY: Sir, could I -- oh, excuse me.

3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: But I do want a report on your
4 case from our state office.

5 MR. COSBY: Sir, I ask you, if I could get you to come
6 up to the table and give them your address, and so on at
7 this time; that would be appropriate.

8 MR. BELL: Okay.

9 MR. COSBY: All right. The gentleman here. Thank
10 you.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: This gentleman right here; yeah.
12

13 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker is Mr. William -- Willie
14 Adams from Greensboro, Georgia. Mr. Adams.

15 **COMMENT BY: WILLIE ADAMS**

16 Good afternoon. How do you do, Mr. Glickman,
17 Committee. I'm Willie Adams from Greensboro, Georgia, poultry
18 and cattle farmer. The president of an organization called
19 United Agriculture Government Coalition. We cover about five
20 Georgia counties: Greene, Morgan, Putnam, Oconee and DeKalb.

21 I began farming in 1977. I achieved a loan from
22 Farmers Home Administration which was \$50,000 to build two
23 poultry houses. One of the biggest mistakes I made, the
24 supervisor at that time told me we ran out of money, said go to
25 a commercial bank and borrow some money. I borrowed that money,

1 making monthly payments. So, that's why I started off in the
2 rut. And since then, I've been in that rut.

3 And I -- to make a long story short, we was working on
4 the loan process back last year and the supervisor at that time
5 became ill and was in and out of the hospital. And what
6 happened, my application was floating around, and the 1996 farm
7 bill, April 1st, went into effect. And so, at -- right now, I'm
8 at a standstill.

9 We, in the poultry business, and from time to time,
10 the company require you to update your houses. Either you
11 update your houses or you don't get any chickens. So, anyway,
12 the situation I'm in now, I've got to do something. And I -- if
13 there's time, I'd like to meet with someone on the committee to
14 discuss my problem. Thank you.

15
16 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Would one of the ushers
17 get his name and address, please. I think he's requesting
18 to meet with one of the committee people. So, if you
19 would, one of the ushers, to get the appropriate
20 information from him, I would appreciate it.

21 Our next speaker, James Hall, from Monticello,
22 Florida.

23 **COMMENT BY: JAMES HALL**

24 I'm James E. Hall from Monticello, Florida, Jefferson
25 County. Leemount (phonetic) is my neck of the woods. And I

1 found out since I got here, I'm just one of the victims of the
2 circumstance.

3 First thing I would like to clear up. I had a chance
4 to work in the ASC office as a reporter. And I always liked to
5 be to work on time. And I begin to watching the mail that was
6 coming in. And I told my boss man that according to the mail
7 you was getting in, "Why can't I tell you what we want?" His
8 words was to me, "Jim, we need a fellow like you." And I was the
9 first black that run for office in the county, by a petition.
10 And the man that I talked with, took my petition and carried it
11 out, and got three more to run against me. That's some of the
12 problem.

13 I would like to let y'all know, before it came time,
14 my granddaddy used to preach in the white church one Sunday. And
15 the white preacher would preach in his church the next Sunday.
16 So -- well, y'all can't call me a racist because I didn't come
17 up that a way.

18 But I don't want nobody give me nothing. Just open
19 the door and I'll get mine. I'm a FHA victim. And when they
20 told me they couldn't lend me no money, leaving my grandchildren
21 and children staying there, \$500 a month, they told me to go
22 into the FHA to better my condition.

23 I thank you.

24
25 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

1 Folks, we are just about out of time. And I, have a
2 list of other speakers. And we're going to shut it off
3 right there. We have about ten minutes to go and if we
4 have participants in the audience, Mr. Secretary, with a
5 thought that you could get through real quick, several of
6 you, would like to open the mikes at this time for those.

7 So, please take a mike there. State your name and who
8 you are. And I we will, we -- and I will have to shut this
9 off at some point as well.

10 Please, go ahead, sir.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I'm on the list. Oh.
12 Do you get this brother here first, or me?

13 MR. COSBY: Right here.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Go ahead.

15 **COMMENT BY: HOWARD JAMES**

16 Thank you, sir. To the Secretary, Sanford Bishop,
17 staff. I've been a farmer for 12, 13 years. And the year of
18 '88, I was encouraged to go to the Farmers Home for a guaranteed
19 loan in which that particular year was a disaster year, and
20 lacking something like \$21,000 for paying Farmers Home back.
21 But in the later years, I was able to build up and continue to
22 farm.

23 This year -- I'm sorry, '96, which is '97 -- I mean
24 '96; Congress was up there fighting about what they were going
25 to do about the law. I had an application in with Farmers Home

1 that was approved to buy land. And Farmers -- and a farm
2 operating loan. The fact that my application was approved prior
3 to the law being passed, they asked me to come back in and apply
4 for the loan for operating, but they discontinued the part about
5 the land purchase.

6 My point is, this year, this -- I'm sorry -- '96 was
7 the best and productive year I have ever had. I was able to pay
8 off everybody and standing in good standing. But I can't go
9 back to Farmers Home because of the law. And why, if I was able
10 to get the operating loan, why couldn't I get the farm purchase
11 loan? My point is, if I could have got the farm purchase loan,
12 it would have been just as well. But my point is, why can't I
13 go back because of the law? That's what I'm saying.

14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: One thing I would have to tell
15 you is the law needs to be changed.

16 MR. JAMES: I agree.

17 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: And we're going to try to get
18 that done this year. I hope that part of the President's
19 budget helps to make this change, so that we -- because you
20 had a delinquency once?

21 MR. JAMES: Once in the past.

22 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Even though you are perfectly
23 cleared up and up-to-date?

24 MR. JAMES: I'm perfectly clear. This year -- '96
25 was a great year. The Lord blessed me to pay up everybody

1 and have a great crop.

2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah, so --

3 MR. JAMES: But I can't get back in.

4 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: I, we -- I've heard this over and
5 over and over again. We've got to get this law changed.

6

7 MR. COSBY: Thank you.

8 All right. We'll go to this microphone here and then
9 this one at the back.

10 DR. BOOKMAN: Okay. My name is --

11 MR. COSBY: No -- yes, you, sir.

12 **COMMENT BY: DR. BOOKMAN**

13 Yes. My name is Dr. Ridgely Abdul Bookman. I'm a
14 farmer here, farming 1600 acres over here in Terrell County. I
15 used to teach agricultural economics at Normland A&T (phonetic).
16 And I must commend you farmers for being able to handle the
17 paperwork that you have to handle. Because I used to teach farm
18 management, and I have a hard time dealing with this stuff that
19 they've got, in terms of the government.

20 The other thing that is, I want us to, to look at the
21 overall picture. They're opening up the doors now for us to
22 complain about how they discriminated against us, but there's a
23 bigger game going on. It is my opinion it's going on. In the
24 Bible, it says "Behold, there comes seven years of great plenty
25 throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after

1 them, seven years of famine. And all the plenty shall be
2 forgotten in the land of Egypt. And the famine shall consume
3 the land."

4 Now, it's interesting that this amateur program is a
5 seven-year program, that after which, as they're saying is --
6 there would be no more subsidies to agriculture.

7 The returns to agriculture over the last 30 years have
8 been less than 3 percent. 1991, the return to assets and
9 agriculture is .4 of a percent. The returns to banking, money
10 and banking, is 6.5 percent. So, how can you loan money, how
11 can you borrow money at 6.5 percent on the average, or 9 or 10
12 percent, and pay it back making thirty-nine cent on a \$100
13 investment? This is, generally, the whole state of agriculture
14 in the United States. So now, agriculture is under debt.

15 Now, when the black farmers have been discriminated
16 against, and it's true, we have been; so we're complaining. So,
17 what the government is going to do, the game is that they're
18 going to let you borrow money now. They're going to try to do
19 right, but then when the famine hit -- they're going to blame
20 black farmers for tearing down USDA. They're going to blame
21 you.

22 It's time you black farmers get together and do for
23 yourself because this country is being cut. Because they're
24 seeing that black people are going to be the majority in this
25 country in the year 2050. So, they're destroying the whole

1 country infrastructure, throughout the country, so, that when
2 you take over, you will not have anything to work with.

3 Thank you very much.

4
5 MR. EARL COSBY: Thank you, sir.

6 We'll go to the mike over here.

7 **COMMENT BY: MILES ROBINSON**

8 Good afternoon to Secretary Glickman, the panelist and
9 this Civil Rights Action Team. I'm Miles Robinson and I
10 represent Tuskegee University and Department of Agriculture
11 Environmental and Natural Sciences. I stand and I rise to let
12 you know that unless and until the criteria for lending to
13 minority and small limited resource farmers is changed by law
14 and by regulation, we will always have, and be subjected to
15 these discriminatory practices.

16 One of my suggestions would be to make certain that
17 that criteria is changed and that on these, on the committees
18 who make those decisions, that we have an appointment. Let an
19 appointment be made of a minority limited resource farmer to
20 that committee to make certain you have some voice.

21 Access to capital is always a problem and we need to
22 make certain we find ways to address that. And until we do,
23 there is nothing's going to change.

24
25 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

1 We'll come back to the mike in front here.

2 **COMMENT BY: EARNEST HOWARD**

3 My name is Ernest Howard from Clay County, Florida.
4 One of, one the main points that I would like to point out here
5 today, that in 1995, July, was passed by our congressman that
6 any of our older farmers, mostly the ones that on benefit for,
7 is SSI, any other medical benefit that when they're deceased,
8 that that land will be turned over to the probated judge to
9 collect money under certain conditions. Those conditions would
10 be that the family is hardship or handicap or under 21 years of
11 age, if not -- if a family can't pay off that debt, that farm go
12 up for sale.

13 Somehow, that should not have passed through
14 Washington, D.C. and it should be effort that on this part of
15 this committee today to fight hard to get that changed back.
16 Because you're looking at 95 percent of our black older farmers
17 will lose their property and their farms will not be claimed by
18 their family because one time in the nursing home will run so
19 much money that a family could not touch that debt and that's
20 one of the main issues that should be touched, and as many and
21 some of the other things that I have been said here. That's one
22 of the more important things that I think any of us, that we
23 need to do something about.

24 And there are some other things due to the culture
25 trend. We will contact you on some other things, but I

1 definitely want to get that in.

2

3 MR. EARL COSBY: Thank you. Thank you.

4 We'll only be able to take about two more. But for
5 the rest of you participants that are standing, we would
6 like for you, just as soon as take about two more, to come
7 to the front, we have some recorders that will take your
8 statements. I want to be able to take about two more, one
9 from this mike at the back, and one from this one at the
10 back. I'm asking the rest of you to come up and we will
11 take your statements.

12 **COMMENT BY: WELTON LONG**

13 I want to thank you. This is Welton Long, Elbert
14 County, Georgia; Dewy Rose, Georgia. I have been dealing with
15 Farmers Home Administration for 25 years. And I've fought them,
16 trying to get justice for other people. I taught agriculture
17 for 30 years. And of all things, they accused me of being
18 unable to manage a farm. You cannot manage -- the first year
19 that I had a farm that I borrowed money from Farmers Home
20 Administration, I borrowed enough money to buy some land and
21 \$25,000 to operate with. Ended up, they put all the money into
22 buying the land and I ended up with \$84 to plant 250 acres of
23 soybeans. It takes a \$100 in that time, in that part of the
24 state to put in an acre of soybean and I got twenty-five cent.

25

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I have a 30 second
2 comment --

3 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: WELTON LONG

4 Just a minute. And we did research in Georgia, and it
5 took a 128 days to process a loan from a black farmer, and only
6 73 days to process a loan for a white farmer. I know because I
7 served on the committee. At that time, they -- you served on
8 the committee and you voted on the committee. And I know how
9 long it took.

10 And when they got ready to serve a white farmer or a
11 black farmer, they often called the two white committeemen
12 together. And they always told me, said, "It don't take but two
13 to pass it." I got to Atlanta and the first thing the man told
14 me when Mr. McDuffie -- some of you remember a long time ago he
15 got mad and said it don't take but two to pass it and they
16 dismissed it.

17 We're still fighting. We were in Washington the last
18 week, I think, because the Secretary remembers us being up
19 there. But there are some things that ought to be straightened
20 out. And as I told once before, I believe Senator Layhee
21 (phonetic) down in Tifton, said before we send any more money to
22 Georgia, or any other state that is not using it right, we need
23 to send nobody in here to spend it. Please, sir.

24

25 MR. COSBY: Thank you. If you'll just let me get to

1 the gentleman I had promised back here, and I will come
2 back to you; you will be the last speaker.

3 Yes, sir?

4 **COMMENT BY: MALCOLM FREEMAN**

5 My name is Malcolm Freeman. I'm from South Carolina
6 and I am employed by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives.
7 Having been born and raised on the farm and having been familiar
8 with Farmers Home programs and the county committees of most of
9 my life and having to work with limited resource farmers that
10 have had to deal with this system, I have a couple of
11 recommendations to make. Anybody who sit and listened to the
12 people here today know that the county committees do not serve
13 the black farmers. I suspect that the county committees also do
14 not serve properly the white farmer, no matter how good the
15 intents and purposes of the legislation drafted in Washington.
16 When it gets down to the local level, the good old boys get it.
17 They take what they want and the rest of the county get what's
18 left.

19 So, my suggestion is that you find something to
20 replace the county committee with, because black people won't
21 have a chance. It only takes two to pass. We can't even get
22 one on it. And if we don't have a linkage all the way from
23 Washington to the local level they'll never, never be a chance
24 for a black farmer to operate in a system equitably.

25

1 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

2 **COMMENT BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:**

3 In 1933, my father got oppressed. But he had to drink
4 water from a "white-only". About 60 years later, I went into
5 Chapter 12 bankruptcy plan to find that the United States
6 Department of Agriculture had removed that "white-only" sign
7 from the water fountain and placed it on the Chapter 12
8 bankruptcy plan.

9 To me, the "white-only" sign on the water fountain
10 was, by far, the less evil.

11

12 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

13 We're going to wrap up at this time. And folks,
14 perhaps I misdirected you. I'm going to ask James Ford and
15 Ralph, if you would, to help these folks get their
16 statements recorded. We have a recorder here. We also
17 have some recorders at the back table, but we would folks,
18 like to get your statements before you leave. So I'm going
19 to ask these people to take care of you.

20 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Earl, can I make just one last
21 statement.

22 MR. COSBY: I'm coming to you and Congressman Bishop
23 for again, last comments that you would have.

24 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Let me just say, we heard about
25 35 people here today and we're going to hear about three-

1 or 400 before we're done, maybe 500 people. We didn't say
2 too much; it's mostly listening. There's an old
3 expression, after all has been said and done, there's a lot
4 more said than done.

5 So, we decided to hear what you had to say. Make sure
6 when you say something, it's going to mean something. And
7 so, this is -- I want to assure you, I'm serious about
8 this. We're going to take this information, Mr. Pearlie
9 Reed and his team that are sitting right in front of you,
10 are empowered with the full resources of the Department of
11 Agriculture, to come up with an action plan that deals with
12 a lot of the problem you've talked about.

13 I'm not going to promise you right now it's going to
14 take care of every problem in the history of the world.
15 But I am going to promise you that we're going to make a
16 good-faith effort to deal with the problems that you have
17 talked about today so this Department of Agriculture is
18 fair and responsible and serves its customers and its
19 employees with fairness and dignity.

20 So, I just wanted to let you know I appreciate very
21 much the opportunity of being here. Appreciate the
22 Congressman Bishop asking me here. Appreciate his
23 perseverance in making sure that we stay on top of this
24 problem. And I'd like him to make any final comment.

25 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Thank you. I just want to,

1 again, thank the Secretary and the task force for coming
2 and for listening. But more importantly, I want to thank
3 each and every one of you for taking the time to come and
4 to say what was on your minds so that they could hear it.
5 Because if you didn't come and if you didn't say, they
6 would not hear it and we couldn't say that they had heard
7 it. Now they have heard, and will hear others in other
8 parts of the country, say what their problems are and their
9 concerns. Probably, will be similar to yours, but it's all
10 in the record and taken down, and now the information is in
11 and they will be a decision acted on it. Hopefully, we
12 will be able to put these issues to rest and be able to go
13 forward. Thank you for coming and taking the time to do
14 it, because now it's going to be a key and it's important
15 that you did it. And I want you to know that I personally
16 appreciate it.

17 MR. COSBY: Thank you. Folks, we have another quick
18 announcement here.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, what I'm supposed to tell
20 you is that you have lunch outside and you'll see the signs
21 indicating what's in the sandwiches.

22 Another thing I want to say is that our annual
23 farmers' conference and marketing conference is next month
24 here at this site. The marketing conference will be at the
25 Ramada Inn and the annual farmers' conference, that's

1 February 14th and 15th, and we invite you to come back.

2 MR. COSBY: Thank you folks, on behalf of Congressman
3 Bishop and Secretary Glickman. Thank you for coming.

4
5 [The following comments were made after the session
6 concluded:]

7 COMMENT BY: JAMES WOODSON

8 My name is James Woodson and I'm from Bainbridge,
9 Georgia. And I -- my phone number is 912/246-5287. And I'd
10 like to come to register a complaint about Farmers Home and
11 their practice in lending money, just like hearing the rest of
12 them stated here. My problem is that I borrowed money from
13 Farmers Home and I paid it all back. And then later on I heard
14 that Farmers Home had forgave some of the debt, a big portion of
15 the debt in the country, just forgive the farmers for it and
16 start all over again. But I paid all my money back, serious
17 money. And -- but I go to get some money, and then there's a
18 lot of unfair and I can't get none.

19 So, starting back in 1964, when I borrowed \$13,000, I
20 paid it back the same year. The next year -- not the next year,
21 but later on, I borrowed \$300,000; I paid that back. And then
22 I had a disaster and I borrowed \$600,000. I paid all of that
23 back. So, I left out of there, when I left the lenders they
24 don't want to lend it to you. When I got in trouble again, I
25 tried to borrow money from them and I couldn't borrow no money.

1 So, what I'm saying is my problem is -- needs to be
2 addressed. Even to do right, you can't get nothing from them.
3 That's what I'm saying -- I know, but I just got started here --
4 but now, I would like to get my problem addressed. I know this
5 is saying it publicly. But I want to say this right now. I
6 need to have somebody look into this for me. Why can't I borrow
7 some money? I don't owe Farmers Home anything. I owe some more
8 people, but I don't owe Farmers Home anything. And I'm fixing
9 to be treated like a step-child. Okay. So, that's what I'm
10 saying. I'd like to have that addressed. You have my name and
11 my phone number. You have somebody get back to me about that.
12 I don't want you to go off and forget it now. I want you to
13 have somebody talk to me and tell me why I can't get any money.

14

15 COMMENT BY: CHARLES FLETCHER

16 I'm Charles Fletcher, Route 2, Box 202, Willacoochee,
17 Georgia; Colquitt County. I've been farming all of my life.
18 I'm 53 years old and I've never been able to receive a home loan
19 from Farmers Administration. I applied in '67 and the '80s;
20 I've always been turned down. My father's 90 years old, my
21 mother's 87. I've been living on the farm all of my life. I
22 have to farm wherever I can get the money, any conditions I can
23 get it. I have four daughters: 31, 16, 4, and 2, and expecting
24 one in March sometime. And I can't keep operating whenever I
25 can't get enough -- can't get no money to operate with. I have

1 to operate any way I can. Borrow at high interest rates. And
2 they say it's supposed to be for the farmers, but it's not. And
3 I have some -- we have 300-some acres of land. And I have a
4 friend, a white friend, that had only ten acres of land and he
5 could borrow \$150,000 over ten years ago, and I couldn't even
6 borrow five. And I have another friend who has 75 acres and he
7 borrowed over \$600,000, and they won't even loan me nothing to
8 farm with. And I've been farming all my life. And I still
9 intend to try farming. And I've had to work two jobs, take the
10 money from the other job in order to farm with.

11 Thank you.

12
13 COMMENT BY: CULLEN PATTON

14 I'll be brief. I'm ready. Yes, I'm Cullen Patton,
15 from Greenville, Georgia, with Wayne Trambell from Newnan,
16 Georgia. And we're here with Ms. Betty Bush, Matt Collins' aide
17 from Columbus, Georgia -- the representative.

18 We have a brief that's been sent to Secretary Glickman
19 two weeks ago by Attorney Mr. Joe Sumerford in Fairfield,
20 Arkansas. We would like for that brief to be taken a look at.
21 If need be, we would like to meet him on a one-to-one basis in
22 Washington. The file needs to be gone over. We need to be
23 there because there's a lot of material that's not in the brief.
24 It's nothing but harassment and discrimination and lack of
25 justice has been done over the last ten or fifteen years. So,

1 if at all possible, we need a meeting with a representative,
2 and an attorney will be there from Arkansas Betty Bush will be
3 there for Matt Collin's office, and other advisors from South
4 Georgia.

5 We thank you.

6
7 COMMENT BY: NED HARMAN

8 My name's Ned Harman, H-A-R-M-A-N, from Carrollton,
9 Georgia. I've been farming for Farmers Home for several years,
10 since the '70s. We'd go in October or September to get a loan,
11 to put in the crops. They'd give it to you after it was too
12 late to plant, like the other one said. These kind of things
13 happened. We get approved for loans, a hundred-something
14 thousand dollars to build a hog facility. And they say go ahead
15 and rate out, start it. Go ahead and get the money from local
16 banks and we'll pay them. But they didn't pay them. I owed the
17 local banks for years and years.

18 I've asked for a national appeals. They said we can
19 give you equitable leave; check into that. I did. They never
20 did do anything about that when I'd go to them. We met with a
21 state director last year, the first of this year, of '96. I
22 wrote my congressman, state senators, and they wrote them back,
23 Farmers Home did, and said we will work with Mr. Harman and give
24 him preservation. After I'd get to that, never would hear from
25 Farmers Home. They never would contact me.

1 I've got a daughter that's been in a coma since the
2 middle of October. I hadn't heard from Farmers Home at all.
3 Then after my daughter got in a coma now, here Farmers Home said
4 they're foreclosing because I hadn't contacted them or tried to
5 work with them. I tried to work with them for several years and
6 can't get anything done with them.

7 Thank you.

8

9 COMMENT BY: LESTER HAWKINS

10 My concern is -- I'm late -- I'm the son of the late
11 Lester Hawkins, I'm the son of the late Katherine Hawkins. We
12 have a farm of a 119 acres and one house. And my father left a
13 debt with the FHA of something like \$130,000. The Farmers Home
14 did not give us any help. We asked for help from them so we'd
15 have a lower payment so me and my brother could pay that loan
16 off, or get some of that money wrote off. Something like that,
17 so we could make the payments easily once a year, a lower
18 payment. Went to the bank, asked them for the money, the bank
19 told us \$18,339 a year. But at that rate, we cannot afford
20 that.

21 Thank you, ma'am.

22

23 COMMENT BY: RALPH BROWN

24 How you doing. My name is Ralph Brown. I'm from
25 Pataula County, Alabama. And I have a farm out there through

1 disaster through '90 through '93. We filed for disaster and
2 then they had all to come back, said in, you know, investigating
3 it. All we did was carry our bills down, and they went through
4 them and they paid us off for what we had it in. Then they came
5 back in '96, and said we owed some money back on it. So, I
6 don't know what going to be the outcome of other year, but
7 that's the latest I heard from them. That's it.

8
9 COMMENT BY: JEROME TUCKER

10 I'm Jerome Tucker from Valdosta, Georgia. I'm a
11 committee member of the Lowndes-Echols FSA. And I have my
12 concerns about the operation committee in writing. And I would
13 like to leave these with -- at this time. I've had problems
14 getting information about programs, getting access to the
15 records in the office, information that I feel I'm entitled to
16 as being a county committee member. [See "Exhibits"]

17
18 COMMENT BY: JOYCE WALTERS

19 I'm from Brooks County, Quitman, Georgia. Well, our
20 problem is coming from Madison County. We were buying a farm
21 there and we got burnt out and that's why we ended up in
22 Quitman. Okay. We bought the farm, this farm in Quitman,
23 through Farmers Home Administration. When we got the farm we
24 did not know, Production Credit did not disclose to us, that
25 there was a violation with the EPA and there was a disease

1 problem on the farm. We lost all our harvest except for ten
2 small ones we have there now. And we are just there. We have
3 a lawsuit with Production Credit which we won for \$825,000. But
4 they are talking back, and with the attorneys, and saying that
5 they're a part of the government, and they should not be sued
6 for punitive damages, and saying that the jury there -- it's
7 like they were not qualified to pass that judgment about
8 punitive damages. So, we are just sitting there. Our house is
9 leaking. We have nothing. We are just there and we need some
10 help.

