

Civil Rights Listening Forum

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Agricenter International

Jerry Lee, Chair of the State FAC opens the program.

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, we still have 2 or 3 seats up here in the front ... those of you that aren't Baptist (laughter). Permit me to introduce myself to you - I'm Jerry Lee, State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service here in Tennessee and this evening I will be serving in the capacity of the Tennessee Food and Ag Council committee chairperson as well as moderating this discussion this evening. Let me first of all welcome you to Memphis those of you that are from out of town and I know that we have a number here and this is a good group and we expect good things out of this group this evening. Let me welcome you to Memphis and to Agricenter International. We would like to thank you for taking your time out to be here this evening and to voice concerns that you may have about USDA programs with the USDA Secretary, the Honorable Dan Glickman and his Civil Rights

Action Team. There are some folks here tonight that I would like to introduce to you and you know, always run the risk when you do this of missing someone but I know that we have Dave McDole, Dave is up here at the head table, who is a member of the Tennessee FAC - Dave hold up your hand if they don't see your name card. James Sanders who is representing the State Director of Rural Development and we have a State Director of Rural Development in the audience, Mr. John Edwards - John, Where are you? John is from Arkansas and we're glad to have you here - we welcome you and you have a lot of constituents here this evening and that's good. There are also some representatives of our congressional delegation here this evening. Mr. Joe Hill and Shirley Mercer - Did Shirley get here, Joe? There you are. These folks represent the Congressman John Tanner of our 8th congressional district here in Tennessee. Did Mr. Ken Scroggs make it? Well, he'll probably be on his way, here shortly he represents congressman Ed Bryant's office. Your presence here this evening indicates your commitment to letting us know what changes need to happen by your being here just as Secretary Glickman and his action team indicate their commitment to make your suggested changes a reality. And I would like to thank the Secretary and his team for showing an interest and coming to Memphis and to Tennessee to visit with us this evening. We have a panel of distinguished guests to initiate

dialogue with you and your community. The first thing I'd like to do is introduce to you Mr. Pearlie Reed who serves as the Civil Rights Action Team Leader for the Secretary's Civil Rights Initiative. Pearlie, would you come forward please?

Pearlie Reed: Good evening, Thank you very much, Jerry. Before I introduce the Secretary I'd like to ask the action team members to make self introductions.

Joyce can we start with you? My name is Joyce Willis, (Pearlie: Please stand so that they can all recognize you) My name is Joyce Willis, I am the Civil Rights Liaison to the Assistant secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. My name is Bob Whiting, I'm Chief Information Management Division, office of the Chief Information Officer. My name is Karen Messmore and I'm with the Food Safety and Inspection Service Human Resources. My name is Sam Thorton with the office of the Secretary. Robert Cole, former USDA employee in Farmer's Home. Good evening, Wilburt Peers, Associate Administrator, Rural Business Service and Rural Development Mission Area. My name is Mon Yee and I'm the Assistant State Conservationist for the former Soil Conservation Service now known as NRCS in Portland, Oregon. Good evening, my name is Randy Weber, I'm the Associate Administrator of the Farm Service Agency. (Pearlie speaks): Three other quick introductions I'd like to make Kathy Gugulis, Kathy would

you stand? Kathy is the Chief of staff for this activity. Sonya Neal who is on that staff and George Robinson, George, who is the Director of Civil Rights at the Department of Agriculture. So with your permission, Mr. Secretary, I will make my introduction of you very, very brief and just ask all of you to join me in welcoming the Honorable Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman. (Applause)

Secretary Dan Glickman speaks: Thank you, Pearlie. You know, I remember - I was in the US Congress for 18 years and talk about short introductions, the first time I ever went home or one of the first times I spoke at a Lions Club or Rotary Club - and I had just spent a few months in Congress, and I was introduced in the following way: and now folks, let's hear the latest dope from Washington (laughter) so I hope that's not what you have today. What you have today is people from Washington who are interested - not just Washington - you heard there are people from outside of Washington working at USDA - who are interested in trying to find out what we can do better to change the attitude and the performance of this department insofar as the way we treat our employees and the way we treat our customers. And Abraham Lincoln set this department up in 1862 to be the people's department - that's what he called it - USDA. And in many respects we have done our mission well, in some areas we have failed.

And our goal today is to hold a series - this is one of a series of many listening sessions we're holding all over the country. We held one this morning in New Orleans and one yesterday in Albany, Georgia. I'm going to Halifax, North Carolina tomorrow for one. Going around the country talking to - mostly try to talk to farmers and ranchers and people who've utilize the services of USDA - the Farmer's Home Administration, the old ASCS, the new Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, the Forest Service, Food Safety, Food Nutrition are all a big part of this very large department of ours to figure out how are we treating you? Are we treating you with dignity with fairness or are we handling our jobs in a wrong and inappropriate way. The President has asked me to do this and it is something to me that is more important frankly than let's say what our farm commodity programs look like or how we run the Department of Agriculture. The most important thing for me is to figure out that we serve the constituents of this country the taxpayers of this country, fairly, without difference between what somebody looks like or where somebody is from. The history of this Department is not stellar when it comes to issues of discrimination and most of our employees do a good job but the Department of Agriculture is different from most other departments of government. The reason for that is the way the department is set up and run most of the day to day decisions and

functions of the department are run at the county office level. and to some extent the state office level, but at the county office level, by often farmer- elected committeemen and county executive directors who have the authority to make a lot of decisions on a day to day basis. That means the department of Agriculture is much more decentralized than most other departments of government for example, like the Social Security Administration in which their district offices have very little authority but here the folks at the county and district office have a lot of authority. And I think our goal is to make sure that any kind of discrimination, any kind of lax civil rights enforcement, any kind of inadequate outreach and service to anybody - to minorities, to anybody is just simply unacceptable. So the purpose of these listening sessions under the leadership of Pearlie Reed who is a long time distinguished career employee with the Natural Resources Conservation Service is to basically hear you, hear what you have to say, perhaps to let us know how you might have been personally wronged, what would be particularly useful is to tell us how we can improve the operations of the Department of Agriculture to make things better. We do a very important thing - we help this country produce a stable supply of food and fiber which is more important than any weapons system in the world. America is a country which has been blessed by a land of plenty and our department is largely the

department that is responsible for making sure that people have food and that we have a strong rural base in this country, but it is not a department that wants the reputation of not treating its people well. So that's why we're here. Most of what you're going to hear from us today is nothing more than listening to you. We want to know what you have to think - where you think we can do better. I have asked Mr. Pearlie Reed to put together this civil rights action team that you see before you. They are to make recommendations to me in and about 30 days from now - thereabouts and as I've told him that we're going to do our best to implement those recommendations whether that means making internal changes within USDA or seeking statutory authority from Congress to make changes if we need to make and let me mention one other goal - one other goal is to try to have an agriculture - an America where young people, where new farmers, where small farmers, where minority farmers can see that you can have an economic piece of America and make a productive living so we can stop this trend toward rapid consolidation in agriculture and we can start a trend to get more people into rural America could be in rural entrepreneurship rural jobs and in rural agriculture as well, so that's all part of what we're trying to do. I appreciate your being here - I take this matter seriously, for example I ordered a halt to pending farm foreclosures until such time as we can take a review to see if there is any

legitimacy to claims of discrimination in these particular cases that are going on and that we are doing that right now and so this is important to us. I thank you very much for your coming out tonight in such great numbers and I will also hope that you will speak to us as honestly and as forthrightly as you can. Thank you all very much. (applause)