11

12 COMMENT BY: J.B. BLACK, JR.

13 My name is J.B. Black, Jr. And I farms in Screven
14 County, which is Newington, Georgia. And I -- have FHA has
15 foreclosed on my equipment and sold it back in June -- I think
16 June. And it didn't bring as much because it was the wrong time
17 of the year to sell equipment, because all of the farmers had
18 already bought equipment. All they could do then is to manage
19 their own property they wasn't going to spend no extra money.
20 And the equipment didn't bring enough to pay the indebtedness of
21 it. Now, they are riding me for to -- to try to get me to pay
22 the remain on that equipment that they foreclosed on. I still
23 own the land, but I'm leasing the land. I got to '89, I think
24 -- I mean '99, I think it is, to maybe get somebody to buy the
25 land. And I'm going to try to do that. But the equipment, they

1 just went ahead and foreclosed on, because I was behind it, in
2 the payments on it. But I really think if they had of waited
3 until this fall. Sold it early in March, February or March of
4 last year, they would have gotten way more out of it. In that
5 time no one was buying farm equipment at that time.

6
7 COMMENT BY: JERRY BLACK

8 Yes, my name is Jerry Black. Same address 971 Oliver
9 Highway. I attended Abraham Baldwin in '75 and got a degree in
10 management. I've filled out farm loans from '78 until now. I
11 have been denied farm loans by FHA from several different
12 directors that -- over FHA. The reason that I was told one
13 time, my father was losing his farm, he had equipment and they
14 told me they could not loan me operating money to, in order to
15 use his particular equipment, because FHA had borrowed some
16 money on the equipment from FHA and it was really their
17 equipment.

18 I was told that there was no minority program that was
19 set aside. I tried to get my son in 4-H. I've won state
20 championship showing cows since 1968. I tried to get my son
21 involved in it and they told me there was no program, when I
22 know that there was a minority youth program going on. And I
23 obtained information from Atlanta. But in my county, I was told
24 by Mr. Evans in Statesboro, who is over the FSA now, that there
25 was no program. If I find out any more information on it, to

1 come and let him know. And when I did, they just said the money
2 was depleted.

3 And I wanted to make another statement. I can get a
4 job on every big farm, far as managing a farm. But then I was
5 told that I would have to go through a management program, but
6 I've managed several farms of 10,000 acres, 5,000 acres, for
7 several different ones in the county and surrounding counties.
8 But I can't operate management of a farm. And my father has
9 farmed for 49 or 50 acres -- I mean years. And I have come up
10 on the farm farming all my life. And I just wanted to know why
11 do I get these runarounds when I'm trying to apply for a loan in
12 order to establish a farming operation.

13
14 COMMENT BY: MARCUS DASHER

15 My name is Marcus Dasher. I'm from Vidalia, Georgia.
16 My complaint is with FHA, at first, Farmers Home Administration.
17 I applied for a loan the first year, I, you know, started,
18 decided to farm on my own. And I ran into the problem. The
19 first thing they told me that I was ineligible to farm because
20 I didn't know how to farm. And I'd been farming ever since I
21 was -- well, before I was 14. But when I became 14 years of
22 age, I had to run my father's farm for him sometime.

23 The second year, when I came back to FHA again, they
24 did the identical same thing, as far as giving my money. And
25 six months after I applied for it. And they didn't buy me any

1 equipment other than a harrow and a row cutter, you know, and
2 still didn't assist in buying me a tractor to, to do this
3 process with. I had to then -- and see of going to a bank and
4 doing the same thing and get me a loan for a tractor, and stuff
5 like that. And I farmed there for two years and I seen that
6 they wouldn't buy me a farm that I was eligible for buying and
7 stuff. Which they had told me, made me the promise after the
8 first year if I, you know, showed some good favoritism, that
9 they would do it.

10 They reneged on their end of the deal, so I decided
11 I'd just give it up because I seen that they was trying to get
12 two birds with one stone, to a certain extent, you know, as far
13 as getting my daddy out and ruining my reputation just as they
14 was speaking as, once we get you in bad standings, you cannot
15 reapply for these loans again. So, I just said -- you know,
16 sold what equipment they bought me and said y'all have it.

17 So, seven years, seven to eight years later afterwards
18 I had moved off and I came back when my father got ill and
19 decided to run my family farm. I ran into a situation through
20 the ASCS office then, because I wasn't eligible to apply for FHA
21 loan. So, what I was doing was just working out of my pocket,
22 and every time programs came up, I'd be the last to know, or
23 either they would cut me or subsidize on me. The first year I
24 was there, they took and zeroed my peanuts out and they wouldn't
25 even let me pick them, you know. So, I lost on that deal and

1 wouldn't pay me any insurance. So, for the last four to five
2 years, I've been catching slack from the ASCS office. But, you
3 know, like they said, there's certain farmers, you know, that
4 these guys sitting on the ASCS board and that's running these
5 ASCS offices, they let them know when stuff is coming down the
6 pipeline so they can get it before we do. That's it.

7
8 COMMENT BY: RAYMOND E. OLDS

9 My name is Raymond E. Olds. Address is 501 -- 5701
10 Wimbleton Court, Cambellton, Florida; Jackson County.

11 Okay. I just want to speak briefly about my problem
12 with farming. I started farming in '77. And the Farmers Home
13 Administration, I received farm operating loans all the way
14 through 1987. And from that time, I was denied an operating
15 loan and I was farming out of my pocket and using my mother's
16 and father's work salary, who works 40 hours a week to help
17 operate my operating costs, my farming. And I was denied a loan
18 to Farmers Home in 1991. I was -- my farm account was
19 accelerated and I was asked to pay up in full. And I could not
20 appeal my rights to reorganize my farming operation.

21 And at that point, I didn't have no money to pay up in
22 full, so I waited to -- last year, in 1995, I was foreclosed on
23 -- sorry; 1995 I was foreclosed on, and I was forced into
24 Chapter 12. And did a Chapter 12. I was -- had to get my land
25 appraised and livestock and equipment. And the Farmers Home

1 Administration appraised it so high that I couldn't afford to go
2 through the Chapter 12. But now I'm into a Chapter 7. And ask
3 to forgiveness of that -- this could be looked into. And I
4 really need someone to look at this high property appraisal. My
5 land is appraised very high, more than it's worth. And they do
6 that in order to keep me from going through the Chapter 12.
7 Thank you.

8

9 COMMENT BY: DAVID PROCTOR

10 My name is David Proctor from Monticello. My question
11 is, the FFA, I'd like to give a -- the program they got, I'd
12 like to, I'd like to try to get into the program. But
13 understanding that what we need, to start something small, you
14 know, I mean, you know, it's -- you know, I mean, I never had
15 dealt with FFA before. I would like to know where I can get
16 some information on it, more about it .

17

18 COMMENT BY: HERBERT MAXWELL

19 Okay. My name's Herbert Maxwell, Monticello, Florida.
20 Okay. All the organization that they have is good if they
21 do what they are designed to do, because what we're looking
22 at here is endangered species of the black farmer. I mean,
23 you come to Florida, you see "Save the manatee," "Save the
24 Florida cougar." They should have a state tag, "Save the
25 black farmer," because they're going to be extinct. Like

1 all these loans being denied before you even sit down.
2 That seem like what it's designed to do, to wipe out the
3 small farmer, white or black; but specifically the
4 minority. Everybody have to fold or foreclose, I mean, the
5 big people just expand. That's it.

6
7 COMMENT BY: SOPHIA GLENN

8 Okay. My name is Sophia Glenn. I'm in Tallahassee,
9 Florida and I work with small farmers in north Florida. I have
10 a couple issues I want to address -- I would like for someone to
11 address.

12 I work with Cooperatives' Association, the North
13 Florida Cooperative in Jackson; it's based out of Jackson
14 County, Florida. I would like to know if they will be more
15 assistance for cooperative organizations, more so than
16 individual farmers, based on the fact that they're more
17 organized and more promise for production or more productive
18 outcomes.

19 Also would like to know if there is some kind of
20 assistance or farm diversification or changing farm enterprises.
21 Because most of the farmers are recurrent farmers who are not
22 producing enough and are not making any income from these
23 enterprises and -- but at the same time, they don't have money
24 to -- they don't have money to change enterprises. They are
25 still changes in equipment and other things that they would

1 need, to change enterprise. With the changes that these farmers
2 would make, and most of the counties that they are working, they
3 would be in vegetable production. And the vegetable production
4 requires irrigated farms. And most farmers don't have that
5 money to invest into irrigation. So, would there be some type
6 of cost-share assistance for farmers to do such a thing.

7 Addressing the farm service agency issues. As I work
8 as a financial manager for small farmers, I would like to know
9 or get more information on farmers who are facing financial
10 problems and disasters. There's a lack of information given to
11 me to help such farmers. And hopefully, this will avoid some --
12 will avoid getting to the farmers at the end point when they're
13 in foreclosure. Which is not very much that we can do at that
14 time. So, we would just like more assistance and more
15 communication with the financial institutions, such as farm
16 service agency to assist us in helping these farmers.

17 To also, to address farm service agency. There are,
18 I've found there are lots of problems with interpretation of the
19 regulations. The interpretation is too broad and it's open to
20 any type of interpretation. For example, a person applies for
21 a beginning farm loan. And the requirements for a beginning
22 farm loan is you must not have farmed in the past ten years or
23 more. Then at the same time, they give you a stipulation that
24 you must qualify for a farm ownership loan also, which states
25 you have -- you must have farmed one in the past five years;

1 which is very contradictory. And these kinds of regulations
2 prevent farmers from obtaining the type of assistance that they
3 need.

4 Also, I would ask that the financial institutions,
5 such as farm service agencies, to assist us in working with the
6 farm, financial management and loan servicing. That also will
7 avoid us getting to those points of foreclosure whereas a lot of
8 times it's not easy for us to help these people at that point.

9 That's all.

10

11 COMMENT BY: WILLIE HEAD, JR.

12 My name is Willie Head, Jr. I'm from Brooks County,
13 Georgia, county seat Quitman, Georgia. My complaint is on FSA.
14 I entered into FSA in 1981, my county supervisor, Mr. Charles
15 Bryant, I applied for a loan to buy my father's farm. I was
16 approved, the loan was approved. And in that, I had certain
17 debts I was supposed to pay off to acquire the land with a clear
18 deed.

19 After I paid off these certain debts, after I had
20 acquired my loan for a certain amount, after I received the
21 loan, then I was told by my county supervisor that there were
22 other debts that I had to pay off with the money that I had
23 received to operate with. I had to use part of that money to
24 pay off those other debts. I was improperly informed by my
25 county supervisor, which in turn started me off in a negative

1 position, because I had to use my operating capital, a portion
2 of my operating capital to pay off existing debts that I was
3 told beforehand that I didn't have to pay.

4 Okay. As I made my way through Farmers Home up until
5 1986, I paid Farmers Home approximately \$17,000 in 1985. I also
6 paid Production Credit \$6,000 in 1985, which was a total of
7 \$23,000. I owed a balance of \$7,000 to Farmers Home. And when
8 I went to reapply for my loan, after paying \$17,000, I was
9 refused. And I was refused until 1994.

10 So, I hadn't been able to get a loan. And I quit
11 applying after 1994. So, now, I am in a position where I only
12 owe Farmers Home about 7500 to \$8,000 with interest. They tell
13 me that because I don't have any land in Farmers Home, only
14 equipment, I did not qualify for an FHA loan. Now, I owe them
15 less than most applicants, but I'm not able to receive any
16 monies from Farmers Home. I think that's an unfair policy. I
17 know farmers who owe them thousands and thousands of dollars and
18 they're able to get money. But I only owe a small amount and I
19 can't get it. I can't get anything. So, I'm filing this
20 complaint on behalf of those who owe small amounts of money,
21 should still be able to borrow money. Thank you.

22 [END OF SPEAKERS]
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF GEORGIA)

COUNTY OF LEE)

I, Rene Armstrong, do hereby certify that the reported the foregoing comments of the USDA Civil Rights Listening Session held on January 6, 1997, in Albany, Georgia.

This 19th day of January, 1997.


RENE A. ARMSTRONG, CVR CCR
GEORGIA CERTIFICATE NO. B-1735

Jerome
Tucker

FORUM FOR MINORITY FARMERS
JANUARY 6, 1997
ALBANY, GA.

REQUESTS OF JEROME TUCKER, COUNTY COMMITTEE MEMBER,
LOWNDES/ECHOLS COUNTIES FSA.

1. ACCESS TO RECORDS, DOCUMENTS, PUBLICATIONS, NOTICES, MAILING LISTS, ETC. OF FSA OFFICE.
2. AUTHORIZED COOPERATION OF FSA OFFICE STAFF OR IMMEDIATE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS IN EVENTS TO THE CONTRARY.
3. DETAILED LIST OF FEDERAL FARM PROGRAM FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA OFFICE FOR DISTRIBUTION. LIST SHOULD INCLUDE PROGRAMS FUNDS DESIGNATED FOR, 1993-1996.
4. DETAILED LIST OF BUSINESSES AND FARMING OPERATIONS FEDERAL FUNDS DISPENSED TO. LIST SHOULD INCLUDE OWNER(S), OPERATOR(S), LEASEE(S), LEGALLY LISTED CORPORATIONS, ETC. OF ANY AND ALL OPERATIONS, BUSINESSES, CO-OPS AND LEGAL ENTITIES FUNDS WERE DISPENSED TO. LIST SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE ANY AND ALL OWNERS, OFFICERS, STOCK-HOLDERS AND OPERATORS OF ANY ENTITY OR ENTERPRISE RECEIVING FEDERAL RURAL AND FARM PROGRAM FUNDS FROM THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA FROM 1990-1996.
5. LIST OF PAYEES AND AMOUNTS OF FEDERAL CHECKS DISPENSED FROM THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA OFFICE FOR THE PERIOD 1990-1996.
6. COMPLETE AND DETAILED BUDGET FOR THE OPERATION OF THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA OFFICE. DOCUMENT SHOULD INCLUDE SALARIES, WAGES PERKS, BONUSES AND OPERATIONAL EXPENSES. FOR THE YEARS 1990-1997.
7. NOTICES, PUBLICATIONS, PAMPHLETS, BOOKLETS, ETC. DETAILING THE AVAILABILITY, QUALIFICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:
 - A. LIVESTOCK, TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE
 - B. VEGETABLES--PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, MARKETING

- C. TOBACCO
- D. PEANUTS
- E. COTTON
- F. FORESTRY
- G. RURAL DEVELOPMENT--HOUSING, BUSINESSES, SOCIAL PROGRAMS.
- H. FINANCIAL--FARM OWNERSHIP & OPERATION
- I. YOUTH PROGRAMS

- 8. LISTS OF CURRENTLY FORECLOSED LAND, BUSINESSES AND EQUIPMENT. AVAILABILITY AND LOCATIONS.
- 9. LIST OF CURRENTLY FORFEITED ALLOTMENTS. CROPS AND VOLUME.

FARM SERVICES AGENCY COUNTY COMMITTEE AGENDA OF JEROME TUCKER

1. BECOME KNOWLEDGABLE
 - A. PROGRAMS
 - a. AVAILABILITY
 - b. QUALIFICATION FOR PARTICIPATION
 - c. STANDARDIZATION
 - B. FARM ACTIVITY
 - a. LOCALLY
 - b. REGIONALLY
 - c. ALTERNATIVE/TRADITION
 - C. AG INDUSTRY
 - a. FIANACIAL--GRAIN MKT., FUTURES TRADING,ETC.
 - b. AG BUSINESSES, SERVICES
2. FAIRNESS, EQUALITY, IMPARTIALITY
 - A. PERSONAL
 - B. OFFICE
 - C. COMMITTEE

.....EVERYBODY HAS A NAME AND JOB.
.....WE ARE ALL PAID BY YOU.....THE TAXPAYER
.....WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE TO YOU.
3. COMMUNICATION
 - INFORMATION
 - AVAILABLE TO HEAR CONCERNS
 - RESPOND TO CONCERNS
 - OPENESS OF PROGRAMS
4. IMPROVE THE VIABILITY OF THE MINORITY ENTITY
 - A. OUTLINE PROGRAM--COMMITTEE
 - a. PURPOSE
 - b. GOAL
 - c. RESOURCE/ INVENTORY
 - d. COMMUNICATION

REPRODUCE LOCALLY. Include form number and date on all reproductions.

FSA-586
(05-15-96)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

County FSA Committee (COC)
OATH OF OFFICE AND SERVICE OBLIGATION

1. STATE <i>Georgia</i>	2. COUNTY <i>Lowndes / Echols</i>
3. NAME OF COMMITTEE MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE <i>Jerome Tucker</i>	4. POSITION <i>COC member</i>

I, the undersigned, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully, fairly, and honestly perform to the best of my ability all duties entrusted in me as a committee member or employee. I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purposes of evasion; and that I will, under the guidance of the State or County FSA Committee, as applicable, faithfully discharge the duties of this office, including carrying out and obeying the laws, regulations, and procedures of FSA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wissam M. Faircloth
WITNESS

Jerome Tucker
SIGNATURE OF COMMITTEE MEMBER
OR EMPLOYEE (Seal)

11/17/96
DATE

I, JEROME TUCKER, FORMALLY REQUEST THE FOLLOWING:

1. HANDBOOK #15-AO(REV. 3)
2. HANDBOOK 1-CONSV
3. GA. NOTICE AO-612
4. GA. NOTICE PL-109
5. HANDBOOK 27-PM
6. HANDBOOK 115-FI(REV.4)
7. COPY OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE SUMMARY, AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 1996 AND AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 1995.
8. PUBLICATIONS 1-PL, 1-PF, 5-PA(REVISIONS 10 & 14), 2-CP(REV. 10)
- 9 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE LOWNDES/SCHOLS FSA OFFICE.
- 10 NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF THE LOWNDES/ ECHOLS FSA STAFF.
11. NAME/ADDRESS OF EITHER THE FSA DIRECTOR OF GA. OR THE DISTRICT IN WHICH SERVES GA.
12. BUDGET OF THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA OFFICE
13. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS FSA OFFICE.
14. NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS.
15. ADDRESS/PH. OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS
16. LIST OF REGISTERED FARMS, OWNERS/OPERATORS AND ADDRESSES OF FARMS IN THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS DISTRICT.
17. COPIES OF FCI-6 & 74 FOR FARMS LISTED ON PAGE 116 OF OCTOBER MINUTES, ALTON GRAY.
18. COPIES OF ALL MINUTES OF FSA COMMITTEE MEETINGS BETWEEN AUGUST 1 AND NOVEMBER 13, 1996.
19. THE ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE UNSCHEDULED MEETING OF NOVEMBER

**CONCERNS OF JEROME TUCKER ON THE OPERATION OF THE LOWNDES/ECHOLS
FSA OFFICE AND COMMITTEE.**

1. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETWEEN MEETINGS. THESE ACTION ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE. AS IN MY CASE, NO EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONTACT THE COMMITTEE TO CONVENE TO CONSIDER THESE ACTIONS. I HAVE PERSONALLY NOTIFIED THE CED OF MY AVAILABILITY TO HANDLE THESE SITUATIONS.

2. FINAL APPROVAL ARE MERE FORMALITIES OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CED/FSA STAFF.

3. FAILURE TO BE NOTIFIED OF POSITION ON THE COMMITTEE UPON THE DEMISE OF MR. SIMS. I HAD TO NOTIFY THE CED THAT THE POSITION WAS MINE. AT WHICH TIME THROUGH DILIGENT EFFORT TO DISCOVER A MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR THE NEXT DAY. I WAS THEN NOTIFIED THAT I DID NOT HAVE TO ATTEND THAT MEETING OR ANY OTHERS.

4. FAILURE OF PROPER NOTIFICATIONS OF MEETINGS.

5. INFORMAL/INEPT MEETING PROCEDURES. CHAIR-PERSON IS A TOKEN POSITION. FAILURE TO START MEETINGS ON TIME. FAILURE TO FOLLOW AGENDA. LACK OF RECORDED MINUTES. FAILURE OF NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS TO A PARTICULAR MEMBER. FAILURE OF CHAIR-PERSON TO MAINTAIN FOCUS/PURPOSE OF MEETING.

6. FAILURE TO PROVIDE MEMBER WITH PUBLICATIONS, INFORMATION TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ON ISSUES.

November 27, 1996

Mr. Odis Sherrod
District Director
P. O. Box 883
Valdosta, GA 31603

Mr. Sherrod, in my attempt to become an active, knowledgeable and participating member of the County Committee, I have requested certain information from the Executive Director of the Lowndes/Echols FSA office. I have been informed by the Executive Director, Mr. Clinton Batten and witnessed by the Program Assistant, Mr. Jerry Paulk, that the requested information either is not available, not convenient or cannot be delivered to me, citing an invasion of privacy. As a voting member of the County Committee, whose primary responsibility is to ensure the programs are administered fairly and equitably to all farmers in this district, and to whom Mr. Batten's position is responsible, I cannot and will not accept this feeble excuse to be denied the information to which I am entitled.

I have enclosed copies of my requests for information, my concerns of the County Committee and Correction of the Minutes of the only meeting I have attended, which by the way was at my invitation to myself.

In addition to the enclosed list of requests, I also request the following:

1. A copy of the County Committee By-laws
2. The amount of Federal Funds released to the Lowndes/Echols FSA Office for Fiscal Year 1995 and FY 1996 to date.
3. List of programs and amount paid to these programs in this district
4. Titles, descriptions and qualifications to participate of all programs pertinent to this FSA office which is located in your district

6, 1996, BE RESCINDED DUE TO THE LACK OF PROPER NOTIFICATION OF SAID MEETING. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF LAA-5 HAD SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED NOTIFICATION OF ALL MEETINGS AND THIS WAS NOT DONE.

Concerns of Jerome Tucker on the Operation of the Lowndes/Echols FSA Office
and Committee

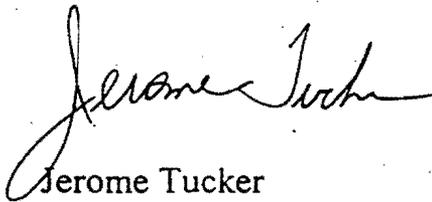
1. Actions taken by the Executive Director between meetings. These actions are the responsibilities of the Committee. As in my case, no effort has been made to contact the Committee to convene to consider these actions. I have personally notified the CED of my availability to handle these situations.
2. Final Approvals are mere formalities of actions taken by the CED/FSA Staff.
3. Failure to be notified of position on the Committee upon the demise of Mr. Sims. I had to notify the CED that the position was mine. At which time through diligent effort to discover a meeting was scheduled for the next day. I was then notified that I did not have to attend that meeting or any others.
4. Failure of proper notifications of meetings.
5. Informal/inept meeting procedures. Chairperson is a token position. Failure to start meetings on time. Failure to follow agenda. Lack of recorded minutes. Failure of notification of meetings to a particular member. Failure of chairperson to maintain focus/purpose of meeting.
6. Failure to provide member with publications, information to make informed decisions on issues.

Mr. Odis Sherrod
November 27, 1996
Page 2

This letter to you is my attempt at solving what I consider to be a minor misunderstanding in-house. Please take my word, in working with Bureaucrats daily, I know the proper steps to take and the manner and methods required to accomplish my goal. However, in the interest of being fair to everyone, I will take my concerns step by step until I get the information I request and am entitled to.

I request a response from you by December 9th, as my similar letter to the state director is scheduled to be mailed out on December 10th.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.



Jerome Tucker
County Committee, FSA

cc: Clinton Batten
Jerry Paulk

I, Jerome Tucker, Formally request the following:

1. Handbook #15-AO(Rev.3)
2. Handbook 1-CONSV
3. GA. Notice AO-612
4. GA. Notice PL-109
5. Handbook 27-PM
6. Handbook 115-FI(Rev.4)
7. Copy of Administrative Expenditure Summary, as of November 1, 1956 and as of November 1, 1995.
8. Publications 1-PL, 1-PF, 5-PA(Revisions 10 & 14), 2-CP(Rev. 10)
9. Organizational chart of the Lowndes/Echols FSA Office
10. Names and address of the Lowndes/Echols FSA Staff
11. Name/Address of either the FSA Director of Georgia or the District in which serves Georgia
12. Budget of the Lowndes/Echols FSA Office
13. Position descriptions for the Lowndes/Echols FSA Office
14. Name of person responsible for Committee Members notification of Meetings.
15. Address and Phone numbers of Committee Members
16. List of Registered Farms, Owners/Operators, and addressed of Farms in the

Corrections of FSA Minutes of Meeting on October 9, 1996
Submitted by Jerome Tucker

1. Meeting did not begin at 8:30AM. First Informal discussion was 8:52AM.
2. There was no discussion of handbook 15-AO.
3. Did not discuss each applicant for approval of payment limitations 1996 Crop Year.
4. Did not review paragraph 652 of 1-PL & GA. Notice PL-109 or payment limitation register. Determination was action of FSA Office Staff with direction to the Committee only on where to sign.

Recommend in the future, minutes be recorded during the course of the meeting. I find this method reduces the number of amendments to the minutes.

Jerome Tucker
November 13, 1996

AUTHORIZATION FOR JEROME TUCKER, LOWNDES/ECHOLS COUNTIES COUNTY COMMITTEE MEMBER, TO HAVE ACCESS TO RECORDS, PUBLICATIONS, NOTICES AND DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE FARM SERVICES AGENCY FOR SAID COUNTIES.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

WITNESS _____

DATE _____

Lowndes/Echols District.

17. Copies of FCI-6 & 74 for farms listed on Page 116 of October Minutes, Alton Gray.
18. Copies of all minutes of FSA Committee Meetings between August 1 and November 13, 1996
19. The actions taken during the unscheduled meeting of November 6, 1996, be rescinded due to the lack of proper notification of said Meeting. The Representative of LAA-5 had specifically requested notification of all meetings and this was Not Done.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CIVIL RIGHTS LISTENING SESSION

ALBANY CIVIC CENTER

ALBANY, GEORGIA

JANUARY 6, 1997

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

LISTENING PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Earl Cosby	Robert K. Duncan
Congressman Sanford Bishop	Secretary Dan Glickman
Pearlie S. Reed	Laura Meadows

CIVIL RIGHTS TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wilbur Peer	Mon Yee
Joyce Willis	Robert Whiting
Karen Messmore	Bruce Weber
Samuel Thornton	John Bottum
Floyd Wheeler	Leonard Bardy

RENE ARMSTRONG, CVR, CCR

National and State Certified Court Reporter

125 Cherokee Avenue

Leesburg, Georgia 31763-9394

912/438-0340

1 Agency, formerly the Farmers Home Administration. Next to
2 her, we have Robert Duncan, who is the Acting Director of
3 the Farm Service Agency, formerly known as the ASCS.

4 At this time, I'm going to call on one of our strong
5 supporters who helped us put this listening session
6 together, that is the Executive Director of the Federation
7 of Southern Cooperatives, Mr. Ralph Paige, to make a few
8 opening comments.

9 MR. PAIGE: Thank you so much. I want to welcome
10 everyone here on behalf of the Federation of Southern
11 Cooperatives, and especially our Albany, Georgia, office,
12 headed by Mrs. Sherrod, for coming, for helping us put it
13 together. This is a historic occasion. Never before, that
14 I can remember, and I've been doing this work for over 27
15 years, that we've had a Secretary to come out and agree to
16 put forth listening sessions throughout the South.

17 I believe this is the first of eight different
18 sessions that will listen to complaints, civil rights
19 complaints, and will listen to problems that farmers have,
20 especially minority farmers, specifically those of African-
21 American farmers. This is tremendous.

22 To you, Mr. Secretary, we commend you for doing this,
23 and we thank you. And hopefully, this will lead toward
24 some very, very, long-lasting action that's very much
25 needed to correct some of the problems that USDA affects

PROCEEDINGS OF SESSION

1 MR. COSBY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and
2 thank you for your attention. I'm Earl Cosby, the State
3 Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation
4 Service here in Georgia. We welcome you to this Civil
5 Rights Listening Session today. We have people here from
6 a number of states; many of the surrounding states, of
7 course, including Georgia. We thank you for taking time
8 out of your busy schedules to be with us today. We're
9 looking forward to you providing input to the Department
10 of Agriculture, and of course, Secretary Glickman, and the
11 Civil Rights Action Team that is present with us today.

12 We're pleased with the commitments of the Department,
13 Secretary Glickman, and the Action Team to get customer
14 feedback. And of course, those customers are you. We're
15 also pleased that we have the signal that necessary changes
16 will be made as comments and concerns are brought to the
17 Department. We have a panel of distinguished guests here
18 today, and will start the dialogue with you.

19 At this time I will go through and make some
20 introductions. I will also call on a few other people here
21 to make some introductions, as well. First, I will
22 introduce a couple of people that work with me from day to
23 day as agency heads here in the state. First, is Laura
24 Meadows, who is the Director of the Rural Development

1 minority farmers, that affects the ones who have been hurt
2 most, who have been hurt most of all by the problems like
3 credit, like marketing, all types of civil rights
4 complaints. This would be the, this would -- this is a
5 type of action. We encourage you to go forth today and put
6 forth, not a quick-fix, but long-lasting action that would
7 lead to some permanent solutions to the many problems that
8 most of you, or all of you, face here as minority farmers.

9 With that, I want again, to thank Mr. Bishop, the rest
10 of the panelists for coming and helping to put forth this
11 session. And to the farmers. Please, go out and talk and
12 say the things that you've said to us, the complaints that
13 you have put forth. This is again, I reiterate, this is
14 the very first time that this has happened. It's historic,
15 and we want to take a, take advantage of this opportunity
16 where something can happen in a positive nature for you.

17 After this session, and after these hearings are over,
18 I personally hope never again that we would have to go
19 through this with the Department of Agriculture. I hope
20 never again to see another complaint of discrimination at
21 USDA. I hope once and for all these type problems we can
22 fix. After all, this is the greatest nation on the
23 continent, and agriculture is a prime example of what it
24 should be worldwide. We should have an opportunity to
25 participate in it. We should have the opportunity to stay

1 on our farms, to make a living in rural communities. And
2 this would -- I think this is a first step to what -- that
3 lead toward a holistic approach to land loss and to the
4 problems of minority farmers.

5 Again, we thank you, and welcome.

6 MR. COSBY: Thank you, Mr. Paige. At this time, I
7 will continue with the introductions. And we have some
8 people that will make introductions, as well as brief
9 comments. The first one I will call on is a 28-year career
10 employee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service,
11 formerly the Soil Conservation Service. He acts in his
12 capacity, at this time, as the Associate Chief of the
13 Agency from Washington, D.C. He's also the chairperson of
14 the Civil Rights Action Team of the Department of
15 Agriculture, Mr. Pearlie Reed.

16 MR. REED: Thank you Earl. And good morning to all of
17 you. It is indeed an honor and a privilege for me to be
18 here with you today. I would like to ask the members of
19 the Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team to just stand for
20 a moment so that you can see who they are. So, would all
21 of you please stand?

22 (The members stood.)

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause)

25 My task here this morning is to introduce the

1 And I just think that our Secretary, Dan Glickman,
2 deserves a round of applause for taking the bull by the
3 horns again.

4 (Standing ovation.)

5 I am not going to take the time to do more talking,
6 because actually the purpose of this meeting is to listen.
7 You know better than anyone how USDA has impacted you or
8 how it's failed to impact you. And that is why we're here,
9 because we want to hear first-hand from you how USDA is
10 performing, and what the problems are, and how those
11 problems can be fixed.

12 My other task this morning is, of course, to present
13 to you the Secretary. I've had an association with the
14 Secretary, prior to his tenure in this job, when he served
15 on the Agriculture Committee, during my first term of
16 congress. He was knowledgeable, highly respected, and when
17 he spoke on the committee, everyone listened. When he was
18 appointed, after having represented the people of Kansas
19 for many, many, years in the congress, having served on
20 several of the subcommittees, on the Ag Committee,
21 including the General Farm; the General Farm Commodities
22 Subcommittee Chairman, where he was also on the
23 subcommittee on wheat, soybeans and feed grains.

24 He implemented legislation that helped us to expand
25 our trade possibilities and to make American agriculture

1 Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, congressman from the great
2 Second Congressional District of the great state of
3 Georgia. I have a long biography of him here. I won't
4 read it. So, what I will simply do is to ask you to join
5 me in welcoming Mr. Bishop.

6 MR. BISHOP: Thank you very much Pearlie. And let me
7 say what has already been said by Ralph Paige and many
8 others, that we are grateful for the Secretary's taking the
9 time and having the interest and the concern. I'm to
10 address some of the perennial nagging issues that have been
11 plaguing USDA for many, many years. We have a Secretary
12 who, when having these issues brought to his attention,
13 decided that he would take the bull by the horns. That he
14 would uncover whatever had been swept under the rug. That
15 he would objectively, fairly, carefully, examine,
16 investigate; but more importantly, listen.

17 And, as you are all aware, this is one of eight
18 listening sessions that the Secretary has scheduled across
19 the country. To listen to people who are the customers of
20 USDA. To try to hear your concerns, your problems, your
21 issues. To record them. To have the Civil Rights Task
22 Force to listen to them so that they can take what you have
23 to say, the issues that you raise, the solutions that you
24 propose, put them in the form of recommendations for a
25 permanent resolution of these all too long-standing issues.

1 continue to be the leader in the world through our trade
2 policies. He served on the House Select Committee on
3 Intelligence. He served as Chairman of that committee.
4 He's a lawyer by background and training, but he's an
5 incisive, critical analytical thinker. He's a wonderful
6 human being; he's a good friend. And he's certainly one of
7 the best friends that American agriculture could ever have.

8 I'm delighted to welcome him to the Second
9 Congressional District of Georgia, the Southeast. This is
10 not his first visit. He was here just, just a few months
11 ago. And we hope that he will continue to come back and
12 continue this process of listening. So that he can fulfill
13 his goal of making USDA user-friendly. So that its
14 programs, its services, and the people who deliver those
15 services are all working in concert to make sure that we
16 have a much better quality of life in this country. And we
17 continue to produce the most abundant, the most economic,
18 the highest quality food and fiber any place in the world.
19 Mr. Secretary?

20 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Thank you Sanford. Actually,
21 I've been down here in this district twice before. Once --
22 this is not a political meeting -- but once was to help one
23 of the great congressmen of the United States get
24 reelected. And he was reelected by a very great margin.
25 And I appreciate Sanford's help, and also Sanford's

1 persistence in helping me deal with this issue. Which is
 2 basically, that USDA has an obligation, a responsibility to
 3 treat its customers and treat its employees with dignity,
 4 with fairness, with equality. And I can say, that in some
 5 cases, we've done a good job at that. And, in some cases,
 6 we've done a bad job of that.

7 And what we're here today is to, under the leadership
 8 of Pearlie Reed, who has been introduced to you, is to
 9 listen to folks around the country to try to get a
 10 first-hand feel of the facts and of the character and
 11 texture of problems that people go through when they deal
 12 with the Department of Agriculture.

13 The way I look at it, and the way the President looks
 14 at it, how we treat our people and how we treat our
 15 employees, and how we treat our customers -- farmers,
 16 ranchers, people in this room -- is more important than any
 17 dairy program or wheat program or corn program or
 18 conservation program or anything else that we do. Because
 19 if we don't treat our people in the way that's right, then
 20 the substantive programs don't make all that much
 21 difference.

22 So, what we are trying to do is to look at the areas
 23 that we have failed in, and to try to determine how we can
 24 do it better. And look at the areas that we have succeeded
 25 in, and find out why we have done it.

1 As many of you know, we've been in the news a lot
 2 lately. And while I love publicity, some of the news that
 3 we've had lately is not the type news that I particularly
 4 like. News about complaints about discrimination, black
 5 civil rights enforcement, and inadequate outreach of
 6 service to any farmer, and to minority farmers in
 7 particular. That is simply unacceptable. However, I think
 8 it has provided us with an opportunity to address the issue
 9 and to make changes in the Department. Make changes in how
 10 we serve people; make changes to try to improve American
 11 agriculture.

12 So, my goal is to take a situation and to make
 13 lemonade out of lemons, so to speak, is to take it and do
 14 some good things with it. The Department of Agriculture --
 15 give you a little bit of background -- is a huge
 16 decentralized bureaucracy, about 100,000 people work for
 17 this department. Many of the decisions that affect farmers
 18 are made in hundreds of county offices around the country.
 19 In fact, the Department of Agriculture is the most
 20 decentralized of all federal agencies.

21 True, most of the decisions that are actually made,
 22 that actually affect farmers are not made in Washington;
 23 they're made locally. And the situation is made more
 24 complex because many of the staff that work for, on farm
 25 problems, actually work for the state or the county, and

1 are not actually employees of the Department of
 2 Agriculture, even though they're out here working in county
 3 offices. And so, they don't answer to USDA directly, in
 4 many cases. However, they help us stay close to our
 5 customers, and put a human face on the federal government.
 6 And that's the way Franklin Roosevelt set it up, because he
 7 recognized the benefits of a local presence.

8 However, the history of civil rights shows that
 9 certain decisions, particularly those affecting the most
 10 basic rights of our citizens, should be made according to
 11 national standards. That's why we have civil rights laws.
 12 We -- Washington does not let county commissions make its
 13 own civil rights decisions. We have learned that we have,
 14 that there are certain basic national principles that we
 15 have to establish. So, what we're doing today is to try to
 16 figure out where we need to do better.

17 I established a Civil Rights Action Team under the
 18 leadership of Pearlie Reed. And these folks, these men and
 19 women who are down -- who stood up with you, represent all
 20 different agencies of the Department of Agriculture, from
 21 rural development, to the forest service, and everything in
 22 between. I've asked them to, to help advise me. They're
 23 the ones that will actually be coming up with a report to
 24 me some time within the next 30 to 40 days, which we will
 25 then act upon, to make these changes. During January, this

1 team will hold 13 listening forums nationwide, all over the
 2 country, and they will come up with recommendations, as I
 3 said, before mid-February.

4 In addition to that, I have ordered our Farm Service
 5 Agency to temporarily halt foreclosure sales on delinquent
 6 farm loans, until a determination can be made on each case,
 7 as to whether there is evidence of discrimination or
 8 inconsistency in program delivery.

9 Third, I directed each USDA agency that serves farmers
 10 to establish an outreach office. These outreach offices
 11 will work directly with the public and constituency groups
 12 to improve the Department's outreach and service to
 13 minority and socially disadvantaged producers.

14 Fourth, I requested our department's Office of
 15 Inspector General to investigate allegations of
 16 discrimination at the Farm Service Agency, and recommend a
 17 plan for promptly resolving complaints that are there. Let
 18 me just close by saying this. Abraham Lincoln created the
 19 Department of Agriculture in 1862. He called it the
 20 "people's department"; that's what it was named. Its
 21 function was to disseminate seeds to farmers around the
 22 country, seeds and information about seeds and planting
 23 decisions.

24 This basically, was kind of the forerunner of our
 25 extension programs that we have right now. What I want to

1 make sure is when people think of USDA, they think that we
 2 are, in fact, the people's department; all the people's
 3 department, not just some of the people's department.
 4 So today, we begin the process of our listening
 5 sessions, where we want to find out from you how are things
 6 going. What can we do better on? Where are the problems?
 7 What kind of program should we be doing in the future?
 8 Help us to make this place a better place because you're
 9 the owners of the Department of Agriculture. You're the
 10 taxpayers in this room. You're my bosses. You're the
 11 bosses of everybody else that are up here. You're the boss
 12 of Sanford Bishop here; you pay his salary. All right?
 13 So, you're our employers and we understand that. And
 14 we hope today that you can help us make this agency a place
 15 that's productive. And as it's long-lasting goal, to
 16 encourage younger farmers, smaller farmers, minority
 17 farmers, to stay in agriculture. And to come back into
 18 agriculture to reverse the trends towards consolidation and
 19 concentration agriculture, which is happening all over the
 20 country. Thank you--all very much.
 21 MR. COSBY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
 22 At this time, I will go through a few ground rules, if
 23 you will, that we will follow as we conduct this listening
 24 session this morning. As I indicated, just a couple of
 25 seconds ago, that this is a listening session, it's not a

1 will fall as speakers are here talking. And we will come
 2 back right after the break and finish up by 1:00 p.m.
 3 At this time we're ready to begin our listening
 4 session. I will call the first speaker. Many of you
 5 indicated this morning, as you registered, that you would
 6 like to speak. Our first one is Mr. Willie Head, Jr., from
 7 Payo, Georgia. If you will step to the microphone and
 8 indicate who you are and begin your presentation for five
 9 minutes. Yes, sir.
 10 COMMENT BY: MR. WILLIE HEAD, JR.
 11 Willie Head, Jr. Good morning. To the Secretary of
 12 Agriculture, to Congressman Bishop, and the panel, we bring you
 13 greetings from Brooks County. My name is Willie Head, Jr. I'm
 14 a third-generation farmer from Brooks County, Georgia; the
 15 county seat Quitman.
 16 My -- I didn't realize I'd be first, but, I'm here.
 17 My complaint with the Farmers Home, or FSA now, I received a
 18 letter in the mail. It said that the Agriculture Department or
 19 USDA wanted to correct their decade of wrongs. And they are
 20 correct. Since 1986, we haven't been able to get anything as
 21 minority farmers. We worked diligently and we realized that
 22 hard work doesn't get it. You have to have opportunity.
 23 Opportunity must be present along with hard work. We certainly
 24 work hard.
 25 Since 1986, we haven't been able to get anything from

1 debate. So, your comments will be taken, and of course,
 2 used throughout this process.
 3 Let me ask the speakers, if you would, to come to the
 4 microphones. And there are microphones scattered
 5 throughout the audience. And speak into those microphones.
 6 As you start, I would ask that you would state your name
 7 and where you're from, and begin to do your presentation.
 8 The sessions will be videotaped as well as audiotaped. We
 9 also have transcribers that will be taking your
 10 information.
 11 I will call the speakers, as I indicated. And we
 12 would -- I have a timekeeper here. When you're out of
 13 time, Cynthia will hold up a card when you have one minute
 14 left, or hold up the next card, which is a zero, when
 15 there's no time left.
 16 If you still have information that you would like to
 17 present when your time has expired, we're going to ask that
 18 you would follow one of our ushers and begin to give that
 19 information to them, or to an appropriate person in
 20 writing. If you could remember that for me, you would help
 21 me to do my job this morning and keep this session on
 22 schedule.
 23 We will take a break at about 10:30. And I say about
 24 -- excuse me, 11:30; we'll take a break about 11:30. And
 25 I say about, because I'm not exactly sure where the minutes

1 Farmers Home. We've survived until this point. Earlier this
 2 year we also received a letter saying that within 45 days, if
 3 you were delinquent with Farmers Home, you had to pay up.
 4 That's impossible for us to do it, since we haven't received any
 5 financial assistance from Farmers Home since 1986. I talked to
 6 the Secretary in Kentucky at Farm Aid last year, and I asked him
 7 about a provision that was in the previous farm bill, before the
 8 1995 Farm Bill. I asked him was there any provision in there
 9 for the minority farmer. He said that there was, but they had
 10 been voted down. I asked him would they be reentered into the
 11 1995 farm bill. And he said they would; they'd probably vote it
 12 down again.
 13 So, that tells me something; that it's some
 14 discrimination, to me in my mind, that there is some
 15 discrimination. You're telling me that there are policies that
 16 go in for a minority farmer, and they're going to be voted down
 17 even before that they're voted on. So, I feel strongly that
 18 there is some discrimination that involves the black farmer.
 19 Since 1986, we hadn't been able to get anything. It's
 20 approximately 60 or 65 black farmers in my county. And only two
 21 to three of them get assistance from Farmers Home. And we're
 22 looking, in 1997, for those two or three not to get anything,
 23 unless the policies are changed. So, we're asking the Secretary
 24 to put these groups out there. To really put watchdogs, or
 25 groups out there, to watch these local communities. Because

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1 they're the one that helps make the decision to decide whether
2 we get anything or not. And that's part of the problem; there
3 hasn't been any watchdog groups over these local committees.
4 Because the same people on the bank committee's on the ASCS
5 Committees; they're on all committees within the system there.
6 And if you're not going to get any financing from the bank,
7 you're surely not going to get any from FSA, because the people
8 that's on that committee is on the bank committee. He's turned
9 you down at the bank, and you go down to the ASCS office and
10 apply, and he's on the same committee. Certainly, you're not
11 going to get anything down there. So, the government will have
12 to put somebody over these committees, or instrument some kind
13 of plan or program, and see that these committees are fair.
14 Because they're certainly not fair, and that's part of the
15 problem with these local committees.
16 They won't let us have anything in my county. And I
17 would like to reannounce the name of my -- Brooks County; Brooks
18 County. Somebody need to come down there and see how they can
19 carry on the programs in that county. That county's 62 percent
20 minority or 62 percent black. And they've controlled
21 everything, especially in the agriculture department. We can't
22 get anything; anything. I mean, we can't get anything. And
23 it's just not fair. We are taxpayers also. We have wives; we
24 have daughters that want to go to college; we have sons who want
25 to go to college. And that's the way we make our living there.

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1 Our name is also written in the lane. And we need somebody come
2 in and assist us to put watchdog groups over these places, so
3 they can see that we're treated fairly.
4 Thank you.
5
6 MR. COSBY: Thank you. I will call the next speaker.
7 And please indicate who you are, and where you are from, as
8 you approach the microphone. Our next speaker is Tirso
9 Moreno from Apopka, Florida. And, please, forgive me if I
10 mispronounce those names.
11 COMMENT BY: TIRSO MORENO
12 My name is Tirso Moreno. And you did a good job in
13 pronouncing the name. I'm from Apopka, Florida. And I
14 represent the Farm Abuse Association in Florida and I'm also
15 part of several national organizations that are looking for
16 improvement of their lives of farm workers and their families.
17 And I would like to start by saying that farm workers,
18 even that are not enough information about the numbers, there
19 are probably over three million farm workers in the U.S. And
20 just in Florida, we have over 300,000 people who don't own any
21 land, but are workers in the agricultural industry and for
22 farmers. And most of them work for very large corporations that
23 are -- employed thousands of them. And the situation of the
24 farm workers, it is worse when they work for larger farmers than
25 when they work for smaller farmers. And, I mean, that is

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1 reality.
2 Also, farm workers do have families who are affected
3 directly by the situation they have at work, at the work places.
4 It is important also to mention that the death rate for farmer
5 workers is about five times higher than your rate of any other,
6 you know, all the other occupations combined. The life
7 expectancy of farmers is still about 49 years old. It is less
8 than 20 years, compared with people who work in other
9 industries.
10 There are about 300,000 cases of illnesses, and over
11 1,000 deaths every year related to pesticides as exposure. Many
12 of the problems, many of the -- these kind of problems are not,
13 or have not been documented. So, the numbers can be much
14 greater than what I'm talking about.
15 The poverty is a strain in our communities. The
16 industry has kept salaries at the very, you know, very, very
17 low. To the point that the farm workers' buying power have been
18 reduced to just about half than what we had about 15 years ago.
19 The way the farm workers are paid, they're paid by the piece,
20 which is not -- I mean, as much as they -- I mean, they, they
21 improve their skills, and they improve their capacity to
22 produce. But with the low wages they pay, there is no way you
23 can keep up with the cost of living. So, our people is poorer
24 than 15 years ago. That is a big problem.
25 Many of the owners of the industry do not hire the

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1 workers directly. They use the labor contracting system which
2 take away the responsibility of the employers. We want to say
3 also, that our communities would not know of any direct services
4 to the farm workers. And the Department, I mean, we -- when I
5 was invited to this event, I didn't even know what to talk
6 about, what to ask for. Because we don't have -- it might be of
7 service to farmers, or to the big corporations who are our
8 employers, but our communities do not know what the Department
9 is doing for our, for our people. I might be ignorant about
10 this. There's a, you know, I think it's important to consider
11 that. We do recommend that the Department have more focusing to
12 the farm workers' communities.
13 I have, I mean, some more recommendations, more
14 specific, but I think the time is over.
15 MR. COSBY: I have a recorder for you. James Ford, if
16 you would come and take this gentleman to one of the
17 recorders, we will -- would like to have that information.
18 MR. MORENO: Uh-huh (yes.)
19 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
20 MR. MORENO: Okay.
21
22 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker is Alfredo Bahema, from
23 Apopka, Florida.
24 COMMENT BY: ALFREDO BAHEMA
25 Hi. My name is Alfredo Bahema, and I represent the

1 Farm Workers Association in Florida. I would like to talk about
2 the living conditions of the farm workers, and especially the
3 salaries. For the last 10, 20 years, the piece rate in salaries
4 continues to be the same for farm workers, when the cost of
5 living is 100 hundred percent higher today. And the lack of
6 guarantee of work makes the farm workers to be the most poor
7 workers in the United States. I feel that the lack of
8 responsibilities from the agricultural industries and farmers
9 makes the situation worse.