Jerry Lee: Thank you Mr. Secretary and let me reiterate the fact that we're honored to have you with us in Memphis, Tennessee this evening along with your staff. We have available for you as you have already determined an interpreter and signer. I hope that those of you that need that kind of assistance and service will note that here at the front. Again as the Secretary has said and as Pearlle has said the purpose of this meeting this evening is a listening session and it's just that - to listen. The panel desires to hear your comments and concerns. I understand that they may interrupt you at time to time to ask you a question and clarify a point that you may have made. But they will not be in a position to answer any questions. They're here to listen. We have a number of people who have signed up this evening to make statements, so consequently we are going to put a time factor on each speaker and that will be 5 minutes. You will be signaled at the point that you have one additional minute remaining and I would certainly

ask your cooperation, you know it's difficult to moderate with the Secretary of Agriculture sitting on the podium. So I would ask your cooperation and indulgence if you're not able to complete your statement in the allotted five minutes, then one of the staff will meet with you on the side where you can complete your statement at that time. If there are those in here that would like to make comments, but didn't sign up because you don't want to speak for one reason or another, we will have 2 comment boxes - one in this room and one outside for your written comments. Please note that identifying yourself in any shape, form or fashion, by name telephone number, address, or what ever is strictly optional on your part. You can still make your written comments anonymously if you so desire. So, at this point in time we will begin, I have a list here of those of you that have asked to make comments and just in case something you say intrigues someone in the audience who did not sign up we're going to kind of vary it a bit and get as much audience participation in this effort as possible. And also, please bear with me if I don't get these names exactly right and I hope that you'll come up after the session and tell me how to correctly pronounce your name if I miss something along the way. Mr. Tom Borrell.

Tom Borrell - Covington TN : Your Honor, Glickman and to Mr. Reed and to your action team my name is Mr. Tom Borrell. I'm from Covington, Tennessee and thank you for this opportunity to speak to you this afternoon. Approximately 15 years ago, myself and a group of other minority farmers staged a protest against certain procedures against the Department of Agriculture in Covington, Tennessee. And Mr. Glickman, I 'm very glad to hear you say the Department of Agriculture has some successes and some failures. One of the things that we noted then was more particularly some of the failures that were administrated upon the African American community. According to USDA census, the year of 1910, Black people owned approximately 16 million acres of land in this country. According to those same statistics today, African Americans own less than approximately 4 million acres. One of the things that we maintain in 1981 which was when we had the protest in Covington, Tennessee is that among other things certain policies whether inadvertent or otherwise, that were administrated by the Department of Agriculture in general and at that time Farmer's Home Administration in particular succeeded in as I said inadvertently or otherwise in rendering African Americans landless. Most African American purchased their land in 1910 and the other years that made up that 16 million acres of land not because we were speculators, not because we were Wall Street investors, but

because we were producers. We grew cotton, soybeans, and we grew tobacco. We had large families at that time. So we were producers. But what we're maintaining is that once you minimize the likelihood that an individual is productive, then the proliferation of cash, the ability to service debt that is associated with that production is going to render that individual landless or that community landless. When individuals receive monies as they did then and I'm sure in some cases still today - when individual farmers receive monies to grow crops in July, September and August, as we can document and I'm sure that your records will substantiate that we did - we say unlike a corporation that's making a product for instance General Motors will make an automobile they can make that automobile on January 1 or July 1 and that quantity will not vary, but in farming as we all know you can't ultimately plant cotton, you can't ultimately grow soybeans. We maintain that here again as a result of certain policies then and we believe now, that the reason that Black people are almost landless today and we are, is almost attributable directly to the inability of the Department of Agriculture in general to make funds unavailable to us on a timely basis. You also said that here again decentralization is one of the functions or make up the characteristics of the Department of Agriculture. We then and probably do now attribute certain problems to this form of decentralization. We maintain that sure,

there may have been good reasons why programs were implemented in Washington, but rendering those programs or the delivery process of those programs did not reach the farmers in the rural counties. We think that, if anything productive is going to come out of this meeting, not only a recognition that Black Americans, African American farmers have been slighted by the Department of Agriculture is going to be one thing that we must honestly admit to, we also have to admit that the Department of Agriculture has been a coconspirator inadvertently or otherwise to that problem and that the vast number the hundreds of thousands of black families that have been displaced, careers that have been ruined as a result of that or those policies somewhere there should be reparations. It's good to know that you're saying we're not going to have foreclosures, but what are you going to do about those hundreds of thousands of acres of land that have been lost hundreds and thousands of Black farmers who have been put out of business because of the policies that were adverse to them. And in my closing I think that if change is to be made one of our observations then and I hope that I'm wrong today, but I do believe that the current system of rendering funds available to African Americans in this country that the system is totally completely and incapable of accommodating the change that's going to be necessary . Thank you for your time.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Tom. Mattie Mack. Kentucky

I would like to say Good Evening to everyone and to our Secretary, Dan Glickman and all the distinguished members up there - we have enough up there to make this thing right for farmers. We are here not because we wanted to because we have to. Things are real rough on the farm. I've been a farmer all my life. I raised my children on the farm. Educated them on the farm and I raised 38 foster children on the farm. I had no trouble with the children. Farming is something to a small farmers heart. People say, well, why do you want to farm? Why don't you just get out? We can't because there's a lot of values and a lot of culture there that we have instilled in all our children and our friends. We would like to see the small farmers continue to farm with low interest loans. We want a loan, but very low interest. We need to get ahead. We 're behind and I don't see if we don't get some help tonight. I don't see too much happening with the Secretary Department. We have been hollering, we have been complaining, no one seems to care. This opens my eyes and let us know that you are here and you want to hear our cry and our plead. I can rest fairly good tonight knowing that all of you all will hear us and hear our plea so we can maintain staying on the farm

and working on the farm. Our cattle, we need better prices for our cattle, it's awful and a shame how we work hard feeding those cattle in all kinds of weather and we sell them and we just don't come out. We buy fertilizer and the fertilizer going higher and higher every year - nothing's coming down. Our produce that we sell is down. We are hurting, not only on the outside, but inside and the inside is what we want to make better. We want all of these distinguished people here to hear our cry. Because there's nothing else that I know how to do but to farm and when I think about farming, the bible says in 2nd Timothy and the 5th verse says that the farmer that does the hardest work should get the first share of his harvest and we get the last. Now something going to have to come on up. We're way behind what God said to do. So, we're going to have to come up and the farmer ... we don't mind working hard, we don't mind sweating, we don't mind getting dirty, but when we sell our products, we want to make sure that we get adequate good prices. And when we work in tobacco, Kentucky is known for the burley tobacco, and we have some top burley tobacco, and we want better prices for our tobacco. If the cigarettes goes up why can't the prices of tobacco go up. We should have 2 dollars a pound for tobacco. Cartons of cigarettes are out of sight and we're still down on the bottom. We want to come up on top this year for 1997. And I was glad to hear the Secretary say about the young people going

back on the farm I have 3 sons and a grandson and they come up and help me on the farm. They would love to build a house there on the farm, but it's no living, you can't just farm and make a living, you have to work outside because nothing is permanent on the farm. And I'm hoping and praying that we can get these farmers here that's here a better price, a better ... everything better, make it better, we've been down - we can't borrow money, they look at you like, you know, your farm is paid for, everything's paid for and you still can't borrow, you don't have enough collateral. So things are going to have to get better for the farmer. We don't look for a handout. We are not up here begging. We just want you all to make things better for us so we can continue to farm. Thank you. (applause)

Jerry Lee: And thank you. I have been reminded to tell you that we are recording these proceedings so that the team can review these tapes at anytime that they would need to to get some points clarified. I have also been reminded that we request you to give your name, county and your state so that's another point that I missed. Alvin O'Neill.