10 Related to housing, the farm workers are living in the
11 worse conditions, worse housing conditions than in the last 20
12 years. And this makes the many farm workers is that's renting
13 their own -- renting houses in higher costs.

14 On the other hand, I want to mention that there is a
15 lack of enforcing the law related to field sanitation. Tirso
16 Moreno was explaining about how pesticides are dangerous to, to
17 all farm, farm workers that are in contact with pesticides. And
18 field sanitation is a real need for farm workers. And on the
19 other hand, the workers' protection of standard law is not being
20 enforced as well. We feel that farm workers needs to be better
21 trained, related to pesticides, not by videos. We feel that
22 farm workers needs to be trained by public education in their
23 own language, in language that they, they can understand.

24 We always complained about more scientific studies on
25 how pesticides damage the farm workers' health. We have been

1 Our next speaker, Suzanne Shingler, the Georgia
2 Ratite Association.
3 MS. SHINGLER: Excuse me. It's Shingler, and it's the
4 Georgia Ratite Association.

5 MR. COSBY: All right. Thank you.

6 COMMENT BY: SUZANNE SHINGLER

7 My name is Suzanne Shingler. I'm from here in Albany,
8 Georgia. And ratites are ostrich, emus and rheas. And it's a
9 growing industry across this nation. And right now, we're
10 having to pay \$33 an hour to have our meat inspected and get it
11 to the market. Because it's a nonamenable meat -- most markets
12 don't even know where to look at what nonamenable or amenable
13 mean. But, if we're to be an alternative industry in this
14 nation, and if we're to be able to get our meat to the market,
15 we have got to have help on getting the price of inspection
16 down.

17 Right now, the state of Georgia has declared ostrich,
18 emu, and rhea livestock, so that we can process it in red meat
19 facilities where they do beef and pork. But to get this to the
20 market, we have to pay not only to have it slaughtered, but also
21 to have the meat inspected while it is slaughtered, while it's
22 being packed. We have got to have some assistance in this from
23 USDA. We have got to have standards set. These birds are a
24 very marketable item. It's a healthy meat. It's an alternative
25 choice for people who have heart problems or cholesterol

1 making a lot of recommendation on how farm workers suffers from
2 short-term symptoms, as well as long-term symptoms. We complain
3 that many lack of their own -- they don't know about how to
4 treat farm workers when they have pesticide symptoms. And if
5 farm workers are well educated about pesticides, it's going to
6 be a long job on them.

7 I want to mention that we need, farm workers need a
8 lot of more better housing projects and better economic
9 development projects, include alliance. We need as well, child
10 care, because there is a lot of childrens in the fields as well.

11 And if I did mention pesticides, childrens has been exposed to
12 pesticides as well.

13 I have a lot of other things that I would like to
14 mention, but I was not prepared real well. But if I have -- I'm
15 going to try to write the living conditions and circumstances of
16 the farm workers. And I can send it to you as well.

17 Thank you.

18
19 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. I should mention at this
20 time, and I failed to do so at the beginning, is that on
21 the way in, or at least when you registered, you should
22 have picked up a comment form, or the people at the table
23 should have given you one. And please feel free to use
24 that comment form to address those -- to list those
25 additional concerns, if you would, please.

1 problems.

2 The birds produce an oil. The emus produce an
3 oil, the rheas produce oil that can be used in medicine, as well
4 as in cosmetics. Standards need to be set on that. Standards
5 need to be set on inspection. And, if nothing else, make that
6 time that we're in the slaughter house slaughtering and
7 processing meat be prorated, because, at the same time, they're
8 doing pork and beef in some other department in that, in that
9 same slaughter house.

10 This industry is quite big in the state of Georgia.
11 We have over 600 farmers. It takes a small amount of land to do
12 ratite farming. Fifty acres can produce over \$100,000 a year
13 income for one farmer. A bird will lay 50 to 75 eggs a season,
14 where a cow only has one calf. So, it is an alternative farming
15 issue that needs to be addressed.

16 There are a lot of minorities. I'm a minority because
17 I'm a woman, and we've been doing it for 15 years. But, unless
18 we can get our product to the market at a reasonable price that
19 can be competitive with other meats on the market today, we
20 can't survive. And we can't support those people who are in
21 this industry right now as producers.

22 So, we would like this to be addressed on a national
23 level, if we have to go to the House and Senate in Washington
24 and get it an amenable meat. We did, in the state of Georgia,
25 we went to the House and Senate and got it declared livestock.

1 If we have to do that on a national level, tell us. Let us
2 start now. Because there are a lot of people who have invested
3 in this. There are a lot of people who are raising the birds.
4 But unless we have an end market and we can put it at the meat
5 counter at a reasonable price, those people will lose all of
6 their investment. So, we would like to have this issue
7 addressed on a national level.

8 Thank you.

9
10 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much. Our next speaker,
11 Carl Parker, from Ashburn, Georgia. If you will please
12 come to the microphone. State your name and where you're
13 from and begin. Thank you.

14 COMMENT BY: CARL PARKER

15 My name is Carl Parker, with just a couple of
16 questions. And I'm from Ashburn, Georgia. And I speak on
17 behalf of me and Gary Parker. As a matter of fact, we're from
18 -- well, we're in Worth County. The county of Worth, but
19 Ashburn, Georgia. We're kind of on the line between the two
20 counties. And we are -- we used to be borrowers of Farmers Home
21 Administration, which is now ASSA Service. And, and in the past
22 we borrowed money and farmed. But, as of 1988, we was not able
23 to borrow any more because of the dry years that put us in bad
24 shape. And then again, in 1990, federal crop insurance, with
25 the help of federal crop insurance, we are totally out of

1 But in later years, a couple of years ago, as a matter
2 of fact, we wanted to diversify our farming operation into a
3 grass farm. And we was told that, by the agent that, that if we
4 even, even if we applied, there wouldn't be any money available.
5 Trying to discourage me and -- the way I felt about it, and --
6 but yet, I still gave, submitted the application. And sure
7 enough, he did just like he said he would. He was going to turn
8 it down. And so, but we kept on, and appealing. And one thing
9 about the appeal process that I feel I understand is that if you
10 appeal FMHA decision, and it's conducted by FMHA people, you,
11 you're bound to lose. And that's something that needs to be
12 changed. (Applause.) I mean really.

13 And here lately, I'm right now in the mediation
14 process. And, I mean, I feel I've got a mediation scheduled for
15 next Monday at 8:30, if anyone can attend. And you're welcome
16 at the Worth County Library. But, but I don't know whether it's
17 going to, going to speed up my process or -- when I heard the
18 Secretary say that all foreclosure would be, would be frozen
19 temporarily.

20 So, in my closing -- I've got one minute, so I'll wrap
21 it up. I would like to meet one-on-one with one of your
22 representatives, if there's any way possible, to resolve my
23 case, if there's any way possible. And it's very necessary for
24 us to meet with them. But, if not, then I'll fill out this
25 papers and turn it in in the suggestion box. And those are my

1 business now.

2 So, we -- but yet, we've been living on the farm. And
3 a couple of years ago, or a few years ago, they came to serve --
4 we were sent a letter saying that we were more than 45 days
5 delinquent. And so, we would -- it was suggested that we pay up
6 at that time. But there was no way possible at that time to pay
7 up, due to the fact that all of them dry years. And, well, with
8 the help of federal crop insurance, and not -- a nonpayment to
9 federal crop insurance that, that we couldn't pay them.

10 So, we went back to Farmers Home at that time, and
11 resubmitted an application. And we was going to change our
12 farming operation. And we'd grow flowers and we, we tried
13 everything trying to survive and make it. And, in the later
14 years, I thought that Farmers Home Administration was an
15 administration to help farmers, that I couldn't borrow money no
16 where else. But when we got there, we were discouraged by the
17 people that were in charge. I won't call their names at this
18 time, but if you want to know, I got them.

19 And I only attempted one or two times to enter a
20 complaint. Because I felt like that if I enter a complaint,
21 then that would just speed up foreclosure process on me. And I
22 didn't want to do that, because some farmers, they already have
23 complaints in with Farmers Home and it didn't do them any good.
24 I didn't see where it would do me any. Therefore, I put in a
25 complaint.

1 concerns.

2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Laura, can you -- Bob, it's one of
3 yours?

4 MR. DUNCAN: Yes.

5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Can you meet with him
6 today before you leave us?

7 MR. DUNCAN: (Nodded head).

8 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Mr. Duncan will meet with you
9 before you leave.

10 (Applause)

11 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

12 Our next speaker, Fred Daniels from Blakely, Georgia.

13 COMMENT BY: FRED DANIELS

14 I'm Fred Daniels from Blakely, Georgia. Many of the
15 things that I had listed to be addressed, the Secretary in his
16 speech said that those things would be looked into. That made
17 me feel happy. One of the things that we notice, all of the
18 government agencies, from federal government, of the state, and
19 local government, and a lot of consolidation and downsizing took
20 place in some of the local agencies. In combining some of the
21 work load did not increase the staffing to provide the kinds of
22 efficiency service that the farmers in my county need. I'll put
23 it that way.

24 Secondly, the addressing of the advisory boards, or
25

1 the advisory councils, or committees, especially with the ASCS
2 office. The structure of it, no black can ever be elected to
3 serve on that board and make any decision. Sometimes they allow
4 us to sit in as a minority representative, but you have no vote.
5 So, you see, you're just representing your people, but you're
6 not in the decision-making policy. I don't know if anything can
7 be done to address that issue as well.

8 Thirdly, we know as we look at future outlooks,
9 population growth between now and the year 2000, the experts
10 tell us that from Virginia -- Virginia, the state of Virginia,
11 to Texas, will be where most of the population will be. For 35
12 years I've noticed the black farm population continue to
13 dwindle. Not only the black, black farm population, but farm
14 population period. But immensely the black farm population. And
15 I was wondering, maybe, what kind of incentive can we come about
16 to encourage young black farmers. Because I've taught a lot of
17 young people. And a lot of the young whites go into farming,
18 father-son partnership, and other means by which -- but as I
19 look at the black population, most of those, when they end it,
20 that's the end of it.

21 Agriculture has been the backbone of this nation
22 through many wars. The tribute of the success of the wars
23 fought was based on agriculture being the foundation and the
24 success of it. And there's an old saying, that if rural America
25 is destroyed, or forsaken, or denied, grass will grow in the

1 Mr. Duncan? Normally, if they're --
2 MR. DUNCAN: Normally, if we have --
3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Use, use the mike.
4 MR. DUNCAN: Normally, we should have -- if it's 5
5 percent minority in a county, normally we will add a
6 minority on the ballot. And that does not necessarily say
7 that, you know, they're going to be elected. But that is
8 a process that we've had in place for several years.
9 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir. That's still -- that takes
10 place in my county. They're on the ballot. They, they be
11 entered on the ballot, but what we're saying, that's giving
12 you an opportunity to run, but you won't be elected.
13 Thank you so much.

14
15 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
16 Our next speaker is David Barnhart from Monticello,
17 Florida. If you would restate your name and location for
18 the record, I would appreciate it.

19 COMMENT BY: DAVID BARNHART
20 My name is David Barnhart. I'm from Monticello. My
21 question is for forestry. Three years ago we were able to get,
22 I think the government had a 60/40 percent share cost, with also
23 herbiciding. We wanted to redo 80 acres this year. I needed to
24 know how come the program is obsolete now. It's no longer in
25 use. We don't have the money for it; they've discontinued it.

1 streets of Washington, D.C. But if you maintain rural America,
2 you can destroy the big cities and they will be rebuilt greater
3 than what they were before.

4 I thank you.

5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Can I -- Earl, can I ask Mr.
6 Daniels a question?

7 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

8 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: You talked about how minorities
9 can't get elected to county committees; is that correct?

10 MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: And is that -- give me some
12 background of that. Let's say, for example, you have a
13 county that has a third of the farmers in the county are
14 minority farmers. Just from the numbers, should they not
15 be able to elect people to that county committee? What is
16 there that precludes people from being elected to a county
17 committee?

18 MR. FRED DANIELS: Usually three individuals are
19 listed on a ballot. And the ballot is sent out to all of
20 the farmers that are eligible to vote. And they vote for
21 that individual. So, if you got a third of them, of the
22 voting black, two-thirds are white, most times. Well, up
23 to -- at this point, we have not been able to get a black
24 on the ASCS committee.

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah. Now, what were you saying,

1 And they've done this for years planting trees.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. PEER: I didn't get his question clear.

4 MR. COSBY: Sir, could you come back to the microphone
5 and restate your, the question. I think there's a --

6 MR. BARNHART: My question is why is it there is no
7 more money, there is no more funding for it? At least
8 that's what I'm told.

9 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Do you know the exact name of the
10 program? Is it ACP program? Would you know the particular
11 program you're talking about?

12 MR. BARNHART: I don't know the exact name of the
13 program, and that's another problem.

14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Forestry incentive program, is
15 that a NRCS or a forestry-funded program?

16 MR. COSBY: That program is ran through NRCS at this
17 time. And that program is funded, but under a limited
18 amount of money.

19 MR. BARNHART: But not in Monticello. Yeah, at
20 Monticello they say that it's no longer there. That was
21 in --

22 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: We can look into that.

23 MR. REED: Are you from Georgia?

24 MR. BARNHART: Monticello, Florida.

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Florida; right?

1 MR. BARNHART: Florida, Florida. Right across the
2 water -- or land.

3 MR. REED: Niles, could you follow up with him and
4 find out exactly what the story is?
5

6 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is James
7 M. Perry from Union Springs, Georgia.

8 MR. PERRY: My name is James Perry. I'm from Union
9 Springs, Alabama.

10 MR. COSBY: Union Springs, Alabama; thank you.

11 COMMENT BY: JAMES PERRY

12 MR. PERRY: I live in Bullock County. My county
13 adjoins Montgomery County to the east. I've farmed most of my
14 life. I plant peanuts, soybeans, and corn, and I have 65 share
15 of brood cows. My father let me start making day-to-day
16 decisions in 1968.

17 My problems started with FHA in 1988 -- I received a
18 letter from them stating -- when I received this letter from
19 FHA. It's about, it's Public Law 100-223. It says that FHA is
20 required to release proceeds from crops or livestock, anything
21 that I would use to, usually sell, for family living or farming
22 expenses. And this letter was sent out during disaster years.

23 So, as I said, that's when my problems started. When
24 I went to my supervisor to ask for a release of these proceeds.
25 My supervisor told me that I didn't read the letter right. He

1 When the National Appeals staff ruled, they ruled in
2 my favor. They advised my state office to continue service
3 without delay. This ruling was made April the 29th, 1991. It
4 was December, '93, before I got any service from FHA. I was
5 told that the national appeals staff could not overrule my state
6 OGC. So, the bad faith for selling the calves still stood
7 against me.

8 On the other hand, OGC asked for this review, and then
9 it came back saying the National Appeals staff couldn't overrule
10 it. So, I would like to ask at this point -- that's when my, I
11 know my rights were violated because my appeal rights has been,
12 have been taken away. If my state office does not have to
13 listen to the National Appeals staff, there's no need of having
14 a National Appeals staff anyway.

15 And my problem also started with my supervisor with
16 FHA regulations. At some point, I saw the regulation one way
17 and my supervisor saw them another way. And I understand that's
18 where the appeal process come in. Both parties must abide by
19 the rules, whatever. You can't have one accepting one rule and
20 another, another rule. So, this is a -- this is one of the
21 problems I've had.

22 We've had other problems that other farmers had in the
23 county. They would have problems getting loans, and when they
24 get them, they're late. They'll have to plant late. But this
25 one farmer in my county, and his name is G.W. Talber, I will

1 also told me that no other farmer read the letter like I read
2 it. So, they let me and another farmer require for these
3 service.

4 I had a cash crop after '88. So, I made the request.
5 I got all the forms that I need to fill out for District 12. I
6 filled the forms out; I was denied. I sold the calves and told
7 the supervisor what I did with the money. Because I was denied
8 by the supervisor, I had to appeal the decision after I had sold
9 the calves, because that's when they had bad faith against me,
10 for the calves against me. And I won this appeal.

11 The next year, we had another disaster. The next year
12 we had another disaster. I got the same letter again. I went
13 back to my supervisor, that year of '89, to ask for a release of
14 the calves again, for that year. Again I was denied. This, I
15 realize, I made a mistake. I didn't get the form to fill out
16 that year. I also sold the calves. I told the farm -- I told
17 my supervisor that the calves were going to be used for farm
18 expense and family living.

19 Because I sold the calves without my supervisor's
20 permission I had to appeal again. I won the appeal again. But
21 the hearing officer stated that FHA had, had 12 days to appeal
22 to Washington to the National Appeals staff, and they did. My
23 state office asked Washington to review the hearing officer's
24 decision. This was -- it came from OGC the state office
25 lawyers.

1 always believe that he was done wrong. He was harvesting his
2 crop that FHA had a lien on. His combiner broke a belt. He
3 went into his county FHA office to get money to replace the
4 belt. He was told that he had used up all his repair money.
5 Repair money is an estimate that you give to your county
6 supervisor at the beginning of the year on your home and farm
7 plan. This supervisor had some checks from the crops that this
8 farm had already -- had gathered earlier. And Mr. Talber also
9 had a crop in the field. So, I ask you to put yourself in this
10 farmer's place. It's harvest time, you need to get back to the
11 field. You have taken your supervisor some checks and you will
12 be taking him the rest once you get your combine repaired.

13 MR. COSBY: Mr. Perry, could I get somebody to come
14 and get the rest of your information, please. James? We
15 would like to have that. If you would give it to James
16 Ford, we will get it recorded by one of our recorders.

17 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Can, can I just ask him some
18 questions?

19 MR. COSBY: Yes. You have a question here.

20 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Sir, what is the status of your
21 case now? You said the OGC the Office of General Council
22 basically took precedence over the appeals division. So,
23 as of right now, has that matter being resolved against
24 you, then?

25 MR. PERRY: Well, I'm being foreclosed at this point.

1 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: You are?
 2 MR. PERRY: Yes. They have taken half of my
 3 equipment. Half if still on the farm. I reported that I
 4 had been discriminated against. And this has been stopped
 5 so far. So, we're looking to hear a ruling from
 6 Washington. And I don't -- well, in my state, it's hard to
 7 -- well, you don't really know how it's going to go. When
 8 Washington make that decision, then I have to deal to the
 9 state office again, also. So, I really don't know at this
 10 point.

11
 12 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir; we'll get that information
 13 from you.

14 Our next speaker, Melvin Crumb from Rowesville, South
 15 Carolina. If you would, repeat the name, and state where
 16 you're from, I would appreciate it.

17 COMMENT BY: MELVIN CRUMB

18 Thank you very much. My name is Melvin Crumb. I'm
 19 from Rowesville, South Carolina. I'm a local farmer, a fourth
 20 generation farmer. And I had some comments.

21 I'm going to rearrange my comments because of a
 22 comment that was made earlier by Mr. Fred Daniels. I think,
 23 perhaps, we need to clarify this position of African-American
 24 representation on the various county committees. And I don't
 25 think that that was adequately explained. So, Mr. Secretary, if

1 some chance of success of winning an election on these
 2 committees.
 3 Because, as was stated earlier, these committees are
 4 the decisions that are made, to a large degree, by USDA, are not
 5 made in Washington. They are made at the local level. And they
 6 are made by the very persons that are elected at the local
 7 level.

8 So, if our options are cut off at the door, and we
 9 don't have anybody to represent us, other than a minority
 10 member, who is appointed in most cases by the committee. And in
 11 my particular county, there has never been any input from the
 12 minority, or the African-American farming community, to suggest
 13 a person to serve on this committee. And again, in my local
 14 case, this person has no farming interest. So, I don't feel
 15 that I am being adequately represented, even though it's a nice
 16 person. I really feel that USDA should look into the method of
 17 how these farming committees are elected. I don't want to
 18 belabor that point, but I thought that we need to clarify where
 19 the problem really is. So --

20 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Can I interrupt there, just a
 21 moment, and make a little brief comment about -- you know,
 22 you have identified a perennial problem. When we took up,
 23 in the agriculture committee, the recommendations from Mr.
 24 Glickman's predecessor, Mr. Espy, on reorganization, we
 25 tried to, under the leadership and at the suggestion and

1 you will allow me a few minutes, I would like to get into the
 2 ins and outs of why we can't get adequate representation or
 3 adequate African-American representation on these various
 4 committees.

5 It was stated by Mr. Daniels that we can get on the
 6 ballot. And that's a fairly easy process if you follow the
 7 rules and regulations. The problem comes when you're in the
 8 minority of the population. And we know that in America, the
 9 majority tends to win. Representative -- Congressman Bishop is
 10 here today as a result of reapportionment of the United States
 11 Congress. And we were fortunate enough to have an African-
 12 American elected to Congress from South Carolina because of
 13 reapportionment. And of course, reapportionment has gone a long
 14 way from the United States Congress down to state government,
 15 county government and even local government.

16 But in USDA, as it pertains to the farm service agency
 17 county committees, there has never been an attempt to
 18 reapportion the election method. Therefore, we are still
 19 electing members at large. And so, if you happen to live in a
 20 county that is majority white or nonminority, then you simply
 21 have to vote and be at the mercy of the voters.

22 I firmly believe that some effort should be made to
 23 reapportion the districts within the scope of USDA's voting
 24 authority, to allow for an adequate chance for an African-
 25 American to have the, to have the privilege of running, and with

1 the bebest, the bebest of the Federation of Public
 2 Cooperatives, Ralph Paige, and others, we tried to get it
 3 put in that legislation, some provisions to make sure there
 4 was some, some representation on the local committees. It
 5 was the Department's recommendation, in fairness to the
 6 Department. But when it got to the committee, it was
 7 amended out of the proposal. And, of course, we were
 8 outvoted because we were in the minority ourselves.

9 MR. CRUMB: I understand that quite well.

10 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: I think this is one of the areas
 11 this task force is going to take a look at specifically.
 12 There are a lot of ways to skin this cat, so to speak.
 13 There's a lot of ways to deal with the issue of appropriate
 14 representation, from the direct appointments from the
 15 secretary all the way down to accumulative voting, the
 16 different kinds of ways to deal with it. And I assume,
 17 that's just one of the things they're going to look at and
 18 make recommendations on.

19 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: MELVIN CRUMB

20 Very good. I certainly appreciate your commitment to
 21 that effort.

22 I'll be real brief with the rest of my remarks.
 23 Getting back to the Farmers Home Administration and their method
 24 of collateralization of loans. This is the only lending
 25 institution that I know of that requires more than a 100 percent

1 of collateral to secure a loan. Let me explain that just a
 2 second. Not only do they ask for a 100 percent of collateral,
 3 they ask for the permission to collateralize any future purchase
 4 of assets that you might acquire.
 5 That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of.
 6 I know of no bank that would change the rules of the term, or
 7 the terms of the loan after you had closed it. But they state
 8 that we ask to collateralize any future purchases, or any future
 9 acquisitions that you might acquire. And so, I don't understand
 10 how the law could apply in that case. It's like saying I'm
 11 going to name the baby before it's born, so to speak. And I
 12 really think that that needs to be looked into.
 13 It's been touched on, the difficulty of getting loans,
 14 and the lateness by which these loans are acquired, and that
 15 sort of thing. The one thing that I think USDA could do to help
 16 African-American farmers would be to create a vehicle by which
 17 we could have discriminatory cases reviewed by an independent
 18 agency. And when I say independent, I mean independent of any
 19 USDA personnel, a truly outside agency. And that would be
 20 nondiscriminatory, no preferences given, no liabilities incurred
 21 because they have no USDA ties. And I believe if you did that,
 22 you would certainly serve the African-American farmers well.
 23 Thank you for this opportunity.
 24
 25 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much.

1 But the reality is that collectively, the Virgin Islands
 2 represents a relatively small land area, compared to any state
 3 of the United States.
 4 Furthermore, the demand for this limited resource is
 5 so great that a cost of purchasing land is extremely high and
 6 prohibitive. The result is that we have many small farm owners
 7 who are -- what a very -- we have very small landowners with
 8 farm operations. Have only a few who are fortunate to inherit
 9 large tracts of lands, sometimes include five to 600 acres of
 10 land.
 11 It should be seriously noted that although some of
 12 these small operations, these farm operations are small, they
 13 are, however, lucrative and productive, as the result of proper
 14 crop and livestock selection, as well as cultural practices.
 15 As stated before, a second in the aspect of our
 16 farming is the extremely high degree of diversification that our
 17 farmers practice. For example, on any given farm, there might
 18 be fruit, vegetable, herb, livestock, poultry, and agricultural
 19 productions. And for this reason, our farmers don't consider
 20 production by the acre, but rather by the plot or fractions of
 21 an acre.
 22 Now, these concerns may seem trivial to some, but when
 23 farmers apply for benefits to, for example, the AFD program,
 24 these relatively result in long, cumbersome hours of work, and
 25 excessive documentation following a natural disaster. On a one-

1 Our next speaker is Lewis Peterson, Jr. from St.
 2 Thomas, U.S. Virgin Island.
 3 COMMENT BY: LEWIS PETERSON, JR.
 4 Good morning, Mr. Secretary Glickman, all members on
 5 the platform, all members of the task force, fellow mistreaters,
 6 farmers, and friends of agriculture. My name is Lewis Peterson,
 7 and I'm the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of
 8 Agriculture in the U.S. Virgin Islands. On behalf of our
 9 department and the farmers of the Virgin Islands, I bring you
 10 warm and tropical greetings.
 11 I've prepared a statement and summary, and if I don't
 12 get to the end, I will submit it. While we, in the Virgin
 13 Islands, are associated with the Southeastern region of the
 14 United States, we wanted you to be aware that we represent a
 15 uniqueness within that region. But perhaps other states can
 16 identify with it.
 17 The basis for this difference is the small land areas
 18 on which farmers operate in the Virgin Islands, and the
 19 diversified nature of the farm states. The size of most farms
 20 is relatively small and drastically different from those here on
 21 the U.S. mainland. For example, one farmer in the contiguous 50
 22 states, he have a farm operation that is hundreds of thousands
 23 of acres in size. A farm in the Virgin Islands may have a half,
 24 one, or two acres of farmland. Naturally, by standards, by the
 25 standards of others, these may be characterized as garden plots.

1 acre farm, for example, sometimes as many as 50 to 60 forms of
 2 the same kind must be completed. At the same time, a devastated
 3 thousand acre farm in Georgia might generate only a single sheet
 4 of documentation to collect all the relevant information needed
 5 to file the claim.
 6 The point here, is that adjusters are not accustomed
 7 to this extra work, which must also encompass calculations of
 8 each crop on the basis of a fraction of an acre. Some take
 9 crops with which they are not familiar. And they become
 10 discouraged and do not demonstrate the extra effort necessary to
 11 complete the process. Consequently, our farmers also become
 12 discouraged.
 13 This was very evident after the Virgin Islands farmers
 14 were devastated after hurricane Hugo in 1989. However, I am
 15 pleased to mention, that after hurricane Marilyn in 1995, as a
 16 result of efforts on the part of our local department, and a
 17 team of hard-working adjusters from right here in Valdosta,
 18 Georgia, our experience have change for the better.
 19 Time is running out. I would like to make three
 20 recommendations at this point. One is that in addition to
 21 federal adjusters, we should certify, train, and qualify, staff
 22 of the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture as crop loss
 23 adjusters. This would ensure input from federal and local
 24 perspectives, while providing the necessary technical input,
 25 awareness, and sensitivity to local concerns and issues.

1 Two, develop crop loss forms that, perhaps, can
2 accommodate multiple crops and multiple farm operations.

3 Three, combine federal and local resources to collect
4 data, to generate database information for crops of the Virgin
5 Islands, since this is a main problem as well.

6 We maintain also, that it's unfair to require that in
7 that area outside the U.S. mainland, have at least ten producers
8 for the crop for which they are -- must be designated eligibly,
9 while on the U.S. mainland, only five is required.

10 We also have other concerns, but since my time is up,
11 I'm going to submit the rest. Thank you.

12

13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. I would like to get one
14 of the ushers to collect the comments, if you would, from
15 Mr. Peterson.

16 Our next speaker, Lamar Corbin. And I do not have
17 here a location listed. So, I will not guess. If you
18 could tell us where you are from when you come, I would
19 appreciate it.

20 COMMENT BY: LAMAR CORBIN

21 To the Panel, Mr. Secretary, Congressman Bishop --
22 sir, I probably, I think I met you in the lobby -- to all
23 our good constituents able to be here today, I just wanted
24 to speak on behalf of the small minority farmers.

25 MR. COSBY: Would you tell us where you're from,

1 thing we are lacking is an opportunity. An opportunity to be
2 able to have the same type of financial access as the majority
3 farmer. Because when the majority farmer is capable of going
4 down to a county farm bureau office, farm credit, to get funds
5 for his operation, he has the old, good old network, good old
6 boy network, that's what it is. Anyway, it's just like saying
7 to the minority farmer, if you go there and everybody here need
8 a cat to be able to operate a farm, to the minority farmer, when
9 he gets there to ask for a cat, all the cats are gone, you know.
10 So, that's what we're saying this morning is only thing we are
11 lacking is the opportunity.

12 And I wanted to also touch on the youth farmers. When
13 you speak of a youth farmer today, they're going out. They're
14 not even in existence because the older farmers are telling the
15 youth farmers not to get into that. Because on every hand
16 you're going to be denied. Every door you go to is going to be
17 closed. If you don't have any assistance in the county agent's
18 office from USDA, when you go to the bank, like some of the
19 other speakers were speaking earlier, they're already had there
20 good old network in there. They call over there, you're going
21 to be denied when get there also.

22 So, like I said earlier, if you needed a cat, whenever
23 you go to the next office to get the cat, the cat's not there.
24 And so, all we're saying is we need an opportunity. An
25 opportunity, not only to expand, but an opportunity only to

1 please?

2 MR. CORBIN: Yes, sir. And my name is Lamar Corbin
3 and I'm from Colquitt County.

4 MR. COSBY: Georgia?

5 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: LAMAR CORBIN

6 Moultrie, Georgia. Well, my concern today is, the
7 Civil Rights Listening Forum is about the opportunities to
8 expand a small farmer. Some of the rights that we've asked for
9 it to be expanded, to be able to expand, we've been denied.

10 When you go to some of the county agriculture
11 departments they are -- recommend other departments that you can
12 go to, and be able to get help from other county agency
13 assistance offices. But when you go there, they'll take all the
14 information there from you. They'll allow you to fill out
15 different applications. And then once they've received all this
16 information, they'll have you under the impression that you are
17 going to get help. But when you go back in, probably two or
18 three days, or a week, they'll deny it.

19 And then, I went to one of the farm credit offices in
20 Moultrie, where they were told my assets was close to a
21 \$150,000, and I was at \$92,000 to the good. And then they gave
22 me a few days, and then the next thing you know, I'm denied.
23 And they didn't give us, "Well, we're not able to help you right
24 now."

25 We're only saying, as a minority farmer, the only

1 operate. By not having the funding when you need the spray to
2 spray your produce with -- well, I'm a produce farmer -- when
3 you need the chemicals to spray your product with, you're not --
4 you don't have it because maybe your funding has ran low. Say,
5 for instance, if the chemicals come in a five-gallon container,
6 you only need a gallon. You can't hardly afford the gallon
7 because you don't have the funding.

8 And so, what we're saying is, there needs to be better
9 informatory information that we can get from the county agent
10 office when we go there. They're telling you that they have all
11 this information. And when you get there, it's not there. A
12 lot of the forms, they're not, they're not even there to give
13 the information you need to operate with.

14 Thank you.

15

16 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker, James Mays, from Leslie,
17 Georgia.

18 COMMENT BY: JAMES MAYS

19 I'm James Mays from Leslie, Georgia, Lee County. And
20 my concern -- I've had all those problems with the Farmers Home
21 Administration. You apply for a loan in October, you get it in
22 May the following year. And, as a result of that, you finally
23 go out of business.

24 But there are other concerns that I see: And I work
25 with the public... I'm on the County Commission in Lee County,

1 Georgia. And I'm interested in the general welfare of people.
2 One of those situations is tobacco. I talked with the
3 Department of Agriculture about tobacco several years ago, I
4 think, up in Perry. And the people, because of the money
5 involved, and the people who are involved in it, because they
6 made it sound like that was a no-no. Disregarding the fact that
7 there are something like 250,000 people a year, in the nation,
8 die directly and indirectly from the cause of tobacco.

9 Now, maybe the Department might create a research
10 situation where they could develop a genetic type of tobacco
11 that wouldn't be so deadly. Or, the other thing they could do,
12 is to cut it out, and provide the farmers with crops that would
13 be productive, profitable and healthy to the nation.

14 I think Senator Dole got -- heard some problems on
15 that tobacco issue. But as -- this, these kinds of things that
16 we need to assist the general public in becoming productive, and
17 yet healthy, in its assets to the nation's wealth and to the
18 nation's well-being.

19 The other area that I was concerned about, that the
20 small farmers had been on the agenda in the Department of
21 Agriculture since the '60s. And it was a very important issue.
22 And the Department of Agriculture never -- well, I guess the
23 congress never actually defined what they -- they were
24 interested in family farms. And this issue, in fact,
25 departmental -- family farming really was, was never defined.

1 And therefore, family farmers never got help. And they have
2 been going out of business since, since the '50s. You know,
3 they just sort of -- whether it's attrition, or just slowly
4 smothering us, smothering the small farmers to death.

5 This -- in fact, the whole, the rural areas are being
6 deindustrialized by the major corporations. And the major
7 corporations are sending their operations somewhere else.
8 They're in Mexico and anywhere they can slave, or cheap, very
9 cheap labor to operate. And as a result, you know, I'm not sure
10 how long we are going to be able to buy those foods if we have
11 to, if we just had to pay freight on them, if all of us are out
12 of jobs, and if all of us are out of work, and with all of us
13 out of production.

14 I -- it appeared to me that, people, that there should
15 be some real effort put forth by the creative thinkers to do
16 some good things for the poor people; there's no problem in
17 doing things for the rich and for the big companies. You know,
18 they create a situation where the black -- with this kind of
19 war, and then we can spread a budget from -- we could increase
20 the budget from ten million -- ten billion dollars more than we
21 need to finance the war, and then poor people are going hungry.

22 And it appears, it appears that the situation is that
23 a lot of these programs were not designed to, to, to solve the
24 problem, to feed the poor, to assist the depressed, the
25 disadvantaged. They were designed so that wealthy people could

1 be more wealthy. For instance, the food stamp program. I went
2 out and make -- in the '60's, and helped create the situation
3 that got, that finally got that passed. But when they got it
4 passed, it was not to feed the hungry; they didn't seem to care
5 about them. It was to feed the supermarkets. And, you know,
6 and to make them, instead of giving the money for food to the
7 poor, they, you know, they called it funny money. So, when the
8 poor person got it, then he wanted to buy something with it.
9 Once they let the supermarket get it, they can buy everything
10 with it -- or anything.

11 These are the kinds of situations that are deep in the
12 roots of our problems. And if we don't get at them, we're going
13 to continue to have problems. And we're disinclined at first,
14 we're going to have a lot of people dying for the lack of
15 services.

16
17 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. At this time, at this
18 time ladies and gentlemen, we're going to take a ten minute
19 break. We ask that you be back in ten minutes and that
20 will be 11:35. Thank you.

21 (After a short break the session continued as
22 follows:)

23 MR. COSBY: I'm going to call the next speaker. Our
24 next speaker, if you will, I'm going to ask her to be
25 coming to the microphone as we get settled down. It's

1 Mamie Dawkins from Graceville, Florida. Did she make it
2 back from the break? You're here -- right here. If you
3 would come to the mike, and state your name and where
4 you're from, and make your presentation, I would appreciate
5 it.

6 MS. DAWKINS: Good morning.
7 MR. COSBY: You might want to speak right into the
8 microphone, if you would.

9 COMMENT BY: MAMIE DAWKINS

10 Good morning. I'm Mamie Dawkins from Graceville,
11 Florida, north Florida area. We are local contractors there
12 and --

13 MR. COSBY: Speak a little closer into the mike, if
14 possible.

15 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: MAMIE DAWKINS

16 I wasn't looking to get here first, be first. But
17 anyway, we are local contractors. And it's hard that, you now,
18 we are in with Farmers Home. We do Farmers Home grants and
19 things, but we haven't been able to do houses yet, build new
20 homes. I mean that, we put in, carry people in, and they tell
21 us that you have money, they have money. But when we get in
22 there, the paperwork is mountains. And when we get in there,
23 they don't have money, and we have to, you know, they put them
24 on hold. And next thing we know, somebody else has gotten the
25 job every time.

1 And another thing is my father farmed, you know, all
 2 of his life until he was disabled. And after he died, Farmers
 3 Home just called up his loan, in like, 30 days, less than thirty
 4 days. And we had to pay it off, which we did. But we --it was
 5 already up-to-date. But we, and, you know, just having to --
 6 they just called up his loan, just like that. And it was
 7 already paid up years. And so, it is a lot of discrimination in
 8 Farmers Home against local contractors, against farmers; because
 9 I'm on both ends.

10 We, like, we -- my husband and I are local contractors
 11 and when we -- you know, what they are doing. We are registered
 12 in Jackson County, Washington County, and Herndon County. But
 13 the only thing we've been able to get is just grant work. You
 14 know, we haven't been able to really build houses because, I
 15 don't know, I guess all of the bureaucratic stuff. And so, I
 16 just wanted to voice that complaint.

17 I feel that I was kind of caught off guard being next.
 18 So, anyway, I just wanted to say that and I'm glad to have the
 19 opportunity to come. And I've enjoyed listening to everybody
 20 talking, you know, because I can identify with what they are
 21 saying. So, this is a good forum. Thank you.

22

23 MR. COSBY: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is
 24 Jerry Fields from Dixie, Georgia.

25 COMMENT BY: JERRY FIELDS

1 through the government, when they asked me to go and help fight
 2 in Vietnam, I did. We're asking them to help us save our homes
 3 and it's not being done, through discrimination. They can put
 4 any kind of label on it they want, but it's just truly
 5 discrimination when you can't go and get a few dollars to help
 6 you along. And once you get this loan, they require you to pay
 7 it all back under disasters and everything else. And once you
 8 can't pay it all back, then they won't give you a loan again.
 9 From what I understand, the reason it was set up, was to help
 10 the people who were in -- you know, who were unable to go and
 11 get a loan.

12 So, I'm just asking that we look into it as -- I'm
 13 proud of this forum being put together and I hope some good
 14 comes out of it. Because that's going to be the only survivor
 15 for the minority farmer, the predominately black farmers.

16 Thank you.

17

18 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker,
 19 Patricia Williams from Two Eggs, Florida.

20 COMMENT BY: PATRICIA WILLIAMS

21 Good morning. My name is Patricia Williams. I'm a
 22 minority contractor from Two Eggs, Florida. I bring you
 23 greetings from the fair city of Two Eggs. Giving honor to the
 24 Secretary Glickman, Mr. Reed, Congressman Bishop and to each of
 25 you in your respective places.

1 I'd just like to say good morning to everyone. Mr.
 2 Secretary, my fellow farmers, my name is Jerry Fields, and I am,
 3 too, from Brooks County. I want to reiterate, Brooks County.
 4 I have here my farm loan. I'm a beginning farmer. I've never
 5 borrowed from Farmers Home. I've tried. I got a book
 6 containing \$13,000, which is nothing compared to -- to help me
 7 to start to continue my farming. I don't know why it's so
 8 difficult for them to help us. They make the -- they tell you
 9 you can borrow the money, then they make the qualifications so
 10 difficult, that you can't get any money anyway. The system is
 11 there, but the qualifications for the minority farmer, you
 12 can't, you can't qualify. So, they deny you.

13 At that time, you're starting to try and -- I farm out
 14 of my pocket, through the help of my fellow farmers. Some of
 15 the other farmers that squeeze a little bit of theirs to help
 16 me. Now, we need help, an opportunity. We are probably the
 17 best farmers in this nation, the minority farmers, because the
 18 big farmer's going to get out there and plant anything. It's
 19 the minority farmers that work for them that do. And all we're
 20 asking for is an opportunity to, to help us to continue what
 21 we've been doing for years and years and years.

22 I see people losing their farms. I have a son that
 23 has to go to college. I want to see my son go to college also.
 24 I want to see him go to college and possibly come back and take
 25 over my farm. I want to be able to leave him a legacy. But

1 First of all, I have several things I would like to
 2 share. My husband and I are past farmers and I want to share
 3 some of the impact that the decisions previously made have had
 4 on us, and particularly me as a minority female. We farmed for
 5 17 years, and some of the things that have been stated here
 6 happened to us. You apply for a loan. People tell you what you
 7 need, as opposed to what you ask for. If you ask for \$10,000,
 8 you get five, regardless of the paperwork you fill out. If you
 9 ask -- apply for the loan in October, as what's been stated, you
 10 get the monies in May. That's already past the time that you
 11 should have already had your crops planted. So, we're being set
 12 up for failure.

13 We went through that for 17 years. And it's not just
 14 with those offices when you sell your crops. Even though you
 15 have your government support prices, if you take peanuts to the
 16 market, your peanuts are set three's, as opposed to the others,
 17 are not -- so, you don't get the support prices that you've been
 18 promised. So, how can you make your loan payment and all those
 19 other things? If you take corn to the market, they say it has
 20 alpha toxin. Show me. Well, they find one grain of corn, corn
 21 with a dark spot, then they're going to penalize your whole
 22 load. And those are the things that we were faced with.

23 And being young farmers, not having the support that
 24 we needed in the county, you had a person working for the
 25 county, and that's just what they are doing. They're not

1 working for the people. They're not going to sit down with you
2 and see. "Well, hey, there's -- got a problem here, how can we
3 help you?" Instead, they're going to help get rid of you.

4 So, after so many years, my husband and I have decided
5 well, we're not going to take this anymore. And, of course, I
6 was fortunate, because I had a career to fall back on. I'm a
7 registered nurse by profession. So, I was stuck with nursing.
8 Well, even so, now I'm more involved because of the things I
9 learned along the way, and am continuing to learn.

10 I've had an opportunity to meet Mr. Reed at another
11 function. And one of the things that he said which impressed me
12 -- and of course, I'm quite vocal and if I don't like something,
13 I usually say something anyway. But he made the statement,
14 never allow a person to treat you in a way that you feel is not
15 right. And if we're going to proceed, this is the idea and the
16 attitude that we're going to have to take. We're going to have
17 to be more vocal, more visible in the communities. And we're
18 going to -- we can let people know that we're not satisfied with
19 what is being done and/or said. Because many times people do
20 things to us, and they think it's okay because we don't say
21 anything. Well, it's not okay; and that's the reason we're here
22 today.

23 A couple of other things that I wanted to mention,
24 when I start looking at the stresses and all those things.
25 There's a lot going on here; that's not just farming. We talk

1 to take 50 million acres of land out of agriculture
2 production; is that right?

3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Are you talking about the
4 conservation reserve program? I'm trying to figure out
5 what, what exactly is what you're talking about.

6 MR. SLAUGHTER: I happened to have read an article
7 that -- where several years ago, it was a plan that came
8 up, that they was to take 40 million acres of land out of
9 agriculture to make it more competitive, and through
10 competition and everything about it.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Well, that -- in the 1980's,
12 Congress came up with a plan, which USDA has implemented,
13 called the Conservation Reserve Program, which pulled about
14 30 million acres out for a ten-year period of time. Where
15 farmers could take their land out of the qualified, as
16 highly erodible land, and would get payments to take that
17 land out of production for ten years. Those contracts are
18 expiring, or have expired. And the Congress, in the last
19 farm bill, authorized the continuation of that program.
20 Maybe not at that same level, but they authorized it to
21 continue.

22 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: EDDIE SLAUGHTER

23 Mr. Secretary, my complaint is that I really don't
24 want to fight my government anymore. I don't want to be mad
25 anymore, I don't want to be angry anymore. I have asked my

1 about stopping people from being dependent and making them more
2 independent. Well, we're leaning away from that; we're making
3 people more dependent. If you take away everything that a
4 person has, how can he be independent? There's no way.

5 And to the committee, to each of you, I challenge you.
6 I urge you to come up with a plan to help provide some type of
7 support. It's like when we're training children, you don't want
8 to take away a negative behavior, you need something positive to
9 replace that behavior with. And we need something to replace
10 what people are losing in farming. And when you come up with
11 your recommendations, we need some type of technical support,
12 and we need someone that's going to follow up and make sure that
13 whatever decisions you make are being carried out.

14 Thank you.

15
16 MR. COSBY: Thank you. Our next speaker is Eddie
17 Slaughter from Buena Vista, Georgia. If you would come to
18 the microphone and state your name and where you're from,
19 I would appreciate it.

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: Good morning.

21 MR. COSBY: Sir, if you could get real close to the
22 microphone. Thank you.

23 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes. Congressman Bishop, Mr.
24 Secretary. I -- first I've got one question that I need
25 answered that I'd like to ask. I think USDA had an agenda

1 county supervisors, I've also went to Athens and Atlanta -- I
2 think that's the state office -- and asked them that -- forget
3 about writing down my note, forget about a debt recovery buyout,
4 and allow me to simply pay off my farm, instead of them posing
5 to me that I quit a \$60,000-a-year job to go into farming where
6 I'm at the mercy of racism and discrimination. That's just how
7 I feel when I deal with Farmers Home. I don't have nothing good
8 that I can say about it. There are some good people that are
9 there. But I asked them to allow me to pay \$1,000 a month, and
10 they simply get out of my business and I'll pay my farm off.
11 Right now, I'm scheduled to pay my farm off in 40 years. I can
12 pay \$1,000 a month, \$12,000 a year; I can pay it off in 17
13 years.

14 And I would like to know why can't I do this? I don't
15 want to be a part of this system that does not work. I do not
16 want to be a part of this system. I do not want to be -- feel
17 like I'm humiliated and degraded and I can't speak my mind when
18 I get there. And before I got up before you-all in here today,
19 he said, Slaughter, be careful what you say because the state
20 office is here. If I'm going to lose my farm, I'm going to lose
21 it fighting. I am tired of the system (Applause).

22 You know, they get up here and they speak nice. It's
23 159 counties in the state of Georgia. Exclude Fort Benning;
24 you've got 158 counties in the state of Georgia and you don't
25 have one elected black person on any county committee. If they

1 is, then somebody correct me. There's 158 counties here in the
 2 state of Georgia. We don't have one; that is a fact.
 3 And we're here -- I am so tired of fighting. I am so
 4 tired of trying to produce a crop and they will go ahead on and
 5 freeze my money in the bank. No other lending institution in
 6 America, or the world, would be allowed to do these kind of
 7 things. It's a good ole boy system out there and we can't win.
 8 You can't fight it; you can't beat it. The only thing I'm
 9 asking y'all, to allow me to pay off my farm off my job, and
 10 they just simply get out of my farming business, and out
 11 completely. And the ones of us that have jobs, that want to be
 12 able to do this, why is there such a problem?