Good evening. My name is Alvin O'Neill, Somerville TN. I'll be real short. If you didn't hear us 15 years ago when we went into Farmer's Home

Administration in Covington, I wonder will you hear me today? We are still asking the same thing. Justice - same thing. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Rev. Jones - Seel Jones. Reverend Jones? Is the Reverend still in the room? Okay, We'll come back to him later on. William Mack.

Thank you, I'm William Mack from Vanderburg Kentucky and my county's Mead county and I'm very glad to be here tonight to express my opinion on the farm. As I've said many times don't many get the opportunity to come the way that I have - my wife just spoke. I worked at a chemical company for 30 years and thank goodness I was able to retire 2 years ago and we bought our farm in 1964 with just a down payment. I had to work full time at the chemical company swing shift. 8 to 4, 4 to 12 and midnight and we had a little less than 100 acres back in 1964. We had to work, our children had to work on the farm, I had to work swing shift to hold the farm. And now this is 1997. I retired and had a good, high paying job, one of the best in the state of Kentucky. The job I had was college education although I didn't get the job I was supposed to get when I went to the company back in 1966, but I worked up to it. But in 1997, it's still the same way. When a good paying job we had to keep a good paying job to keep the

farm going. And we didn't buy the best of equipment we bought used equipment. We bought the 50 horsepower tractor and right now we just purchased a 70 horsepower tractor, just purchased that a few months ago to try to make it easier as you get older. So, I'm just wondering where are we going? We try to encourage our young people to come on the farm. How can you encourage young people to come on the farm when you are not making nothing for yourself? How do you do it? Where do we go from here? We have got to get the young people back on the farm. How do you hold your farm when you're not making nothing? Now this is true facts, we raised cattle, we raised hogs, we raised tobacco. We raised hay and we raised other crops to supplement the farm and to keep the ground and the pasture and all that going. But how do you do it? We're here tonight to -what are you all going to do to make the farm better? What can you do for a 100 acre farm? That's what I'd like to know. Because I'm 65 in the next few days and it was the same in 1964 as it is now. It was hard times then and it's hard times now. Where do we go? The prices are low, and the price is high at the chemical plant. I worked at the chemical company and I didn't do hardly nothing as many of you all who work in public jobs. You're just there. And you may get paid big money. Then you go home and work until 10 o'clock at night trying to feed the cattle and the hogs and you're not making nothing. You all know it and

you can make the big money on the job, time and half, double time on holidays and all that - triple time. Then you come home and you can't hardly feed the hogs. You can't take the money you feed the hogs with and buy another hog. It's the same in Kentucky and Georgia and Mississippi and everywhere we go. It's everywhere. So what I want to know I have a son, 22 years old, he wants to farm, but he said Daddy's done retired 30 years working and you can't sell anything to make anything off of it. You can't sell 5 head of cattle and go back and buy one. You all go sell a load of cattle and see how many you can buy back - you won't get nothing. Where do we go? I'm very glad to be here, thank you for the opportunity and I'm just wondering - as I grow older, and time is passing on I would like to say where do we go? You tell us, I'll be glad to accept the answer, just tell us. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Mr. Mack. Well, we've had some excellent comments made at this point and I wonder if any of you in the audience who did not declare your willingness to make a comment have been intrigued enough by these comments that you've changed your mind. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to make a statement? Yes sir, please come forward and state your name, county and city.

Good evening everybody, I'm Robert Smith from Arkansas. - I'm one of the few farmers I believe someone on the stand probably know who I am. From Forest City, I think Mr. Reed knows who I am. But what I want to say is that in 1995, I'm talking about FH & A. I know they call it Farm Services or whatever they call it now, but what I want to say is that I don't think I was treated right. I know I was in debt, but I'm representing Jesse Smith farming cooperation which owns about 460 acres of land at the time I farmed about 1500 acres went in that year for a loan and I don't know what happened, they say they gave me a subordination - go to the bank to get the money. Now I thought if you get a subordination, a bank should honor it if you've got somebody in FHA pushing it. But I don't think that nobody in FH&A down there in that area was pushing it because I went to every bank in sanfranty county, monroe county, cross county and they cut the subordination down and the bank that I had been doing business with - I ain't going to call names - and the bank that I had been doing business with I could have the subordination in 1994 and I paid them out. Now I might not have met all the criteria for FH&A, but they gave me a subordination and that bank wouldn't honor the subordination. So that put me into you know what. And to this day, I can't get no money. I don't think I was fairly treated and need to

talk to somebody about that because when you all issue a subordination, I figure you ought to stand behind it and if the bank don't do it, well if you interview me and tell me you got a hundred thousand dollars, they're going to put a security for me, I believe the bank should honor the 100 thousand dollars same way FH&A would. If I was going to borrow 200 thousand dollars or whatever. So that's what I'm here for tonight. I wasn't treated fair. Thank you.

Mr. Glickman: Sir, if you would stay at the end after it's over I'd like Randy Weber, (Why don't you raise your hand so they can see you) to talk with you. He's the honcho with the Farm Service Agency and he's very, very capable man - I want him to talk to you before you leave.

My name is John Clay, I'm from Frankfort, KY and I have a small farm. The problem that we basically have in KY is that there's very few Black farmers. Talk about county agents - when you are the only Black farmer in a county, and many counties are that way, you have little voice. Very much that goes on, you're the last one to be notified of programs. Usually they've been phased out when you get to us. The other problem is that we are just like ghost people. The Secretary very seldom hears about us. The nation very seldom hears about us.

They don't even realize that there are still Black farmers around. Somehow, we need to change that image. To get to young people and to get young people into farming, you're going to have to first get to these financial institutions. That's the key. Because for young people to get into farming they are going to have to get into machinery. They have to have machinery. The machinery costs as much as the farm. So if we can I'd like to see, from top down, from Washington down some kind of education, to get to these young people they need to get through the county agent, land grant schools They need to be revamped all the way around because very often what is happening is that the Black land grant schools are being phased down and the agriculture programs in those schools many times are nonexistent. Discouraging young Blacks to even go into agriculture. We need to turn all of this around, otherwise, we .. most of these farmers are at the retirement age, when we're gone, our children are gone because many of them are already discouraged about entering. The financial situation you've heard about that - that's one of the key things. The other is the black mark against all farmers. There is no future in farming. We need to change that around. There's so many things that needs to be done. This is not just a Black issue, I think this is a farm issue. I mean black and white, because what's going to happen and we farmers are all talking about that in Kentucky because of tobacco and the attitude in

Washington towards the burley belt is that in small farms with alternative farming and yet - like in Kentucky, what alternative do we have? There's no processing plants in Kentucky for alternative crops even if we went to vegetables. We'd have to go 2 or 3 hundred miles if we grew alternative crops. And yet from Washington down there's no encouragement to us as to how to initiate - you don't go into something unless you unilaterally plan it and yet they're telling us you plant it, you grow alternative crops and then come to us because we don't know what the answer is ourselves.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, sir. We'll take one more statement from the floor and then we'll go back to our list and I believe this gentleman...