13 I don't want you -- I don't want nobody giving me
 14 nothing. I'm not asking for welfare. I'm not asking for
 15 handouts or give-me-down or give away. I don't want give away;
 16 I don't want welfare. I simply want to pay for what I got. And
 17 let me have my farm without constantly every 15 -- every three
 18 to four months, I'm fighting Farmers Home for foreclosure or
 19 something I done violated, or where I did -- stumped my toe, or
 20 something I did, or didn't do. I am so tired of it. And I just
 21 want to ask you, can there be something done for us, that the
 22 Lord has blessed us to be productive members of society to pay
 23 off our farms without having to go through all the hoops that I
 24 have to jump through on a regular basis?

25 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Mr. Slaughter. Mr. Slaughter?

1 I think, I think if -- you've asked some questions and I
 2 don't know the answer to your question because I don't
 3 know, I don't know something about it. But I guess what
 4 you're saying is, what you're saying is you'd like to pay
 5 off your loan in fixed payments every month, but, and I
 6 gather, as part of that, you would like to be alleviated
 7 from the Farmers Home requirements that they currently put
 8 on you in terms of farming requirements then. Is that
 9 right?

10 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes, sir. Those things that are
 11 simply, I figure that are subjective, things that are
 12 double standards. There are so many things that I'm just
 13 tired of fighting. I simply just want to pay off my farm
 14 and let me and my family -- I have an aunt with cancer.
 15 She, when she found out that it, my farm was being
 16 foreclosed on, you-all but kill her; you-all will really
 17 kill her.

18 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah. Let me ask you this. Is
 19 your farm in a foreclosure status now?

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: No, sir. I -- Mr. Johnson out of the
 21 state office has asked me that I work with the county
 22 agents and they are suggesting that I get another loan. I
 23 really just want them to leave me alone.

24 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Who is your -- is your
 25 congressman, Mr. Bishop, here?

1 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes, he is. And I voted for him, too,
 2 because (Laughter) -- I ran on the ticket and got elected
 3 with you to the school board when we elected the Sheriff.
 4 So you, you need to at least let that -- and again, I'm not
 5 talking about welfare, Brother Congressman.

6 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Yeah, you and I talked about the
 7 situation.

8 MR. SLAUGHTER: And I was trying to work through them
 9 and I'm not trying to talk against them. I'm just tired of
 10 fighting them.

11 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

12 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Thank you.

14 MR. COSBY: Just a quick announcement. There is a
 15 green van in the parking lot, a green Mitsubishi van with
 16 the lights on. If you would like to get that started, as
 17 you head home, you might want to go out and cut those
 18 lights off.

19 Our next speaker is Robert Hawkins from Newton,
 20 Georgia.

21 COMMENT BY: ROBERT HAWKINS

22 Hi, I'm Robert Hawkins from Newton, Georgia. To the
 23 USDA Civil Rights Action Team, I would like to explain. My son
 24 did an FHA. He came up one year \$1400 behind. He put in the
 25 loan for another year, it was turned down. And I had, my farm

1 was coming up for foreclosure. My son put in an application for
 2 -- to buy my farm. It was simple -- turn it down. I want to
 3 know was there anything could be did about it?

4 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Would you talk to him?

5 MR. COSBY: Mr. Duncan's going to talk to you.

6 MR. HAWKINS: Okay.

7 MR. DUNCAN: We'll have to get the specifics on it.

8 MR. COSBY: All right.

9 MR. DUNCAN: If you'll see me when the meeting
 10 adjourns, we'll check into it.

11 MR. HAWKINS: Thank you.

13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 We're going to move on, and I don't have the exact
 15 city or town listed here, but it says Portia Holmes from
 16 Florida. Did I do that correctly? Please correct me.

17 MS. HOLMES: No.

18 MR. COSBY: Come on up, if you would, please. I don't
 19 mind being corrected.

20 COMMENT BY: PORTIA HOLMES

21 Good morning; my name's Portia Homes. I'm from
 22 Marianna, Florida, also. My complaint is also against Farmers
 23 Home. I have not been involved with them as long as many of you
 24 in here, but long enough. In 1994, my husband and I acquired a
 25 plot of land from Farmers Home through a program that was set up

1 for beginning minority farmers. We were told -- given
2 information by Farmers Home in bits and pieces. We had to go in
3 on one day, we were told one thing. We'd go back another day,
4 we were told another day -- another thing. I have spent money
5 in gas, phone calls. Eventually, in about four and a half
6 months, we acquired the land. And it took a lot to get it. And
7 we were in Farmers Home almost three to four days a week,
8 sitting at the desk with a credit manager trying to get the
9 land.

10 In 1996, in January, we decided that we would build a
11 home on this property. We were not going to build a new home,
12 we were going to buy an old home, move it out onto the property,
13 have it remodeled and add rooms to it. That's the best way to
14 go, folks. In order to do this, we had to have land
15 subordinated.

16 Starting in January, we put in an application. We
17 filled out all that was needed to be done in order to get the
18 subordination rolling. We went to our local bank, we applied
19 for our loan. Our money has been waiting in our local bank in
20 order for us to be -- to build our home. The money was approved
21 by the bank in March of 1996. And finally, in October of '96,
22 we finally were allowed to get our subordination from Farmers
23 Home.

24 Our house should be already built. It's been a full
25 year. Contractors are the Dawkins family, who's already spoken.

1 understand, and no one is trying to help you to understand it.
2 So, I can understand how someone who might have an education
3 that is below mine -- I'm not saying that they aren't
4 intelligent, but even intelligent folks can't understand Farmers
5 Home.

6 Thank you very much.

8 MR. COSBY: Thank you.

9 And our next speaker is Walter Franklin from
10 Graceville, Florida. If you would state your name and your
11 location, I would appreciate it.

12 COMMENT BY: WALTER FRANKLIN

13 My name is Walter Franklin. I'm from Graceville,
14 Florida, and I'm certainly happy to be here. And I thank the
15 council on being -- taking such a noble step toward looking into
16 these situations and allegations.

17 I would like to speak briefly on some of the things
18 that we have encountered. We have been blessed, the Lord has
19 blessed us. And our parents are deceased and they left the
20 family of eight children land. And we haven't been able, after
21 the death of our father and mother, it's still in debt. And we
22 was served a foreclosure notice. And given such a short time to
23 respond. But by the foresight of our parents, they, you know,
24 left a little something and we was able to, to work with that.
25 And we was going throughout -- we was going to the different

1 The major problem is they do not want the Dawkins family to be
2 our contractor. They suggested names of people who were not
3 African-Americans.

4 In order to get our land subordinated, we owned a home
5 in town. This home in town is paid for. We had to take a
6 second mortgage out on that home. We own a 163.1 acres of land,
7 and it is over secured. Over secured. We have improved the
8 land 100 percent, and then they still needed our home in town in
9 order for us to get our subordination. So, if we don't do well,
10 we lose everything except the shirts on our back.

11 Another complaint I have of Farmers Home is that the
12 credit manager in our particular county, that's Jackson County,
13 Florida, has been in that position for 30 years. That is too
14 long for a person to be in a money position on a county level.
15 Other government agencies float their personnel in, out;
16 five-year stints, six-year stints, whatever. He has been in
17 position for 30 years, and someone needs to look at the record
18 books at how many African-American farms in Jackson County,
19 Florida, have been foreclosed on. They have been foreclosed on
20 since I've been in the county, just four years. He is
21 professional, he is smooth, he is nice -- he is killing us.

22 I want to bring all this up because I am also a
23 registered nurse. I consider myself an intelligent person. I
24 walk into the office, the paperwork, the language, the lingo,
25 just everything is foreign. It is nothing that you can

1 offices and they would tell us what we needed to do, that each
2 child could put up an acre of land, and thus and so. And they
3 had that all figured out and everything.

4 But to make a long story short, we had to really do
5 some hustling and trying to get around to get the remaining
6 monies. And we finally came up with a cashier's check and we
7 went in a little early before the deadline date and they almost
8 refused to take the cashier's check. And they said, Well,
9 they'd have to check it out to see whether -- you know. And
10 this is just one of the things. And we had a little, it was a
11 little over what the amount was supposed to have been. And they
12 said, Well, if it was, it had to be \$10 or more for them to give
13 us, you know, the change. So, we sat there a good hour. And
14 they said, Well, no one is in, and different things like this.
15 But we just -- so, after all in all, we just said just keep the
16 change, you know, but -- amen.

17 And we're working with the farm and I've been out of
18 farming -- I farmed, you know, growing up, grew up on a farm.
19 And so that, you know, it made us -- we worked real hard and
20 everything. So, I said, Well, when I get grown, I don't want to
21 see no farm. But eventually, we went back to that, to the farm
22 status. And we have the land, it is paid for, but we're so --
23 we can't hardly do anything with it because we don't have any
24 money. And we never -- you know, we go through banks and we
25 automatically know that's -- you know, so, that's turned down.

1 And the water preshared program came about, and we was
2 able to start doing some things on the farm, fencing in and
3 doing land work. And they made it so rough. And Ms. Williams
4 there, was -- her and her husband was doing the work. They
5 suggested and made, and suggestions at the office that -- they
6 said, Well, we can't tell you who to get. But at the same time,
7 they was telling us. And as long as they figured we was going
8 to get who they really recommended, they, you know, the guy
9 showed us all the things that, you know, in the program that he
10 would do. And when they finally find out that we was going
11 another route, they took it away.

12 And to make a long story short, we have just gone
13 through a lot. But we're still struggling there and we've also
14 formed up with the Farmers Cooperative trying to institute and
15 recommend that in hopes that we can save the black farmers in
16 the community. Not just this community, the communities in
17 Jackson County, but we're hoping it has a far-reaching effect.
18 And I appreciate this time that you-all have given us. And I
19 pray, and I certainly pray that all of this will come to some
20 good.

21 Thank you very much.

22
23 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

24 Our next speaker is Leon Crum from Ernsburg, South
25 Carolina.

1 African-Americans to get a chance to enter into farming. I'd
2 like to go back into farming. I know that would be impossible
3 because I know I'll need a quarter of a million dollars to
4 start.

5 It should be also -- each time we go in those Farmers
6 Home offices, FSA offices, most of the people we see in there
7 are often white people. We need some kind of commitment from
8 you or Farmers Home to improve, improve employment opportunity
9 for African-Americans on the local level. It's nice that
10 Washington can have these hearings and come down and hear what
11 we've got to say. But the buck stops at the county level. They
12 are the ones who are making the decisions.

13 Farmers tell me, and I know from the fact that my
14 duties on that application, that Farmers Home plan, unless you
15 have some real knowledge of how to fill out these papers, it's
16 impossible for you to get through it. Let alone a farmer with
17 a fifth or sixth or seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh
18 grade education. You need to do something about those loan
19 applications.

20 Those things -- if you really want to see where black
21 farmers are being discriminated at, look at when they receive
22 their loan servicing packages. Then you can compare -- I will
23 not -- if you got a check list, those counties got a check list,
24 they go down this check list and they say, Did you receive a
25 full application? All right. After you got that, you receive

1 COMMENT BY: LEON CRUM:

2 Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming to South Carolina
3 for Farm Aid. Also thank you for coming to Florence for its
4 tobacco meeting. It was four cars of us coming from South
5 Carolina over 500 miles. I would like for some of those folks
6 to stand now, if you could? Also, we've got 1890 from South
7 Carolina. Could you please stand?

8 (People stood.)

9 A couple of things that I wanted to present to you. My
10 brother and I farmed. We were sold out when Farmers Home was
11 Farmers Home, not FSA. We farmed vegetables and hogs. Now I
12 work for a federation; thank God for that. On the county
13 committee, we have a TV program that we do every Friday morning.
14 We spent three weeks talking about the county committee
15 elections. In a six-county area, over 10,000 ballots sent out
16 and less than a thousand got returned. A lot of those ballots
17 get sent to the wrong address, to the wrong people. Farmers are
18 afraid to send them back in; a lot of them don't even understand
19 what it's all about. We need more education for them.

20 African-Americans have the greatest -- the hardest
21 opportunity to get their yields changed. Often times, white
22 farmers can go in and not even have a proven yield, but they can
23 get yields updated. And it's also reflected in their cat.
24 coverage, in terms of how they get their money on those loans.

25 The current regulations are making it impossible for

1 a full application, and that's when we will see, when did you
2 offer that guy his loan servicing options? I believe y'all put
3 that in the computer; the date's on there. If you compare that
4 when you, when you offer the black farmers compared to white
5 farmers, you'll see that, that, as I say, been discriminated
6 against black farmers.

7 And the last statement I'd like to make, sir, is that
8 since, since Farmers Home Administration has done nothing pretty
9 much for black farmers over the last, how long they've been
10 started. Can you, today, make the commitment that you will put
11 some programs in place that will assist minority farmers?
12

13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 Our next speaker is Arthur Rhyers. And please correct
15 me if I'm pronouncing that wrong, from Cottondale, Florida.
16 Please restate your name and location, please.

17 COMMENT BY: ARTHUR RHYERS

18 My name is Arthur Rhyers, Cottondale, Florida. My
19 concern about is the FH -- okay. My concern about is Farmers
20 Home Administration. Back in 1980, I went in Farmers Home
21 Administration to get a loan. And Charles Lear was the
22 administrator down there. He didn't even let me get in the
23 seat. He said, "Well, Arthur, you're not qualified." He didn't
24 even let me sit down. So, I just got my little cap and walked
25 on out and forgot about it, you know. And I didn't think it

1 were right, but then he told me that if I went into the bank,
 2 they'll loan me some money.
 3 So, now I done got me times now I done borrowed it
 4 out. So, I can't borrow no more money from the bank. So, I
 5 just got to go along just the best way I can and borrow what I
 6 can get. I worked through the state on low income, about
 7 \$15,000 a year. And -- but I'm a North Florida Co-Op manager
 8 and I'd like for all the North Florida Co-Op members to stand,
 9 up please. (People stood to applause) -- we ran our co-op farm
 10 and I hope we'll not need Charles Lear no more.

11 Thank you.

12

13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

14 Our next speaker, Kenneth Brown, from Buena Vista,
 15 Georgia.

16 COMMENT BY: KENNETH BROWN

17 Good afternoon. My name is Kenneth Brown from Buena
 18 Vista, Georgia. The last time I talked to you, Mr. Glickman, I
 19 had a problem; it just moved to a different spot. I've been
 20 fighting, I guess about two years, trying to get Farmers Home to
 21 reappraise my equipment. It took them two years to get to that
 22 part, but it only took Mr. Glickman two days. They reappraised
 23 it in two days. At that point, they went on to near recovery.
 24 I was -- I'm thankful for his authority. He called just as he
 25 said, Mr. Glickman. And that's why I'm here today, because of

1 lot smarter than I am, can figure out some of these problems
 2 that can give us some help.
 3 We, as minority farmers, need some help. Not because
 4 -- the regulation are there, like you said, the money's there,
 5 but when it gets down to Farmers Home, that's where it stops and
 6 it goes to a different route. They've got certain people that
 7 they won't loan money to. If you're not in that group, you
 8 don't get any money. Now, it may seem racial; it is racial. It
 9 may seem biased; it is biased. It may seem like the good ole
 10 boys; it is the good old boys. If you don't belong to a certain
 11 group, you can't get any money.

12 If I had money -- which I don't, but I work -- my
 13 credit would be better, my yields would be better. But in the
 14 process of the last two years I've been having to work and farm
 15 out of my pocket. Now, how you expect my yields to be as good
 16 as a man farming out of his pocket and a man's got an operating
 17 loan? You can't compare my yields with him, because if you do,
 18 they're going to look like I'm poor management; which I am.
 19 Poor productive too.

20 If you want to help us, and I know you are because you
 21 are here today. And I believe that you are a man of your word.
 22 Give us some opportunity, not only just write regulation, but
 23 put somebody down there to watch over them. Because just
 24 because you sent it there, Mr. Glickman, it doesn't mean that
 25 it's going to get to us.

1 him.
 2 If you-all weren't here, I wouldn't be here, because
 3 I, I rely on -- we, as minorities, we rely on our leaders to
 4 look out for us. We are not able to go to Washington, talk to
 5 the people. But we vote you in. And we expect -- and we rely
 6 on y'all to do something for us in return. We don't want
 7 anything that's given to us. We believe in working; we grew up
 8 working. As a black person you know work because that's all
 9 you've done. But let us get something in return for it.

10 I know I only have five minutes, but like Mr.
 11 Slaughter said, you get tired of fighting when you know you're
 12 going to get knocked down. But something in the back of you
 13 always pick you up and you move on. And I want to give thanks
 14 to my father because if it wasn't for him, he's 60 years. I've
 15 been with farming long, something would have changed by now, I
 16 wouldn't be here. But thankful for him, he pushed me on.

17 To the point where why blacks can't get any money. A
 18 lot of people push the responsibility and the blame to somebody
 19 else. Nobody wants to be responsible for turning a black person
 20 down. But where is the blame? If you go into Farmers Home, you
 21 can't get any money there. If you go to the bank, you can't get
 22 any money there. I just don't understand why nobody don't know
 23 why we can't get any money. Because I don't feel like I'm the
 24 only one out there that can't get any money. I believe that and
 25 that's why I'm here today. There's somebody here who is a whole

1 Okay. I'd like to thank the -- I'm from Buena Vista
 2 Georgia. My county agent is Macon County, Mr. Sammy Hall, he
 3 moved to Byron, Georgia, it's now Byron, Georgia, that's my
 4 county supervisor. I am -- I went past debt recovery, went to
 5 -- I am in debt recovery. But at the same time, the lending
 6 institution don't want to loan me money because of the amount of
 7 money that the Farmers Home is going to write off. Because they
 8 feel that Farmers Home is going to come back and say, "Hey, we
 9 gave you that money, now we're going to tax it on you."

10 I cannot make the payments on the real estate and pay
 11 all these back taxes and penalties. So, the lending
 12 institutions are afraid to loan me money. So, right now, I'm
 13 looking at -- matter of fact, you're looking at Chapter 12,
 14 because that's where -- there's no way I'm going to allow them
 15 to take my farm without a fight.

16 I'm relying on you Mr. Glickman to -- I know that
 17 everything is on hold as far as the net recovery and all of
 18 that, but -- I'm finished. Thank you.

19

20 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

21 Our next speaker, Alfred Walker from Monticello,
 22 Florida. Is Mr. Walker here?

23 COMMENT BY: ALFRED WALKER

24 My name is Alfred Walker from Monticello, Florida.
 25 I'm a member of the North Florida Farmers' Co-Op and I'd like

1 them to stand.
 2 (People stood)
 3 And our concern here Mr. Secretary, and Senator
 4 Sanford, and both staff, both panels. We have a great concern.
 5 I was on the farm from 1946 through 1966. My dad was a farmer.
 6 And we always were running against the wind when it come down to
 7 being a black farmer. I left and went to Vietnam in 1966. I
 8 left my mom and my dad, running against the wind on the farm.
 9 I gave my time in Vietnam. I came back home, my mom and dad
 10 encouraged me to go to college, which I did. Finished college;
 11 obtained four degrees, taught almost 30 years.
 12 And I'm retired, I'm back to that same farm that I
 13 left my daddy and mom on. Been sitting down since 1994, since
 14 I retired. I'm trying to find something to do, but like I've
 15 heard some of them said, I need money. And after hearing about
 16 how much money you can make on a small piece of land, I have
 17 enough to make me over \$75,000 a year. But thank God, my cousin
 18 right here, sitting here looking right at me, he has squeezed
 19 his time to farm our land to just keep it from growing up.
 20 Mr. Secretary, the only thing I ask you this morning,
 21 to let justice ring. We need money as black farmers and
 22 minorities. We need help. I live in Jefferson County,
 23 Monticello, Florida, and we have been denied many things as
 24 black farmers. Not only on the farm, many other things we have
 25 been denied of. And we are asking for help. I taught all these

1 I have enough coming in, I have an income.
 2 But I'm concerned about other farmers. I want to say
 3 this too. I'm not only concerned about the black farmers, there
 4 are white farmers out there suffering too. We, you know, we
 5 have other people too. It's not only the black. We have poor
 6 people who are suffering for funds.
 7 Thank you very much and I pray that you do what's
 8 right.
 9
 10 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 11 Our next speaker is George Hall from Boligee, Alabama.
 12 COMMENT BY: GEORGE HALL
 13 Good evening. That is George Hall from Boligee,
 14 Alabama. To the Honorable Secretary and the rest of the
 15 distinguished guests, to the commission, I would like to give
 16 you a kind of history of how I feel about Farmers Home
 17 Administration and the FSA office. I'm the sheriff in the
 18 county that I'm from. I need to say that, I guess, to allude
 19 back to it later. I experienced some difficulty with Farmers
 20 Home Administration back in the early '70's.
 21 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Which county are you from?
 22 MR. HALL: Green County, Alabama.
 23 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. I think I've heard about
 24 you.
 25 MR. HALL: You may have, but that's okay.

1 years, retired, would like to do some small farming, like truck
 2 farming. But I know I need money. And like I've heard some of
 3 them said, it's no use in me going, because they're going to
 4 disqualify me before I get there. And like they said, if you go
 5 to the bank in a small place like where I live, everybody know
 6 everybody. "When old Walker come, don't give him no money."
 7 So, we're just asking for you-all to place
 8 representatives in these counties that can make sure that we get
 9 our piece of the rock. Everybody want a piece of the rock; I
 10 do. And I don't like sitting down and I don't like freebies.
 11 And like a young man from Colquitt County said, we're not asking
 12 to expand. Give us something to work with what we have. If you
 13 can make that much on a small plot of land, appropriate me some
 14 money so I can get started. Just get me started, that's all we
 15 asking. We aren't asking you to do it for us. Just give us a
 16 start, give us a jump start and we'll go for it.
 17 The black man has built this country, and we can
 18 continue to build it with help. And we built it with our help.
 19 We built it with our strength. We built it with our knowledge.
 20 We made it out of nothing and I know we can make it with
 21 something. I didn't make it -- I didn't come here this morning
 22 just for a form of fashion. I came here, and I'm here because
 23 I am concerned. I can go home and sit down. I don't have to be
 24 a member of the North Florida Farmers Co-Op. I'm a retired
 25 school teacher. I have enough to live on the rest of my life.

1 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: That sounds like a good story.
 2 MR. HALL: I hope it's a good attempt.
 3 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: GEORGE HALL
 4 But I experienced some difficulty with Farmers Home
 5 Administration back in the early '70s. Now, I too, went to
 6 Vietnam and fought for this country. And I don't brag about
 7 that, but I do like to see people treated fairly. And the
 8 problem I had with Farmers Home Administration was that I had a
 9 home and I acquired some additional lands. And, as some have
 10 said here earlier, it will be a repeat of what other people have
 11 said, I had to take what I had and post it against what I was
 12 trying to borrow. And therefore, I'm at the mercy of Farmers
 13 Home Administration.
 14 They was in a position where they was going to
 15 foreclose on me and I filed bankruptcy. Now, this is a bad deal
 16 for most people to file bankruptcy I think, but it worked at
 17 that point. And from that day until this day, I've been labeled
 18 with that position after filing bankruptcy. If you go to the
 19 bank or whatever lending institution to acquire money, that flag
 20 is there. And it's bad.
 21 So, it puts you in an awkward position to have to try
 22 to maneuver and meet your obligation when you can't, like I say,
 23 acquire the proper funds that you need to keep your business
 24 operating. Well, the committees from the farm service agencies
 25 control now, I understand, Farmers Home Administration. And if

1 your name is there, as some of them have said earlier, the flag
 2 is up.
 3 Now, I made a complaint against the farm service agent
 4 in Utah for discrimination against me. Now, I would like to
 5 encourage the black farmers here to continue to press forward.
 6 There is somewhere, somebody that can listen to a complaint.
 7 Now, I was fortunate enough to get my complaint through, but it
 8 did take some time. As a matter of fact, this is what it took
 9 (holding up folders). Now, I know most blacks don't like to do
 10 paperwork, but that's part of the system, and we have to keep
 11 records, and we have to do what we got to do.
 12 So, I want to encourage black farmers to press
 13 forward. But in the meantime, my suggestion is that this
 14 committee has to be dealt with throughout the state or
 15 throughout the region. These are the people that control. Now,
 16 somehow, we have to have some minority in these positions, that
 17 is to represent or look out for the black farmers, or the
 18 minority, or the small people.
 19 We went out in our region, in our county, to try to
 20 acquire, to get some blacks elected to that committee. But we
 21 were misfortunate, we -- that did not finalize; that did not
 22 happen. And I think the reason being is that blacks have, as
 23 has been said here earlier, if you go in the office, you're
 24 probably going to be denied whatever benefits. So, they take
 25 the attitude there's not any use in going. So, then when the

1 list come down when they send out ballots, your name's not on
 2 the ballot, it's not on the list, so you don't acquire a ballot.
 3 So then, you can't elect a person to the position without the
 4 proper ballots or votes.
 5 So, what we need is some mechanism to make sure that
 6 the outreach program is out in outlying areas; to make sure that
 7 blacks understand the procedures to know what's required; and to
 8 make sure that they receive an opportunity to vote. This is the
 9 main problem I think with the whole situation with Farmers Home
 10 Administration or Farm Service Agency is the committee. We do
 11 not necessarily do away with it. But it need to be a mechanism
 12 in there to make sure it's doing what it's supposed to do.
 13 Thank you, sir.
 14 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 15 Our next speaker is Charles Harris from Leesburg,
 16 Georgia.
 17 COMMENT BY: CHARLES HARRIS
 18 Good evening. I'm Charles Harris from Leesburg,
 19 Georgia, and I come today to speak about the farming. Every
 20 year along about this time. I don't go to sleep at night because
 21 I'm wondering where I'm going to get my loan from. I think
 22 every man sitting on that board know where is he going to get
 23 his check from every week. But in the farming situation, we
 24 don't know where we're going day by day. And I believe if every

1 man was sitting there, would have a changed heart this morning,
 2 been born again, you ought to be crying. Because some of these
 3 complaints that I hear, it almost make me cry.
 4 But, you know, for -- I come in this business in 1983
 5 from Sylvester, Georgia. And a man give me one broken down
 6 tractor and no peanut pickers to pick no peanuts. I asked him,
 7 "How I'm going to go pick my peanuts?" He said, "I don't know."
 8 That's Farmers Home. And you know, it's bad, it's really bad,
 9 that a man can do a job, and y'all won't let him do it. A man
 10 can farm every day. Every day I get up and get out there and
 11 try to do the very best that I can. And it ain't -- y'all don't
 12 pay no bit of attention; say it's nothing. Well, it's something
 13 to me because that's my life. I'm not asking you to give me
 14 nothing. I'll work for what I get, every day.
 15 But the onliest thing I'm asking for is a chance to
 16 keep on farming for my family. I got five boys and don't nary
 17 one of them want to see the farm. Got two living at home.
 18 Don't want to even go out there. And then y'all say you put
 19 people on five years and you've got five years' equipment. I've
 20 been having equipment ever since '83. Now, what, you got to
 21 gamble along for -- if it's been five years and you still paying
 22 on it. Yeah, I'm still paying on five years. You can't get no
 23 loan. I can't buy nothing else.
 24 Still sitting in the same spot, spinning my wheels.
 25 I've got a little old bitty farm. Say, Yeah, I'm in three or

1 four different counties. Yeah, I have to be there. Because I
 2 can't get in one. I can't farm in one county. I got to farm in
 3 three or four counties to get enough farm to farm with. I got
 4 some farmers here that I rent from. They worried about their
 5 money right now.
 6 And it's bad man, it's bad. Now, some of y'all might
 7 not think it's bad, but it's bad. And any time a man -- you go
 8 tell a agency, a man will tell you, he don't know how you're
 9 going to pick the peanuts. Then a belt break and you can't get
 10 no money to fix it. It's bad gentlemen. And everybody sitting
 11 on that board knowing where their check comes next week.
 12 Thank you.
 13 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 14 Our next speaker is Warren Daniels from Green,
 15 Florida. Mr. Daniels.
 16 COMMENT BY: WARREN DANIELS
 17 My name is Warren H. Daniels from Greenville, Florida.
 18 I really didn't come to speak. I really kind of be listening to
 19 see what y'all going to do. Because when all of the money was
 20 flowing, and all of the big people was getting the money to
 21 plant trees and things, the program was going good. But since
 22 it got out to us little people, they discontinued the program.
 23 I want to know why. Can I get an answer?
 24 MR. COSBY: Are you talking about the conservation to

1 preserve the CRP program?
2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Are you talking about the
3 forestry reforesting program that we were talking about
4 before?
5 MR. DANIELS: I think so. But I didn't understand the
6 answer to that. I want it now.
7 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: As I understood it, you said the
8 program was in fact still functioning. I don't know where,
9 whether it's functioning in terms of dollars in this state
10 or not. I don't know the answer to your question, to be
11 honest with you. I'm going to have to get you, get back
12 with you the answer to the question.
13 MR. DANIELS: Well, I appreciate it. Because without
14 me knowing the answer, I'll be very upset. And I don't
15 like that.
16 MR. COSBY: We will get you, sir, we will get you
17 connected with our people from Florida. You're from
18 Florida; right?
19 MR. DANIELS: Yes.
20 MR. REED: Niles Glasgow? Niles Glasgow, stand up.
21 He's going to fix you up.
22 MR. DANIELS: Oh, okay; good. Thank you.
23
24 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
25 Our next speaker -- all right; may I have your

1 and his program specialist gave me a summary of my constitution,
2 which they is a question. Neither one of them would give me the
3 right to appeal their decision.
4 In '94, I had a crop disaster, they denied my bases on
5 unworkable manner. Mister -- it's two adjusters came and
6 offered to pay me half of my disaster to cut the cotton up. I
7 told them that I refused to do that because the rain had
8 destroyed my crop.
9 So, I called Chipley Broad and Mr. Alexander Day came.
10 And he said I'm going to treat you just like anybody else. He
11 paid me the full premium for my cotton, but he didn't make a
12 record of the day he come. One man come on the 12th of July,
13 and he come on about the 24th. But he told me I had to wait
14 until my -- till the harvest season to come treat my base. So,
15 the local ASC used the first adjuster and used Mr. Alexander Day
16 final adjuster. And see, I didn't work no cotton.
17 I appealed it to the state committee. They upheld the
18 decision. But when I got to the state office, they told me not
19 to ask no questions. Because I was going to start to ask them
20 about my bases, which I had about 1100 acres of -- when I, when
21 I took my 4500 acres of cropland and farmland, it come out to
22 about 17' acres of cropland. Well, I had 1200 acres in the --
23 with the program land. And my program land just kept
24 deteriorating, just kept deteriorating. And I asked them to
25 give me a summary for some of, of my cropland. The local ASC

1 attention please. Our next speaker is C. Bell from Selma,
2 Alabama.
3 COMMENT BY: CECIL BELL
4 I am Cecil Bell from Selma, Alabama. Which I already
5 have my complaint in Mr. Glickman's office. It's been there for
6 a year now. First, what my complaint about is, improperly
7 identifying the crop basis. I started farming in about '77. By
8 '82, I had rented about 4500 acres of farmland and crop land.
9 I rented from several different farmers. When I build a place
10 on it, I pull it together and make one farm out of it. When I
11 got ready to make the loan, the executive director down at the
12 ASC office, he improperly identifying my base when I get ready
13 to make a loan. On the other parcels of this land, when I build
14 the bases on the land, and go to put it together, the base
15 doesn't follow the land.
16 I went to complain to the local executive director.
17 And I asked them to give me a, I asked them to give me a --
18 wait, just a minute. I asked them to give me a summary of
19 reconstitution of my bases. He never would give them to me. I
20 went to the state director and asked him to give me a
21 reconstitution of my bases. He came down and looked at the
22 reconstitution of my bases. And we had a lien on several
23 occasions.
24 He told me that the local ASC director was correct in
25 the summary of my constitution. Him and his program director

1 office never did give me one. The ones at the state ASC office,
2 him and his program specialist, and they put me something
3 together. But when I got to the state office, they told me not
4 to ask no questions. So, what I did --
5 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Who told you not to ask any
6 questions?
7 MR. BELL: The state committee, somebody on the state
8 committee told me not to ask no questions.
9 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: CECIL BELL
10 So, it was appealed up to the National Appeals
11 Division. They held up the decision. So, I appealed it to
12 Memphis, Tennessee, Ms. Upchew (phonetic). I appealed the
13 discrimination along with my disaster program.
14 Ms. Upchew told, wrote me, told me that within that
15 jurisdiction that they didn't handle discrimination cases. Gave
16 me the right to appeal to civil rights. And now, so, I appealed
17 it to the civil rights. I kept asking them about it. And so,
18 they told me they were going to send it back down there to the
19 Department of Agriculture when Mr. Max Epton -- but Mr. Max
20 Epton was gone. So, I wrote you Mr. Dade, a personal letter,
21 and I asked you to carefully consider my case.
22 So, just before Christmas, I contact your office, the
23 lady told me that my case had been, had been investigated and
24 they would get in touch with me a few days. So, that's where I
25 stand now. I'm wondering, I cannot -- I did not go bankrupt.

1 I still got judgments. I wrote off about 710,000 to Farmers
2 Home and the People's Bank. And so -- to build those bases with
3 people like Gold Kist and different other farmers, I've got
4 judgment for a 100-, over \$100,000 with them. But I still
5 didn't trade bankrupt, with the help of my sister. She took
6 over my farm money.

7 So now, I'm waiting to see what you going to do.

8 MR. COSBY: I would ask, sir, if we could get one of
9 our usbers to come, finish getting additional information.
10 The question would --

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Before you do that. Randy, can
12 you get a report from our -- you're Alabama; right?

13 MR. BELL: Yes, sir.

14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Okay. Can you get a report on
15 this case from our Alabama State Office? I'd like to know
16 more about the case, because this sounds like a real
17 complicated case. And I want to know exactly what -- and
18 in addition to that, I'll check on the complaint. I don't
19 -- they told you that you were going to have a disposition
20 of this complaint right away?

21 MR. BELL: They told me that they had investigated my
22 case and they're going to send somebody to talk to me.

23 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: All right. We'll get, we'll get
24 on your case. I mean, I'll make sure that I, personally,
25 send the message that I want them to contact you

1 making monthly payments. So, that's why I started off in the
2 rut. And since then, I've been in that rut.

3 And I -- to make a long story short, we was working on
4 the loan process back last year and the supervisor at that time
5 became ill and was in and out of the hospital. And what
6 happened, my application was floating around, and the 1996 farm
7 bill, April 1st, went into effect. And so, at -- right now, I'm
8 at a standstill.

9 We, in the poultry business, and from time to time,
10 the company require you to update your houses. Either you
11 update your houses or you don't get any chickens. So, anyway,
12 the situation I'm in now, I've got to do something. And I -- if
13 there's time, I'd like to meet with someone on the committee to
14 discuss my problem. Thank you.

15
16 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir. Would one of the usbers
17 get his name and address, please. I think he's requesting
18 to meet with one of the committee people. So, if you
19 would, one of the usbers, to get the appropriate
20 information from him, I would appreciate it.

21 Our next speaker, James Hall, from Monticello,
22 Florida.

23 COMMENT BY: JAMES HALL

24 I'm James E. Hall from Monticello, Florida, Jefferson
25 County. Leemount (phonetic) is my neck of the woods. And I

1 immediately.

2 MR. COSBY: Sir, could I -- oh, excuse me.

3 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: But I do want a report on your
4 case from our state office.

5 MR. COSBY: Sir, I ask you, if I could get you to come
6 up to the table and give them your address, and so on at
7 this time; that would be appropriate.

8 MR. BELL: Okay.

9 MR. COSBY: All right. The gentleman here. Thank
10 you.

11 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: This gentleman right here; yeah.

13 MR. COSBY: Our next speaker is Mr. William -- Willie
14 Adams from Greensboro, Georgia. Mr. Adams.

15 COMMENT BY: WILLIE ADAMS

16 Good afternoon. How do you do, Mr. Glickman,
17 Committee. I'm Willie Adams from Greensboro, Georgia, poultry
18 and cattle farmer. The president of an organization called
19 United Agriculture Government Coalition. We cover about five
20 Georgia counties: Greene, Morgan, Putnam, Oconee and DeKalb.

21 I began farming in 1977. I achieved a loan from
22 Farmers Home Administration which was \$50,000 to build two
23 poultry houses. One of the biggest mistakes I made, the
24 supervisor at that time told me we ran out of money, said go to
25 a commercial bank and borrow some money. I borrowed that money,

1 found out since I got here, I'm just one of the victims of the
2 circumstance.

3 First thing I would like to clear up. I had a chance
4 to work in the ASC office as a reporter. And I always liked to
5 be to work on time. And I begin to watching the mail that was
6 coming in. And I told my boss man that according to the mail
7 you was getting in, "Why can't I tell you what we want?" His
8 words was to me, "Jim, we need a fellow like you." And I was the
9 first black that run for office in the county, by a petition.
10 And the man that I talked with, took my petition and carried it
11 out, and got three more to run against me. That's some of the
12 problem.

13 I would like to let y'all know, before it came time,
14 my granddaddy used to preach in the white church one Sunday. And
15 the white preacher would preach in his church the next Sunday.
16 So -- well, y'all can't call me a racist because I didn't come
17 up that a way.

18 But I don't want nobody give me nothing. Just open
19 the door and I'll get mine. I'm a FHA victim. And when they
20 told me they couldn't lend me no money, leaving my grandchildren
21 and children staying there, \$500 a month, they told me to go
22 into the FHA to better my condition.

23 I thank you.

25 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

1 Folks, we are just about out of time. And I, have a
 2 list of other speakers. And we're going to shut it off
 3 right there. We have about ten minutes to go and if we
 4 have participants in the audience, Mr. Secretary, with a
 5 thought that you could get through real quick, several of
 6 you, would like to open the mikes at this time for those.
 7 So, please take a mike there. State your name and who
 8 you are. And I we will, we -- and I will have to shut this
 9 off at some point as well.
 10 Please, go ahead, sir.
 11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I'm on the list. Oh.
 12 Do you get this brother here first, or me?
 13 MR. COSBY: Right here.
 14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Go ahead.
 15 COMMENT BY: HOWARD JAMES
 16 Thank you, sir. To the Secretary, Sanford Bishop,
 17 staff. I've been a farmer for 12, 13 years. And the year of
 18 '88, I was encouraged to go to the Farmers Home for a guaranteed
 19 loan in which that particular year was a disaster year, and
 20 lacking something like \$21,000 for paying Farmers Home back.
 21 But in the later years, I was able to build up and continue to
 22 farm.
 23 This year -- I'm sorry, '96, which is '97 -- I mean
 24 '96; Congress was up there fighting about what they were going
 25 to do about the law. I had an application in with Farmers Home

1 and have a great crop.
 2 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Yeah, so --
 3 MR. JAMES: But I can't get back in.
 4 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: I, we -- I've heard this over and
 5 over and over again. We've got to get this law changed.
 6
 7 MR. COSBY: Thank you.
 8 All right. We'll go to this microphone here and then
 9 this one at the back.
 10 DR. BOOKMAN: Okay. My name is --
 11 MR. COSBY: No -- yes, you, sir.
 12 COMMENT BY: DR. BOOKMAN
 13 Yes. My name is Dr. Ridgely Abdul Bookman. I'm a
 14 farmer here, farming 1600 acres over here in Terrell County. I
 15 used to teach agricultural economics at Normland A&T (phonetic).
 16 And I must commend you farmers for being able to handle the
 17 paperwork that you have to handle. Because I used to teach farm
 18 management, and I have a hard time dealing with this stuff that
 19 they've got, in terms of the government.
 20 The other thing that is, I want us to, to look at the
 21 overall picture. They're opening up the doors now for us to
 22 complain about how they discriminated against us, but there's a
 23 bigger game going on. It is my opinion it's going on. In the
 24 Bible, it says "Behold, there comes seven years of great plenty
 25 throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after

1 that was approved to buy land. And Farmers -- and a farm
 2 operating loan. The fact that my application was approved prior
 3 to the law being passed, they asked me to come back in and apply
 4 for the loan for operating, but they discontinued the part about
 5 the land purchase.
 6 My point is, this year, this -- I'm sorry -- '96 was
 7 the best and productive year I have ever had. I was able to pay
 8 off everybody and standing in good standing. But I can't go
 9 back to Farmers Home because of the law. And why, if I was able
 10 to get the operating loan, why couldn't I get the farm purchase
 11 loan? My point is, if I could have got the farm purchase loan,
 12 it would have been just as well. But my point is, why can't I
 13 go back because of the law? That's what I'm saying.
 14 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: One thing I would have to tell
 15 you is the law needs to be changed.
 16 MR. JAMES: I agree.
 17 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: And we're going to try to get
 18 that done this year. I hope that part of the President's
 19 budget helps to make this change, so that we -- because you
 20 had a delinquency once?
 21 MR. JAMES: Once in the past.
 22 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Even though you are perfectly
 23 cleared up and up-to-date?
 24 MR. JAMES: I'm perfectly clear. This year -- '96
 25 was a great year. The Lord blessed me to pay up everybody

1 them, seven years of famine. And all the plenty shall be
 2 forgotten in the land of Egypt. And the famine shall consume
 3 the land."
 4 Now, it's interesting that this amateur program is a
 5 seven-year program, that after which, as they're saying is --
 6 there would be no more subsidies to agriculture.
 7 The returns to agriculture over the last 30 years have
 8 been less than 3 percent. 1991, the return to assets and
 9 agriculture is .4 of a percent. The returns to banking, money
 10 and banking, is 6.5 percent. So, how can you loan money, how
 11 can you borrow money at 6.5 percent on the average, or 9 or 10
 12 percent, and pay it back making thirty-nine cent on a \$100
 13 investment? This is, generally, the whole state of agriculture
 14 in the United States. So now, agriculture is under debt.
 15 Now, when the black farmers have been discriminated
 16 against, and it's true, we have been; so we're complaining. So,
 17 what the government is going to do, the game is that they're
 18 going to let you borrow money now. They're going to try to do
 19 right, but then when the famine hit -- they're going to blame
 20 black farmers for tearing down USDA. They're going to blame
 21 you.
 22 It's time you black farmers get together and do for
 23 yourself because this country is being cut. Because they're
 24 seeing that black people are going to be the majority in this
 25 country in the year 2050. So, they're destroying the whole

1 country infrastructure, throughout the country, so, that when
 2 you take over, you will not have anything to work with.
 3 Thank you very much.
 4
 5 MR. EARL COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 6 We'll go to the mike over here.
 7 COMMENT BY: MILES ROBINSON
 8 Good afternoon to Secretary Glickman, the panelist and
 9 this Civil Rights Action Team. I'm Miles Robinson and I
 10 represent Tuskegee University and Department of Agriculture
 11 Environmental and Natural Sciences. I stand and I rise to let
 12 you know that unless and until the criteria for lending to
 13 minority and small limited resource farmers is changed by law
 14 and by regulation, we will always have, and be subjected to
 15 these discriminatory practices.
 16 One of my suggestions would be to make certain that
 17 that criteria is changed and that on these, on the committees
 18 who make those decisions, that we have an appointment. Let an
 19 appointment be made of a minority limited resource farmer to
 20 that committee to make certain you have some voice.
 21 Access to capital is always a problem and we need to
 22 make certain we find ways to address that. And until we do,
 23 there is nothing's going to change.
 24
 25 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.

1 definitely want to get that in.
 2
 3 MR. EARL COSBY: Thank you. Thank you.
 4 We'll only be able to take about two more. But for
 5 the rest of you participants that are standing, we would
 6 like for you, just as soon as take about two more, to come
 7 to the front, we have some recorders that will take your
 8 statements. I want to be able to take about two more, one
 9 from this mike at the back, and one from this one at the
 10 back. I'm asking the rest of you to come up and we will
 11 take your statements.
 12 COMMENT BY: WELTON LONG
 13 I want to thank you. This is Welton Long, Elbert
 14 County, Georgia; Dewy Rose, Georgia. I have been dealing with
 15 Farmers Home Administration for 25 years. And I've fought them,
 16 trying to get justice for other people. I taught agriculture
 17 for 30 years. And of all things, they accused me of being
 18 unable to manage a farm. You cannot manage -- the first year
 19 that I had a farm that I borrowed money from Farmers Home
 20 Administration, I borrowed enough money to buy some land and
 21 \$25,000 to operate with. Ended up, they put all the money into
 22 buying the land and I ended up with \$84 to plant 250 acres of
 23 soybeans. It takes a \$100 in that time, in that part of the
 24 state to put in an acre of soybean and I got twenty-five cent.
 25

1 We'll come back to the mike in front here.
 2 COMMENT BY: EARNEST HOWARD
 3 My name is Ernest Howard from Clay County, Florida.
 4 One of, one the main points that I would like to point out here
 5 today, that in 1995, July, was passed by our congressman that
 6 any of our older farmers, mostly the ones that on benefit for,
 7 is SSI, any other medical benefit that when they're deceased,
 8 that that land will be turned over to the probated judge to
 9 collect money under certain conditions. Those conditions would
 10 be that the family is hardship or handicap or under 21 years of
 11 age, if not -- if a family can't pay off that debt, that farm go
 12 up for sale.
 13 Somehow, that should not have passed through
 14 Washington, D.C. and it should be effort that on this part of
 15 this committee today to fight hard to get that changed back.
 16 Because you're looking at 95 percent of our black older farmers
 17 will lose their property and their farms will not be claimed by
 18 their family because one time in the nursing home will run so
 19 much money that a family could not touch that debt and that's
 20 one of the main issues that should be touched, and as many and
 21 some of the other things that I have been said here. That's one
 22 of the more important things that I think any of us, that we
 23 need to do something about.
 24 And there are some other things due to the culture
 25 trend. We will contact you on some other things, but I

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I have a 30 second
 2 comment --
 3 CONTINUED COMMENT BY: WELTON LONG
 4 Just a minute. And we did research in Georgia, and it
 5 took a 128 days to process a loan from a black farmer, and only
 6 73 days to process a loan for a white farmer. I know because I
 7 served on the committee. At that time, they -- you served on
 8 the committee and you voted on the committee. And I know how
 9 long it took.
 10 And when they got ready to serve a white farmer or a
 11 black farmer, they often called the two white committeemen
 12 together. And they always told me, said, "It don't take but two
 13 to pass it." I got to Atlanta and the first thing the man told
 14 me when Mr. McDuffie -- some of you remember a long time ago he
 15 got mad and said it don't take but two to pass it and they
 16 dismissed it.
 17 We're still fighting. We were in Washington the last
 18 week, I think, because the Secretary remembers us being up
 19 there. But there are some things that ought to be straightened
 20 out. And as I told once before, I believe Senator Laybee
 21 (phonetic) down in Tifton, said before we send any more money to
 22 Georgia, or any other state that is not using it right, we need
 23 to send nobody in here to spend it. Please, sir.
 24
 25 MR. COSBY: Thank you. If you'll just let me get to

1 the gentleman I had promised back here, and I will come
 2 back to you; you will be the last speaker.
 3 Yes, sir?
 4 COMMENT BY: MALCOLM FREEMAN
 5 My name is Malcolm Freeman. I'm from South Carolina
 6 and I am employed by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives.
 7 Having been born and raised on the farm and having been familiar
 8 with Farmers Home programs and the county committees of most of
 9 my life and having to work with limited resource farmers that
 10 have had to deal with this system, I have a couple of
 11 recommendations to make. Anybody who sit and listened to the
 12 people here today know that the county committees do not serve
 13 the black farmers. I suspect that the county committees also do
 14 not serve properly the white farmer, no matter how good the
 15 intents and purposes of the legislation drafted in Washington.
 16 When it gets down to the local level, the good old boys get it.
 17 They take what they want and the rest of the county get what's
 18 left.
 19 So, my suggestion is that you find something to
 20 replace the county committee with, because black people won't
 21 have a chance. It only takes two to pass. We can't even get
 22 one on it. And if we don't have a linkage all the way from
 23 Washington to the local level they'll never, never be a chance
 24 for a black farmer to operate in a system equitably.
 25