Good evening everybody, I to God, He's the head of my life, what I wanted to voice my opinion about Farmer's Home. I have had some very bad experiences with them. I have been fighting this case since 1994. I applied for a loan for 200 thousand, they gave me 66 thousand at 8 and 1/2 % interest for 6 years. I don't know if anybody heard...Michael Stowalt and I'm from Huntsville, Alabama but my loan was applied in Pulaski, Tennessee and I applied for 200 thousand at 5% interest and they kept denying me, then they finally granted me

66 thousand at 8 1/2 % interest for 6 years and I applied to purchase a farm and equipment and cattle. So I was denied for the 200 thousand, but I was granted 66 thousand. Right now I've been through ice storm in February, I lost 20 head of cows, I been on television, I've been arrested, I've been the whole 9 yards. It cost me a thousand dollars a month to feed those cows, I have a hundred and 20 head - cows and calves - Farmer's Home, they told me they was going to give me some disaster money, I qualified for the disaster money, and I never did receive any disaster money. I never did see any response. I got on television, I cried out in every kind of way I could to get some assistance. They turned their back on me and I'm not the only one. There's many, many more of us and we are tired and I've been praying hard for something to come through. I'm through.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Michael. We're going to go back to our list now and then we'll come back to the floor.

Secretary Glickman: If it's possible I'd like to get Tennessee folks to let me know, Michael, I assume that I could get some information about your loan applications and everything else, which county is that, would that be?

Michael - Giles County.

Secretary Glickman: Giles County. Could somebody get me some information about this ...

Michael: I've got everything you need right here. (Laughter, applause)

Secretary Glickman: We'll ... I'll take a look at it.

Jerry Lee: Mr. Sam Lee .. Samuel Lee.

I'm from Lordel county, Tennessee. Many of the concerns I have have been addressed and it seems that the problem I have now sort of pales in the face of all we have heard so far. I would like some I guess verification or perhaps some consideration of a change in the catastrophic insurance. I refer particularly to the provision whereby you must plant a crop in order to get any catastrophic insurance. Realizing that a farmer goes through the expense of preparing the land, putting in all of the premerge crops, the burndown, the fertilizer and everything and then a catastrophe occurs. In our case the Mississippi River for

the last 2 years, we've been unable to plant the cotton because by the time we got ready to plant the river came out and flooded us out. Paid your insurance, but yet you get no consideration because you did not get a chance to plant. My concern is that if something could be worked out whereby a farmer could recover some of the initial pre-plant expenses that he's occurred (sic). This is what I would like for the committee to consider.

Dan Glickman: Can I just ask Randy Weber. You might want to .. we've had this problem in different places around the country where the "cat" coverage is triggered when the crop is destroyed and doesn't deal with the problem that you talk about. There have been some cases where we have managed to get this taken care of, I wonder if you might know anything, or might want to talk to him, I don't know what part ..whether it's in a part of the country where there hasn't been any consideration to prevented planting coverage under the "cat" policy..

Randy Weber: Samuel, I'd like to talk to you after the meeting. There is prevented planting under the "cat" coverage that would help to cover ... unfortunately the "cat" coverage the level of coverage is very low, but I would certainly like to talk with you afterwards to discuss this further.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Charlie Rain ...Charlie Rain... Did I pronounce that correctly? Charlie Rain... We'll come back to Charlie. This gentleman over here would like to speak. Please give your name and where you're from.

I'm Robert Elliott, I'm from Gibson county, TN. Honorable Glickman, members of the panel, good afternoon. I've worked with Extension service for about 20 years and I know directly, not what somebody said, but I know directly what has happened with some of my farmers in the Agricultural extension service. I was allowed to work with certain farmers. They were supposed to be classified as small farmers and a small farmer in order to classify you had to be under \$10,000 gross sales, well, that's not much money. We had in particular 2 farmers in Madison Co. that somehow or another they were trying to get new homes. Everytime the money would get right, the plan for the house would be wrong. They would get the plan right and the money would run out. And this just kept going over and over and over again and I was determined that these people were going to get a house so I called a man in Washington by the name of Honey Washington and he came down and ... big, distinguished looking gentleman, and

we were out loading pepper at the co-op in Jackson. I almost got fired over it. But they sent Mr. Washington down and in Nashville they told him to check with me. I met with him and then they had a meeting to fire me. Well, that was alright, they didn't fire me, but he said when I leave in the morning, I want you to have plans for this man a house and they did. Well, he got a house, then later on he got behind on his loan and they tried to take it away from him. Even had people going out there and looking at the farm in the morning checking on him and I was determined that he wasn't going to lose his farm because I was the one who helped him get it. So, we designed little projects, feeder pigs and what have you, and the man is about ninety something years old and still has his farm. That happened on 2 occasions. Not only did I work with small farmers, but we have agents here today and you wanted me to address some of the things going on in the agencies. For instance, we have racial slurs being ... letters being sent to agents to home demonstration agents in my county, nothing is being done about it. I mean horrible letters. I complained about a racial slur with the University of Tennessee and they spent \$750,000 trying to fire me. Money that would have given everybody in the state a small raise, but yet they jumped ... even sent airplanes over my house taking pictures. I have the pictures in my house now to prove it and all these ... I just want to address a few things. The Dean of the

University of Tennessee I see is here. This dean is not responsible and I want to make that clear for all the things that have happened. He has done some things to try to improve the image with the Extension Service. At the time I left the extension service ... I have a small business now I build kitchen cabinets and design baths and what have you, but at the time I left we had about 450 people in the state of Tennessee that were white and we didn't have a single black agent who was a supervisor or above supervisory capacity and we just can't have this. The thing of racial slurs ... we've had to go to meetings and be sitting in meetings and listen to those slurs. One of my comments, one of my pet peeves was that I was out on the farm and heard an employee or heard a judge make a statement that the little nigger boy had the best animal, but I wasn't going to give him first place. And when I wrote the dean he said get you some witnesses and we'll fire Robert Elliott. This kind of thing, this kind of thing... somebody else didn't take his full time so maybe I have an extra half a second. (laughter) We just don't need this kind of ... We have agents in the state that are going around cutting yards during the day .. supposed to be out helping farmers. We can't get them out to our farm. I have a farm, I live on a 180 acre farm, you can't get .. only time I can get the agent in my county over there is to make me shut up. He'll come out and check my grass. I know as much about grass as he does, but he'll bring

somebody from Knoxville out there to look at my grass. These kind of things, little insignificant things that are not going to help anybody and you can have a Ph.D. degree and drive a car and you don't have a car, you can't make no changes, you can't go nowhere and that's what we've had a lot of PhD's out there driving but they didn't have a car and in order for these people out there on the farm to be able to make some changes, they're going to have to have some money and FHA I think has been especially FHA.. the extension service has been guilty of it too because we haven't had any help. The gentleman said a while ago that we when we learn about the program the program is just about over. We put buddies on the committees. Kinship and friendship, they just kept going, same people kept on getting on the same committee. Over and over this one goes off and he goes over there to the FHA committee, he gets off the FHA committee and here he comes to get on the extension advisory committee. Same thing that has been going on and I'm sorry, I know I'm stepping on somebody's toes - I don't care. I work for me and I don't have to worry about where my check is coming from tomorrow. And this is the reason why people can't say too much because they're 3 months behind on the car note, 3 months behind on the house note, and you can't say nothing when you're behind with your notes, you're scared the man's going to cut your bills off, cut your money off tomorrow. You

know, I'm sorry I just get emotional and I .. after spending 20 years in this kind of mess, I see it all the time, we have a deal over in Madison county and I just got to tell you this one. Where the woman is probably the most articulate person I've ever seen as a teacher, she comes up for tenure and they fire her because she had she wore braids and she had a little boy to learn a speech "I have a Dream" and they fired her. Wouldn't admit her tenure. And now she's on the school board. She ran for school board and won. Now every Tom, Dick and Harry's jumping on the bandwagon that she ought not to do this and she ought not to say that and the person that they had before her was very quiet and that's what they wanted but it's time now for us to be quiet when it affects us and I had this statement when I talked to the dean, if this is this guys attitude, we don't need him making decisions that's going to affect Black children and get you some witnesses and we'll fire him.

Jerry Lee: Thank you Mr. Elliott. Thomas Donaldson.

To the Honorable Secretary, and to our distinguished guests, I'm speaking on behalf of the small farmers. Small farmers need to make a living, too. My concern is how our federal money is being allocated. I'm Thomas Donaldson

from Tipton Co. and I'm very concerned that the small farmers in Tipton county have not received their fair share of government money that has been allocated especially disaster money. I don't have 4 or 5 thousand acres where I can buy 200 thousand dollar combine or tractor. I must make a living truck farming and I know our government is interested in people making their own living. And one way a person can make a living is to farm. He can take 10 acres, 20 acres and truck farm and make a living, but if there's a disaster, he lost as much as that man who raised 100,000 acres of cotton. So that to me is unfair and I think that's one thing that needs to be addressed. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Mr. Donaldson. Mr. Wilson. Bruce R. Wilson.

Thank you. I had to listen to the Secretary to most of the comments this afternoon... I'm one of those persons who was with Tom Borrell when we were up sitting in and had been shot at some years ago. I have watched the total elimination of African American Farmers from my community. I'm from Philips County, Arkansas. When I returned from law school in 1973, there were approximately 41 farmers in this community that was started by Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration in 1938. It was the fulfillment of the elusive 40 acres

and a mule promise. We were called a project. One young man here Philos Driblin (?) who works for your Department .. Third .. Lets you know how long he's been around for people to be thirds. His dad was farming. Now there are absolutely zero African American farmers in our community. Throughout Philips county in 1948 African American people controlled 52% of the land mass in Philips county because we are in the delta area and until they built the levies, white people couldn't stay close to the river because the mosquitoes ate them up. So, we had grants from 1900 federal government flood land grants. African American people owned as much as 3000 acres of land, all of that has been taken due in part to the Agricultural Department which was the lender of first resort to small African American farmers and the lender of last resort to large white farmers. I can recall not too long ago when white farmers wouldn't go to FHA. Simply would not go in there because it was akin going into the welfare line. Now you can't get in there for them. The program that was started for the purpose of providing credit to those people who did not have credit elsewhere now been cut off from those persons. Tom mentioned the process of reparation. We have lost so much. We have lost so many farm families, so many opportunities. Anyone that has a sense of economic knows that all wealth comes from the land. If you do not have any land, you do not have any credit, without

any credit you can't education your kids, your kids can't go off to college, have a second generation that goes over into other occupations and become professional. You don't have the credit to start off with if you don't have any land. There was a few years ago much acclaim program in your department about set asides for minorities to buy land. That was the biggest joke that has ever come out of Washington. Because you created a program where African American farmers had to compete with white farmers for the same money and had to bring up their credit spreadsheet to the office, the local office and look at the white farmer who has security and the Black farmer who just got a hope, white farmer's got the money. You are now financing in your department monopolies. integrated industries agricultural industries being financed by your department. they're monopolies. You finance the farmer, corporate or otherwise, who buys the land, he then borrows money from you to buy the implement (company ?) he then gets the flying set (?), then the fuel and oil supply and the parts shop and he knows or she knows when the marginal farmer is in bad shape and the helped get him in bad shape and then they end up with the land all financed by you. Now, I will be submitting to Mr. Reed and the panel probably along with Mr. Calvin King who is here and Mr. Tommy Davis in the back written comments, voluminous written comments on these areas and the

atrocities that have been committed. One last thing I want to say: the past Secretary I thought Mr. Espy who I know and knew well, I think probably in an effort to do good did one of the worst things that could have happened for farmers when he put the old FmHA under the auspices of the ASCS, which is the most racist dept. in the history of ... you turned over the chickens to the fox. (laughter and applause)

Jerry Lee: Mr. Joe Bryant.

Mr. Secretary, my Daddy told me a story about 40 acres and a mule. I'm sure you've heard it before. The mule's dead, and my white brothers have the forty acres. We are not looking for a gift. Somebody in FSA decided that they would appoint an advisor to the committee. Big joke. He or she has no vote.

Secretary Glickman: Are you talking about the county committee?

Mr. Bryant: County committee. He or she has no vote. It's humiliating. They sit there and watch decisions being made and voted up on and all you can do is make comment. That needs to be changed. Two years ago, we were in

Washington, DC . There were lots of recommendations made to change that. Nothing happened. The guidelines when you appoint Blacks, African Americans to these different positions, when you seek help, they quote you guidelines. We're tired of hearing about the guidelines. We need some action. Just to see a black face that has been appointed to one of the positions and when you ask for help, you get quoted the guidelines. I've been quoted the guidelines for 4 years. I need some help. Farmer's Home Administration refused to finance my operation in any form because we established a partnership. I talked with former Secretary Espy about it, he said he was going to see that something happened, never heard about it again. I hope that doesn't happen today. We need .. We have a family farm that we expanded and for paperwork purposes we developed a partnership. We are a family farm with 4 family entities, we are not a conglomerate cooperation and we can't benefit from any other services. We can't even benefit from some of the disaster programs. If that be the case, because of the way we're structured, one agency says we can structure one way another one comes back to say you conflict the guidelines. I asked the State Director, I've asked people from Washington, I've sought help to get the guidelines changed, even have an audience with you, Mr. Secretary. I haven't had any help. So, I'm here today and I hope to talk to you. Thank you, sir.

Jerry Lee: Mr. Bryant, would you give us your City and county, please?

Mr. Bryant: I'm from Clinton country, Arkansas. I'm a democrat. I'm from a little place called Allport, Arkansas, I'm the mayor there. I'm a farmer and I need help.