1 or 400 before we're done, maybe 500 people. We didn't say
 2 too much; it's mostly listening. There's an old
 3 expression, after all has been said and done, there's a lot
 4 more said than done.
 5 So, we decided to hear what you had to say. Make sure
 6 when you say something, it's going to mean something. And
 7 so, this is -- I want to assure you, I'm serious about
 8 this. We're going to take this information, Mr. Pearlie
 9 Reed and his team that are sitting right in front of you,
 10 are empowered with the full resources of the Department of
 11 Agriculture, to come up with an action plan that deals with
 12 a lot of the problem you've talked about.
 13 I'm not going to promise you right now it's going to
 14 take care of every problem in the history of the world.
 15 But I am going to promise you that we're going to make a
 16 good-faith effort to deal with the problems that you have
 17 talked about today so this Department of Agriculture is
 18 fair and responsible and serves its customers and its
 19 employees with fairness and dignity.
 20 So, I just wanted to let you know I appreciate very
 21 much the opportunity of being here. Appreciate the
 22 Congressman Bishop asking me here. Appreciate his
 23 perseverance in making sure that we stay on top of this
 24 problem. And I'd like him to make any final comment.
 25 CONGRESSMAN BISHOP: Thank you. I just want to,

1 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 2 COMMENT BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:
 3 In 1933, my father got oppressed. But he had to drink
 4 water from a "white-only". About 60 years later, I went into
 5 Chapter 12 bankruptcy plan to find that the United States
 6 Department of Agriculture had removed that "white-only" sign
 7 from the water fountain and placed it on the Chapter 12
 8 bankruptcy plan.
 9 To me, the "white-only" sign on the water fountain
 10 was, by far, the less evil.
 11
 12 MR. COSBY: Thank you, sir.
 13 We're going to wrap up at this time. And folks,
 14 perhaps I misdirected you. I'm going to ask James Ford and
 15 Ralph, if you would, to help these folks get their
 16 statements recorded. We have a recorder here. We also
 17 have some recorders at the back table, but we would folks,
 18 like to get your statements before you leave. So I'm going
 19 to ask these people to take care of you.
 20 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Earl, can I make just one last
 21 statement.
 22 MR. COSBY: I'm coming to you and Congressman Bishop
 23 for again, last comments that you would have.
 24 SECRETARY GLICKMAN: Let me just say, we heard about
 25 35 people here today and we're going to hear about three-

1 again, thank the Secretary and the task force for coming
 2 and for listening. But more importantly, I want to thank
 3 each and every one of you for taking the time to come and
 4 to say what was on your minds so that they could hear it.
 5 Because if you didn't come and if you didn't say, they
 6 would not hear it and we couldn't say that they had heard
 7 it. Now they have heard, and will hear others in other
 8 parts of the country, say what their problems are and their
 9 concerns. Probably, will be similar to yours, but it's all
 10 in the record and taken down, and now the information is in
 11 and they will be a decision acted on it. Hopefully, we
 12 will be able to put these issues to rest and be able to go
 13 forward. Thank you for coming and taking the time to do
 14 it, because now it's going to be a key and it's important
 15 that you did it. And I want you to know that I personally
 16 appreciate it.
 17 MR. COSBY: Thank you. Folks, we have another quick
 18 announcement here.
 19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, what I'm supposed to tell
 20 you is that you have lunch outside and you'll see the signs
 21 indicating what's in the sandwiches.
 22 Another thing I want to say is that our annual
 23 farmers' conference and marketing conference is next month
 24 here at this site. The marketing conference will be at the
 25 Ramada Inn and the annual farmers' conference, that's

1 February 14th and 15th, and we invite you to come back.
 2 MR. COSBY: Thank you folks, on behalf of Congressman
 3 Bishop and Secretary Glickman. Thank you for coming.
 4
 5 [The following comments were made after the session
 6 concluded:]
 7 COMMENT BY: JAMES WOODSON
 8 My name is James Woodson and I'm from Bainbridge,
 9 Georgia. And I -- my phone number is 912/246-5287. And I'd
 10 like to come to register a complaint about Farmers Home and
 11 their practice in lending money, just like hearing the rest of
 12 them stated here. My problem is that I borrowed money from
 13 Farmers Home and I paid it all back. And then later on I heard
 14 that Farmers Home had forgave some of the debt, a big portion of
 15 the debt in the country, just forgive the farmers for it and
 16 start all over again. But I paid all my money back, serious
 17 money. And -- but I go to get some money, and then there's a
 18 lot of unfair and I can't get none.
 19 So, starting back in 1964, when I borrowed \$13,000, I
 20 paid it back the same year. The next year -- not the next year,
 21 but later on, I borrowed \$300,000; I paid that back. And then
 22 I had a disaster and I borrowed \$600,000. I paid all of that
 23 back. So, I left out of there, when I left the lenders they
 24 don't want to lend it to you. When I got in trouble again, I
 25 tried to borrow money from them and I couldn't borrow no money.

1 to operate any way I can. Borrow at high interest rates. And
 2 they say it's supposed to be for the farmers, but it's not. And
 3 I have some -- we have 300-some acres of land. And I have a
 4 friend, a white friend, that had only ten acres of land and he
 5 could borrow \$150,000 over ten years ago, and I couldn't even
 6 borrow five. And I have another friend who has 75 acres and he
 7 borrowed over \$600,000, and they won't even loan me nothing to
 8 farm with. And I've been farming all my life. And I still
 9 intend to try farming. And I've had to work two jobs, take the
 10 money from the other job in order to farm with.
 11 Thank you.
 12
 13 COMMENT BY: CULLEN PATTON
 14 I'll be brief. I'm ready. Yes, I'm Cullen Patton,
 15 from Greenville, Georgia, with Wayne Trambell from Newnan,
 16 Georgia. And we're here with Ms. Betty Bush, Matt Collins' aide
 17 from Columbus, Georgia -- the representative.
 18 We have a brief that's been sent to Secretary Glickman
 19 two weeks ago by Attorney Mr. Joe Sumerford in Fairfield,
 20 Arkansas. We would like for that brief to be taken a look at.
 21 If need be, we would like to meet him on a one-to-one basis in
 22 Washington. The file needs to be gone over. We need to be
 23 there because there's a lot of material that's not in the brief.
 24 It's nothing but harassment and discrimination and lack of
 25 justice has been done over the last ten or fifteen years. So,

1 So, what I'm saying is my problem is -- needs to be
 2 addressed. Even to do right, you can't get nothing from them.
 3 That's what I'm saying -- I know, but I just got started here --
 4 but now, I would like to get my problem addressed. I know this
 5 is saying it publicly. But I want to say this right now. I
 6 need to have somebody look into this for me. Why can't I borrow
 7 some money? I don't owe Farmers Home anything. I owe some more
 8 people, but I don't owe Farmers Home anything. And I'm fixing
 9 to be treated like a step-child. Okay. So, that's what I'm
 10 saying. I'd like to have that addressed. You have my name and
 11 my phone number. You have somebody get back to me about that.
 12 I don't want you to go off and forget it now. I want you to
 13 have somebody talk to me and tell me why I can't get any money.
 14
 15 COMMENT BY: CHARLES FLETCHER
 16 I'm Charles Fletcher, Route 2, Box 202, Willacoochee,
 17 Georgia; Colquitt County. I've been farming all of my life.
 18 I'm 53 years old and I've never been able to receive a home loan
 19 from Farmers Administration. I applied in '67 and the '80s;
 20 I've always been turned down. My father's 90 years old, my
 21 mother's 87. I've been living on the farm all of my life. I
 22 have to farm wherever I can get the money, any conditions I can
 23 get it. I have four daughters: 31, 16, 4, and 2, and expecting
 24 one in March sometime. And I can't keep operating whenever I
 25 can't get enough -- can't get no money to operate with. I have

1 if at all possible, we need a meeting with a representative,
 2 and an attorney will be there from Arkansas Betty Bush will be
 3 there for Matt Collin's office, and other advisors from South
 4 Georgia.
 5 We thank you.
 6
 7 COMMENT BY: NED HARMAN
 8 My name's Ned Harman, H-A-R-M-A-N, from Carrollton,
 9 Georgia. I've been farming for Farmers Home for several years,
 10 since the '70s. We'd go in October or September to get a loan,
 11 to put in the crops. They'd give it to you after it was too
 12 late to plant, like the other one said. These kind of things
 13 happened. We get approved for loans, a hundred-something
 14 thousand dollars to build a hog facility. And they say go ahead
 15 and rate out, start it. Go ahead and get the money from local
 16 banks and we'll pay them. But they didn't pay them. I owed the
 17 local banks for years and years.
 18 I've asked for a national appeals. They said we can
 19 give you equitable leave; check into that. I did. They never
 20 did do anything about that when I'd go to them. We met with a
 21 state director last year, the first of this year, of '96. I
 22 wrote my congressman, state senators, and they wrote them back,
 23 Farmers Home did, and said we will work with Mr. Harman and give
 24 him preservation. After I'd get to that, never would hear from
 25 Farmers Home. They never would contact me.

1 I've got a daughter that's been in a coma since the
2 middle of October. I hadn't heard from Farmers Home at all.
3 Then after my daughter got in a coma now, here Farmers Home said
4 they're foreclosing because I hadn't contacted them or tried to
5 work with them. I tried to work with them for several years and
6 can't get anything done with them.

7 Thank you.

8

9 COMMENT BY: LESTER HAWKINS

10 My concern is -- I'm late -- I'm the son of the late
11 Lester Hawkins, I'm the son of the late Katherine Hawkins. We
12 have a farm of a 119 acres and one house. And my father left a
13 debt with the FHA of something like \$130,000. The Farmers Home
14 did not give us any help. We asked for help from them so we'd
15 have a lower payment so me and my brother could pay that loan
16 off, or get some of that money wrote off. Something like that,
17 so we could make the payments easily once a year, a lower
18 payment. Went to the bank, asked them for the money, the bank
19 told us \$18,339 a year. But at that rate, we cannot afford
20 that.

21 Thank you, ma'am.

22

23 COMMENT BY: RALPH BROWN

24 How you doing. My name is Ralph Brown. I'm from
25 Pataula County, Alabama. And I have a farm out there through

1 problem on the farm. We lost all our harvest except for ten
2 small ones we have there now. And we are just there. We have
3 a lawsuit with Production Credit which we won for \$825,000. But
4 they are talking back, and with the attorneys, and saying that
5 they're a part of the government, and they should not be sued
6 for punitive damages, and saying that the jury there -- it's
7 like they were not qualified to pass that judgment about
8 punitive damages. So, we are just sitting there. Our house is
9 leaking. We have nothing. We are just there and we need some
10 help.

11

12 COMMENT BY: J.B. BLACK, JR.

13 My name is J.B. Black, Jr. And I farms in Screven
14 County, which is Newington, Georgia. And I -- have FHA has
15 foreclosed on my equipment and sold it back in June -- I think
16 June. And it didn't bring as much because it was the wrong time
17 of the year to sell equipment, because all of the farmers had
18 already bought equipment. All they could do then is to manage
19 their own property they wasn't going to spend no extra money.
20 And the equipment didn't bring enough to pay the indebtedness of
21 it. Now, they are riding me for to -- to try to get me to pay
22 the remain on that equipment that they foreclosed on. I still
23 own the land, but I'm leasing the land. I got to '89, I think
24 -- I mean '99, I think it is, to maybe get somebody to buy the
25 land. And I'm going to try to do that. But the equipment, they

1 disaster through '90 through '93. We filed for disaster and
2 then they had all to come back, said in, you know, investigating
3 it. All we did was carry our bills down, and they went through
4 them and they paid us off for what we had it in. Then they came
5 back in '96, and said we owed some money back on it. So, I
6 don't know what going to be the outcome of other year, but
7 that's the latest I heard from them. That's it.

8

9 COMMENT BY: JEROME TUCKER

10 I'm Jerome Tucker from Valdosta, Georgia. I'm a
11 committee member of the Lowndes-Echols FSA. And I have my
12 concerns about the operation committee in writing. And I would
13 like to leave these with -- at this time. I've had problems
14 getting information about programs, getting access to the
15 records in the office, information that I feel I'm entitled to
16 as being a county committee member. [See "Exhibits"]

17

18 COMMENT BY: JOYCE WALTERS

19 I'm from Brooks County, Quitman, Georgia. Well, our
20 problem is coming from Madison County. We were buying a farm
21 there and we got burnt out and that's why we ended up in
22 Quitman. Okay. We bought the farm, this farm in Quitman,
23 through Farmers Home Administration. When we got the farm we
24 did not know, Production Credit did not disclose to us, that
25 there was a violation with the EPA and there was a disease

1 just went ahead and foreclosed on, because I was behind it, in
2 the payments on it. But I really think if they had of waited
3 until this fall. Sold it early in March, February or March of
4 last year, they would have gotten way more out of it. In that
5 time no one was buying farm equipment at that time.

6

7 COMMENT BY: JERRY BLACK

8 Yes, my name is Jerry Black. Same address 971 Oliver
9 Highway. I attended Abraham Baldwin in '75 and got a degree in
10 management. I've filled out farm loans from '78 until now. I
11 have been denied farm loans by FHA from several different
12 directors that -- over FHA. The reason that I was told one
13 time, my father was losing his farm, he had equipment and they
14 told me they could not loan me operating money to, in order to
15 use his particular equipment, because FHA had borrowed some
16 money on the equipment from FHA and it was really their
17 equipment.

18 I was told that there was no minority program that was
19 set aside. I tried to get my son in 4-H. I've won state
20 championship showing cows since 1968. I tried to get my son
21 involved in it and they told me there was no program, when I
22 know that there was a minority youth program going on. And I
23 obtained information from Atlanta. But in my county, I was told
24 by Mr. Evans in Statesboro, who is over the FSA now, that there
25 was no program. If I find out any more information on it, to

1 come and let him know. And when I did, they just said the money
 2 was depleted.
 3 And I wanted to make another statement. I can get a
 4 job on every big farm, far as managing a farm. But then I was
 5 told that I would have to go through a management program, but
 6 I've managed several farms of 10,000 acres, 5,000 acres, for
 7 several different ones in the county and surrounding counties.
 8 But I can't operate management of a farm. And my father has
 9 farmed for 49 or 50 acres -- I mean years. And I have came up
 10 on the farm farming all my life. And I just wanted to know why
 11 do I get these runarounds when I'm trying to apply for a loan in
 12 order to establish a farming operation.

14 COMMENT BY: MARCUS DASHER

15 My name is Marcus Dasher. I'm from Vidalia, Georgia.
 16 My complaint is with FHA, at first, Farmers Home Administration.
 17 I applied for a loan the first year, I, you know, started,
 18 decided to farm on my own. And I ran into the problem. The
 19 first thing they told me that I was ineligible to farm because
 20 I didn't know how to farm. And I'd been farming ever since I
 21 was -- well, before I was 14. But when I became 14 years of
 22 age, I had to run my father's farm for him sometime.

23 The second year, when I came back to FHA again, they
 24 did the identical same thing, as far as giving my money. And
 25 six months after I applied for it. And they didn't buy me any

1 wouldn't pay me any insurance. So, for the last four to five
 2 years, I've been catching slack from the ASCS office. But, you
 3 know, like they said, there's certain farmers, you know, that
 4 these guys sitting on the ASCS board and that's running these
 5 ASCS offices, they let them know when stuff is coming down the
 6 pipeline so they can get it before we do. That's it.

8 COMMENT BY: RAYMOND E. OLDS

9 My name is Raymond E. Olds. Address is 501 -- 5701
 10 Wimbleton Court, Cambellton, Florida; Jackson County.

11 Okay. I just want to speak briefly about my problem
 12 with farming. I started farming in '77. And the Farmers Home
 13 Administration, I received farm operating loans all the way
 14 through 1987. And from that time, I was denied an operating
 15 loan and I was farming out of my pocket and using my mother's
 16 and father's work salary, who works 40 hours a week to help
 17 operate my operating costs, my farming. And I was denied a loan
 18 to Farmers Home in 1991. I was -- my farm account was
 19 accelerated and I was asked to pay up in full. And I could not
 20 appeal my rights to reorganize my farming operation.

21 And at that point, I didn't have no money to pay up in
 22 full, so I waited to -- last year, in 1995, I was foreclosed on
 23 -- sorry, 1995 I was foreclosed on, and I was forced into
 24 Chapter 12. And did a Chapter 12. I was -- had to get my land
 25 appraised and livestock and equipment. And the Farmers Home

1 equipment other than a harrow and a row cutter, you know, and
 2 still didn't assist in buying me a tractor to, to do this
 3 process with. I had to then -- and see of going to a bank and
 4 doing the same thing and get me a loan for a tractor, and stuff
 5 like that. And I farmed there for two years and I seen that
 6 they wouldn't buy me a farm that I was eligible for buying and
 7 stuff. Which they had told me, made me the promise after the
 8 first year if I, you know, showed some good favoritism, that
 9 they would do it.

10 They renegeed on their end of the deal, so I decided
 11 I'd just give it up because I seen that they was trying to get
 12 two birds with one stone, to a certain extent, you know, as far
 13 as getting my daddy out and ruining my reputation just as they
 14 was speaking as, once we get you in bad standings, you cannot
 15 reapply for these loans again. So, I just said -- you know,
 16 sold what equipment they bought me and said y'all have it.

17 So, seven years, seven to eight years later afterwards
 18 I had moved off and I came back when my father got ill and
 19 decided to run my family farm. I ran into a situation through
 20 the ASCS office then, because I wasn't eligible to apply for FHA
 21 loan. So, what I was doing was just working out of my pocket,
 22 and every time programs came up, I'd be the last to know, or
 23 either they would cut me or subsidize on me. The first year I
 24 was there, they took and zeroed my peanuts out and they wouldn't
 25 even let me pick them, you know. So, I lost on that deal and

1 Administration appraised it so high that I couldn't afford to go
 2 through the Chapter 12. But now I'm into a Chapter 7. And ask
 3 to forgiveness of that -- this could be looked into. And I
 4 really need someone to look at this high property appraisal. My
 5 land is appraised very high, more than it's worth. And they do
 6 that in order to keep me from going through the Chapter 12.

7 Thank you.

9 COMMENT BY: DAVID PROCTOR

10 My name is David Proctor from Monticello. My question
 11 is, the FFA, I'd like to give a -- the program they got, I'd
 12 like to, I'd like to try to get into the program. But
 13 understanding that what we need, to start something small, you
 14 know, I mean, you know, it's -- you know, I mean, I never had
 15 dealt with FFA before. I would like to know where I can get
 16 some information on it, more about it.

18 COMMENT BY: HERBERT MAXWELL

19 Okay. My name's Herbert Maxwell, Monticello, Florida.
 20 Okay. All the organization that they have is good if they
 21 do what they are designed to do, because what we're looking
 22 at here is endangered species of the black farmer. I mean,
 23 you come to Florida, you see "Save the manatee," "Save the
 24 Florida cougar." They should have a state tag, "Save the
 25 black farmer," because they're going to be extinct. Like

1 all these loans being denied before you even sit down.
2 That seem like what it's designed to do, to wipe out the
3 small farmer, white or black; but specifically the
4 minority. Everybody have to fold or foreclose, I mean, the
5 big people just expand. That's it.

6
7 COMMENT BY: SOPHIA GLENN

8 Okay. My name is Sophia Glenn. I'm in Tallahassee,
9 Florida and I work with small farmers in north Florida. I have
10 a couple issues I want to address -- I would like for someone to
11 address.

12 I work with Cooperatives' Association, the North
13 Florida Cooperative in Jackson; it's based out of Jackson
14 County, Florida. I would like to know if they will be more
15 assistance for cooperative organizations, more so than
16 individual farmers, based on the fact that they're more
17 organized and more promise for production or more productive
18 outcomes.

19 Also would like to know if there is some kind of
20 assistance or farm diversification or changing farm enterprises.
21 Because most of the farmers are recurrent farmers who are not
22 producing enough and are not making any income from these
23 enterprises and -- but at the same time, they don't have money
24 to -- they don't have money to change enterprises. They are
25 still changes in equipment and other things that they would

1 which is very contradictory. And these kinds of regulations
2 prevent farmers from obtaining the type of assistance that they
3 need.

4 Also, I would ask that the financial institutions,
5 such as farm service agencies, to assist us in working with the
6 farm, financial management and loan servicing. That also will
7 avoid us getting to those points of foreclosure whereas a lot of
8 times it's not easy for us to help these people at that point.

9 That's all.

10
11 COMMENT BY: WILLIE HEAD, JR.

12 My name is Willie Head, Jr. I'm from Brooks County,
13 Georgia, county seat Quitman, Georgia. My complaint is on FSA.
14 I entered into FSA in 1981, my county supervisor, Mr. Charles
15 Bryant, I applied for a loan to buy my father's farm. I was
16 approved, the loan was approved. And in that, I had certain
17 debts I was supposed to pay off to acquire the land with a clear
18 deed.

19 After I paid off these certain debts, after I had
20 acquired my loan for a certain amount, after I received the
21 loan, then I was told by my county supervisor that there were
22 other debts that I had to pay off with the money that I had
23 received to operate with. I had to use part of that money to
24 pay off those other debts. I was improperly informed by my
25 county supervisor, which in turn started me off in a negative

1 need, to change enterprise. With the changes that these farmers
2 would make, and most of the counties that they are working, they
3 would be in vegetable production. And the vegetable production
4 requires irrigated farms. And most farmers don't have that
5 money to invest into irrigation. So, would there be some type
6 of cost-share assistance for farmers to do such a thing.

7 Addressing the farm service agency issues. As I work
8 as a financial manager for small farmers, I would like to know
9 or get more information on farmers who are facing financial
10 problems and disasters. There's a lack of information given to
11 me to help such farmers. And hopefully, this will avoid some --
12 will avoid getting to the farmers at the end point when they're
13 in foreclosure. Which is not very much that we can do at that
14 time. So, we would just like more assistance and more
15 communication with the financial institutions, such as farm
16 service agency to assist us in helping these farmers.

17 To also, to address farm service agency. There are,
18 I've found there are lots of problems with interpretation of the
19 regulations. The interpretation is too broad and it's open to
20 any type of interpretation. For example, a person applies for
21 a beginning farm loan. And the requirements for a beginning
22 farm loan is you must not have farmed in the past ten years or
23 more. Then at the same time, they give you a stipulation that
24 you must qualify for a farm ownership loan also, which states
25 you have -- you must have farmed one in the past five years;

1 position, because I had to use my operating capital, a portion
2 of my operating capital to pay off existing debts that I was
3 told beforehand that I didn't have to pay.

4 Okay. As I made my way through Farmers Home up until
5 1986, I paid Farmers Home approximately \$17,000 in 1985. I also
6 paid Production Credit \$6,000 in 1985, which was a total of
7 \$23,000. I owed a balance of \$7,000 to Farmers Home. And when
8 I went to reapply for my loan, after paying \$17,000, I was
9 refused. And I was refused until 1994.

10 So, I hadn't been able to get a loan. And I quit
11 applying after 1994. So, now, I am in a position where I only
12 owe Farmers Home about 7500 to \$8,000 with interest. They tell
13 me that because I don't have any land in Farmers Home, only
14 equipment, I did not qualify for an FHA loan. Now, I owe them
15 less than most applicants, but I'm not able to receive any
16 monies from Farmers Home. I think that's an unfair policy. I
17 know farmers who owe them thousands and thousands of dollars and
18 they're able to get money. But I only owe a small amount and I
19 can't get it. I can't get anything. So, I'm filing this
20 complaint on behalf of those who owe small amounts of money,
21 should still be able to borrow money. Thank you.

22 [END OF SPEAKERS]
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF GEORGIA)

COUNTY OF LEE)

I, Rene Armstrong, do hereby certify that the reported

the foregoing comments of the USDA Civil Rights Listening

Session held on January 6, 1997, in Albany, Georgia.

This 19th day of January, 1997.

RENE A. ARMSTRONG, CVR CCR
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