Jerry Lee: We're going to take one more, then we're going to take one from the floor. We're going to take one from the list, going to take one from the floor, then we're going to take a break. Okay? Mr. Tom Anderson. Mr. Tom Anderson? (does not respond). Okay. We'll take one from the floor.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary to the members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen I'm Ben McGee from Arkansas. Mr. Secretary, I want to straighten up one thing, Joe Bryant made a mistake on where he's from, he's from a little place called Huminoak. (laughter). The gentleman's a classmate of mine back in college. People have been talking about ASCS a little bit and I'm one of the original employees I guess or one of the first ones that ASCS was forced to hire in

Arkansas in '66. I worked for ASCS for about 8 years. and the thing that when Mr. Espy started talking about putting it under the auspices of ASCS I had a chance to visit with him at that particular time and I raised some concerns about it because during the time I was with ASCS I think there were about 4 African Americans working for ASCS throughout Arkansas and of course, when I left in the early 70's, I think 2 of them had left, there might have been 1 or 2 left. Then of course it might be one or 2 left in the state now. The pattern I noticed about ASCS even electing county committees, Mr. Secretary, what they would do, especially in the area where I was from, they would go out and find someone who couldn't read or write, who was a farmer, maybe he was a farmer of 25 acres or 30 acres and they would submit his name for the committee. And I don't have to explain to you why he was submitted - his name was submitted. I'm telling you that because I hope that you will relook at this alignment And maybe do something about it. But let me tell you what my comments to you are about. I'm in the house of representatives in Arkansas and back I guess about 5 years ago we knew how difficult it had become for African Americans to borrow money from the banks up and down the delta. So, some of us got together and we decided that after interviewing some bankers and the bankers talking about the interest rate in Arkansas being so low and there was such a high risk loan they

weren't interested in even with the guarantee loaning money to the small farmers, so what we did in the legislature, we passed some special legislation, Mr. Secretary, and we put about 10 million dollars of state money in the banks in the delta to try and encourage the banks to loan money to these high risk people that they indicated that they had a problem with. Guess what they did with the money? They loaned money to all the people they were loaning money to to begin with at a lower interest rate and it wasn't to African American farmers. So, after a couple of years of this and observing what they were doing with the money, we repealed the legislation in the state and stopped doing it because it never got to the people. So, even with your guarantees you still got a problem in the delta because the banks are not going to loan any money - even with that.

What you have to do if you really want to affect change in the delta among the African American farmers is first of all you've got to have an FHA that's farmer friendly and you've got to ensure that the money gets to the people who need the money. And how do you do that? It's simple. You simply put people in charge who are interested in making sure the process works. Now, you need to go back and look at the people who had charges filed against them that you've got in high positions now and you need to get rid of all of them. You just simply don't need to hold any more investigations, you need to get rid of all those people and you

need to start with a new slate of people who are farmer friendly and put the money out there where the farmers are. That's all you have to do and the problem is resolved. Thank you sir.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. One more. Let's have one from the floor.

I'd like to say God bless everyone this evening my name is Joe Black and I'm from Arkansas, Crittenden county. I'd just like to say I've had a lot of bad experiences with the Farmer's Home Administration in .. the Farm Services and all of that but I'd like to just name about three: One is untimely loans from FHA you know, you can put your application in in January and get your money in June or July and you can't do nothing with it. And also I had some programs that I was ... I had 253 acres of land and 97 acres of wooded land and was trying to put it into a program that I understood would pay 50 dollars an acre for the wooded land, but nobody in my county knew anything about it and you find out you've got other people there with the same wooded land in the program. Then I was approved for a 8 inch water well to raise vegetables to subsidize the farm. Senator Pryor at that time had approved it, they came out and checked the land

the soil, tested it and it was the right type and then the local committee decided that well since he's the one who was going to get it, they they were going to enter another man and challenge him so Senator Pryor sent a man back and said that Joe Black can't get it, we ain't going to give it to nobody. Now, who did it benefit? Didn't help me any. Nobody got it, so.. I've had some bad experiences. So we need some help. God bless you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Let's take a 10 minute break. You've been a very cooperative audience.

Breaktime

Jerry Lee: Folks who requested to make a statement, we have about 6 or 7 left on the list and we do intend to conclude the session at 8 o'clock this evening and if we go ahead and expeditiously call for people on the list, then we still will have some time hopefully for those of you on the floor that have not had an opportunity to make a statement and would like to .. if you want to ensure that, step outside and get your name on the list and we'll also accept that too. But we

will be closing the session at 8 o'clock. Next person on our list is J.L. Wilson.
(was on list twice) How about James Stuplim? Mr. Mills. Cleophus Mills.

Cleophus Mills from Arkansas, Philips county. I have been unfairly against in
Philips county myself by Farmer's Home Administration. They denied my loan 2
or 3 times. the only way I got my loan was through Arkansas Land Farm
Development Corporation. That's all I've got to say.

Jerry Lee: Mr. Evans Johnson, III.

My name is Evans Johnson III, Mississippi county, Arkansas. I am a third
generation farmer and I farmed all my life, born and raised on the farm in
Mississippi county on the farm in which I now live. I've applied for loans from
Farmer's Home approximately 5 times and been denied each time. I was funded
twice on 2 separate occasions 2 years in a row and the second time - third time I
applied for loan was denied in may. The loan application was turned in in
January final denial came in May and went through foreclosure on farm sale in
93 on equipment loan. Farmer's Home paid the bank \$113,000 there seen
without any knowledge of me knowing what the claims were against me. Then in

1995 .. in 1996 I went through a real estate foreclosure with Farmer's Home now you have people on your state committee with bogus claims that Farmer's Home has now paid these are people on our state committees that have now paid with no proof of a claim. Anybody in these positions can go in and say they have a lien on your crops or whatever you do and contact you your state officials and your national officials like yourselves you don't get any response from them. And that's been done time and time again. And nobody's going to continue to encourage their children to follow in their footsteps if the same kind of scenario continues. That's all I have to say.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Mr. Young, Harry Young.

Good evening, I'm Harry Young from Orangeburg Kentucky, Davis County. I have a letter here that I submitted to Mrs., Barbara Nelson, Civil Rights and Small business development staff. On March 28, of 1996. It pertains to discrimination with the Farmer's Home Administration. I have not I cannot get anyone to talk to me about the status of this discrimination complaint, I cannot talk to anyone. I called the office and they tell me don't call back. That they have arthritis and that they don't want to talk . They've got other things to do. And this

was in March of 86. I'd just like to know what can I do to find out the status of this complaint that I've filed?

Secretary Glickman: When did you file the complaint?

Mr. Young: March 28, 1996. Mrs. Barbara Nelson, Civil Rights and Small Business Development Staff Washington, DC - that's who I filed it with. I've got a copy of what I filed, I've got a copy for my farm representative in the area showing them where ... I'm the only Black farmer in 3 counties and I have a million tons of coal on this property that the Farmer's Home has been trying to take away from me. I've submitted bids to TVA for \$26 a ton, I'm certified as an 8(a) coal producer - only Black coal producer in the United States I guess. I've submitted bids over this farmland to the TVA for \$26 a ton they turned my bid down. The same analysis and everything, they paid \$28 a ton for the same coal that I've been trying to sell for \$26 a ton. So, you're talking about discrimination, I know .. I can write you a book on it. From the ASCS when I first started farming they had soilbank (?) and this is all recorded. I'm the only farmer in that area that had to pay back his soilbank money. I had to pay mine back. I can write you a book on it. But I would just like to know who

do I contact or what's going to take place with this letter that I wrote to Mrs. Barbara Nelson?

Secretary Glickman: Let me ask you something: Do we have your name and address?

Mr. Young: My name is Harry Young, 10554 Highway 231, Utica, Kentucky. U-T-I-C-A Kentucky 42376. My telephone number is area code 502 ..

Secretary Glickman: We'll contact you, you don't need to contact us ..What's your phone number again Mr. Young?

Mr. Young: Area code 502, 275-4590.

Secretary Glickman: Okay, we'll contact you. You want to know the status of your complaint and the particulars ..

Mr. Young: I can give you a copy. I can get it all right here, I'll give you a copy.

Secretary Glickman: Why don't you get us a copy of the letter you wrote.

Mr. Young: What I sent her.

Secretary Glickman: Okay.

Mr. Young: Thank you, sir.

Secretary Glickman: Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Mr. Young. (applause) Mr. Abraham Carpenter, Jr.

First of all I'd like to say Good evening to everyone. Honorable Secretary, Ladies and gentlemen on the panel, my name is Abraham Carpenter, Jr. I'm a member of the Carpenter produce family, Grady (?) Arkansas, Lincoln County. We farm approximately 1000 acres of produce. I've encountered some problems with the Farm Service Agency which has been going on for approximately 4 years. I'll be very candid with you and to the point about the issues. At the present state, I've

won all of my appeals, I'm at the national appeal director's level right now which I was due a decision on December 11, but to this day I haven't gotten my answer, but according to law, by December 11 it was the deadline. They have been holding my payments from the Farm Services Agency for over three years. They have cost me over approximately \$200,000 in legal fees. They have damaged my business by approximately 90 million dollars. They have caused my family and I so much stress, pain and mental anguish and also total defamation of our character. Since this conspiracy began, I received disparate treatment Farm Service Agency has intentionally upheld my paperwork they have intentionally developed methods by which to disqualify and deny me from payments and programs. I have been refused assistance in filling out my paperwork by Farm Service agency employees, We have not received equal access to participating in Farm Service Agency programs, services and information. Gentlemen, I want to make it perfectly clear that I don't have a prejudice bone in my body. I love and respect all people. I see only one color and that color is green. (laughter) But I must admit, when someone tries to purposely destroy your livelihood, and when you know you're being treated different and then being perceived as being inferior to another race, only the love of God would keep you from hating those persons who are taking those actions against you. And I do mean only the love of

God. I'm thankful I do have the love of God. They say they are following procedures to justify all of the wrongdoing that has taken place. They act as though they are above the law. But I know procedure and I know the law. I know when unnecessary stress and burden of proof is being placed on the producer. This is not fair, nor is it justice. They use the terms procedure and policy to justify the procrastination process by which they use to delay the implementation and the process by which government programs are supposed to function. It is morally wrong as well as against the law to treat someone in this manner. Many farmers are outraged at what has taken place. Some even wanted to resort to violence. I explained to them that if you act ignorant, you get treated that way. You must be intelligent about all things and all situations to receive respect. I told them that there were laws against these type of actions and we must find justice in the law. There are other problems out there that are being experienced by other farmers in other areas of government programs and services. These problems as I have described them relate and refer to my personal encounters with the Farm Service Agency. Solutions to the problems: Possible solutions to the problems should begin with making sure we have fair and impartial employees administering these government programs. How can an employee administer a program fairly when he or she makes racial remarks and

looks at a member of another race as inferior to him or herself? These people should be terminated. The administering of government programs should be monitored to make sure that all farmers are receiving equal access to participation and all programs and services. Make sure that all information is disseminated to all producers and that producers are aware of the programs which they may be entitled to or may benefit from. Stop the procrastination process by which the agency's used to delay the implementation and the processing by which government programs are supposed to function. The agency should not be allowed to make up rules as they go along to justify their actions. This has happened. I've seen them make new rules just to place a greater burden of proof on the producer, and to deny a certain producer from benefits that he was entitled to. Create new programs that will work in favor of the farmer and not against him. for example the NAP program created for alternative crops supposed to replace the disaster program .to my understanding, the requirements to qualify and receive payments under the NAP program automatically restricts basically anyone from receiving a payment. I see it as a program carefully designed by the agency just to say a disaster program is in place but it also is being designed where no one will ever receive a payment, and if so, it won't even cover your production costs. It needs to be redesigned or totally eliminated

because minority farmers are more affected by this program than anyone else. The time frame in which most minority farmers receive their payments is substantially later than other farmers. Some employees have purposely delayed minority farmer loans and payments or put them on the bottom of the list. Certain employees can verify that this is true. This is purposely done to expedite foreclosure and elimination of minority farmers. This can be easily proven because there's a pattern how this process has taken place over the years. This process should be monitored, totally disallowed or totally discontinued. Government employees should be held accountable for intentionally trying to destroy one's livelihood. As it stands right now they make any allegations they like. They can deny a person services and information, they can delay making payments until they deem necessary, and they can cause a person many undue hardships and financial disposition because of their personal feelings and nothing be done about it because their protected by the government. If they knew they would be held accountable personally as well as the whole agency, you would have far less problems, because they would think before making their decisions. I've been told that EEO - Civil Rights was a joke. If this is true it needs to be reformed. We need totally unbiased individuals serving in this capacity who will work diligently and relentlessly to see these cases resolved. Remember your

organization can only be as good as the people working within the organization. Last but certainly not least, for anyone who has been discriminated against, restitution should be made and in a timely manner. We cannot resort to violence nor ignorance, but based upon the law of the land all men are created equal. No man shall be discriminated against because of race, creed, color or sex.

Individuals should be compensated for the damages that have occurred so that justice can prevail. Now, I know that these things that I've talked about today does not sit well with a lot of agency employees, but these things shouldn't even exist for me to be discussing. Everything that I've said was true. Everything I've said has occurred. Everything was based upon the facts and the law. Just be honest with yourself and you all know that discrimination exists. I'm not angry at anyone for creating it, so don't be angry at me for pointing it out. They time has come for us to recognize the problem, address the problem, find a solution to the problem and come together focusing all our thoughts, all our envies, all our hatred and all of the unfairness on creating an agency that is fair, impartial to all producers as well as employees from this day forward. Thank you. (applause) I have my written remarks as well as my oral.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. I indicated to you early in the evening that these proceedings were being taped, the transcript will be made available to you if you should so desire at this address, please write this down if you're interested. The United States Department of Agriculture, Civil Rights Action Team, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC, 20013. If you care to fax your request in, that number is 202-720-9030 and I will be announcing this again before we leave here this evening. Carolyn Prowell.

I'm Carolyn Prowell with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluffs and I'm working with the small farm project. I reside in Philips County, Marvel, Arkansas. I don't stand before you to bite the hand that feeds me, but I was born and raised on a small farm and on that farm my grandmother used to tell me that some of the most intelligent people in the world were farmers, so when I got out of high school, I majored in agriculture. I majored in agriculture because I wanted to help farmers. I really don't find myself helping people the way that I'd like to and I've seen a lot of programs come and go and I would like for this particular program to really do something positive for the farmers. I don't want to take back to the farmers false hope, I want something positive. These people came here when they hurt, if you work with them, you hurt, too. My first job was

with Farmer's Home Administration. Sixteen years ago and when I worked there I vowed I'd never work with farmers again because I didn't like what I had to do and I did it to the people that I lived with in the town that I lived with. I'm on the flip side now, I'm trying to help people but I'm limited, if I'm presented with a farmer who has a \$600,000 debt, and he's farming 60 acres, how can I help him? I can't. I know what they feel and it doesn't make me feel good when I'm out there trying to help somebody and I know I can't. So, if you aren't going to do anything positive for them, please don't build their hopes up and don't build my hope up because they're my family, my brothers and sisters that I work with. I can go out and get a job, that's why I left agriculture, I went back to school and majored in computer programming so I can get another job, but most of these people don't know how to do anything, but farm and if anybody were to ask me to give a list of 50 farmers that were successful, I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it - not with the people that I work with and that doesn't seem like that's a fair ... it's not fair. Please help them.

Secretary Glickman: Could I ask you, Carolyn's your name, right?

Carolyn: Yes.

Secretary Glickman: Could I ask you a question, from your perspective out there , what would be the kinds of things that you think we could best we do to ... you're working with folks day to day on the ground, what are the kinds of things we can do to be most help?

Carolyn: I think policy would help the people if the policy on the outside looks like it's going to help you like one of the gentlemen said with the housing, you have the money available, but the ... but it was something on the application policy, something on the application that was wrong you fix that and over here something is wrong. Things just aren't .. it's like they aren't meant to help the Black farmer. If they could change policy, if they could give loans with lower rates, it's like they're in a hole and you're going to have to come up, you're going to have to give them something to dig their way out of the hole and then they would be able to compete with everybody else. And they can't do it with what policy is providing right now. They have absolutely nothing to look forward to. If those ... and .. people ... one man said that if you had a office that was farmer friendly, I think is what he said .. I worked in an office my county supervisor, I honestly don't think that he saw a Black person until he came to

Philips County. And he would come through the back door, I worked with the man, and he'd come .. I didn't get up here to say all of this ..but he would come through the back door and he would be in his office and farmers would be lined up to see him and we wouldn't know he was there. I've asked the man questions about some of the files I worked with and it's 13 years later and he's no longer there and I don't have answers for those farmers. So if you're going to send me or if I'm going out someplace to work with somebody, let me be able to help that person, let me... don't send me in the area where I don't care for the people that I'm working with because I'm not going to try to help them. Send somebody whose willing to help those people, somebody who has a caring heart out there to work with those people and not somebody whose just there for whatever reason, trying to move up in rank maybe. There's a lot of things that could be done to help people.

Pearlie Reed: Carolyn, are you with the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff Small Farmer Outreach Program?

Carolyn: That's correct.

Pearlie Reed: Do you believe that our county offices can or will ever be able to correct the problems we have heard here tonight?

(Audience: No, no way)

Carolyn: Uh, yes they can, that was one of the things I jotted down when Secretary Glickman started talking. He said can we do anything and I wrote down yes, you can do anything, but will you do anything? Yes, you can do anything, but you can't do anything with the people that's there because they've been there too long and they haven't proven themselves. If I worked in a job for a certain length of time and I'm not performing, they're going to fire me! I've got to go, I've got to perform, or I have got to go. It's the same thing with them. If you don't know policy, it's in the book, you can go to the book. If I'm there for x number of years and I'm not helping anybody, then why am I there? Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Did the Reverend Seel Jones still care to make a statement?

Mr. Secretary, that's Reverend Seel James. I'm going to take a seat right here. I'm just as grateful to be here as many other farmers are this is my first time ever attending a farmers meeting. But I can share this one thing: To be a farmer is a gift from God and there are many farmers that I have associated myself with and have learned of that character and interest in farming and I need to share that with them if they're here. God ordains farming as wellso as He ordains ministries. Feeding is a ministry to the people of God. It's a nourishing ministry that feeds the body and let us not be mindful not to think that God places certain of us over his ministries to feed his people. I am so grateful to be here to listen to all of the problems and the compliments and the comments of each and every one of the different farmers, but let me share this before I complete my statement, God finds the farmer worth to farm. We must be found worthy to farm to raise cattle, anybody can drop a seed, but if it's not nourished properly from the heart then it won't grow and if it won't grow, then we won't be nourished from the heart. What's from the heart reaches the heart and it works wellso as it is in farming. We must be found worthy to do this job because it is certainly still yet God's business. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. How about Mr. Charlie Rain? Am I pronouncing that correctly? Charlie Rain. No? Okay. Mr. Steplin? Mr. James Steplin.

I'd like to say good evening, I've come a pretty good ways from here so, I've got on a lot of clothes, it's hot up in here. (laughter) My name is James Stefferson, I'm the sole operator of stephenson farms of Chickot county, my residence is Durmount, Arkansas, 206 North School Street. I've lot of problems with Farmer's Home Administration. I think Dr. (unintelligible) and I are ... we've been through a pretty good road down through Chickot county. If you're ever down in that area, kind of stop in and look in on us. Some of the problems we have that area of Chickot county that we kind of have to look both ways in the county - that's Drew County and Chickot County and Ashley County. 2 or one of the largest farmers in the area was foreclosed this past year and they was black farmers. One worked about 1800 acres of ground and other worked about 3000 acres of cotton. We're getting very thin and one of the problems is we can't get any financial. The bottom line is money. Programs are good, meetings are real good, but if you don't get the financial out there to us, and bring it to us, we didn't ask you to give us anything, just put the money available for us. One of the areas in my area is the money is put out there, but the black farmers don't get

it, we don't get it. I asked for a well ever since 1983. And I'm pumping out a ditch out of ..(unintelligible) right now. With a one to one gearhead on top of it. I had to have party plates (?) strung out for a mile to try to water some soybeans. That's unheard of. Here's my next door neighbor he's got a well every half a mile. How do he do this? Where is he getting his money from? Farmer's Home Administration. I'm the one needing it and another area: the young brother was on the front was talking about a decrease in Black people's land. Mr. Secretary of Agriculture, in 1927, I have my Grandpa's deeds in my briefcase right here and now, and the 40 acres and a mule is gone. That's not fair, that's not fair. And in another area in the catfish industry: In my area it's not.. I know someone is qualified to raise catfish, black. You can't tell me .. I used to pick them up by the ditch a long time ago. And you can't tell that a black man or a black lady cannot raise some catfish. Where is the money coming from? From Farmer's Home Administration. We can't dig a pond everything is posted. We can't hunt, we can't fish, so I think an area you need to look in is seeing to our civil rights are not being violated in 1984 Calvin King and I got run out of Chickot County and I live in Chickot county cause the man disqualified us for buying 900 acres of ground. and then Farmer's Home Administration went right down the road and got a man that the had foreclosed on and gave them 900 acres of ground and I

had 80-some thousand dollars worth of equipment already paid for. Already paid for. And how about cleaning the slate. The only way we're going to get something done is the people that are in these offices now if .. clean them out of there. You've got to get them out of there. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Mr. Calvin King.

Good evening, Mr. Secretary, panel, I'm that Calvin King that was with him in Chickot county. Let me say two things, just giving reference back to a meeting we had today in Fargo, Arkansas and again let me point back up here, my name is Calvin King I'm from Mead County Arkansas and I work with Arkansas land and farm development corporation. My experiences with Farmers Home Administration, formerly Farmers Home Administration now USDA Farm Services Agencies prior to that I think Rural Development Administration and then of course there are probably some other changes on the way , but in the 70's in some reference that was given by Mr. Borrell, I was also one who was denied . I was denied loan services because I was just coming out of college I wanted to return back home and become a farmer. I was denied those services. That somewhat motivated me in a way because I decided to study regulation a little

bit more and I still either way I would read those regulations forward, backward, upward, downward - I was eligible, but of course, this has been given reference to earlier - the way that regulations are interpreted sometimes by those who are implementing them are just the opposite of what was in black and white. So denial of my application existed and I never received services. Another part of the history is that I then was able to become employed with Farm Services now then Farmers Home administration for a period of time and that somewhat encouraged me a little bit more because it gave me a better understanding of system itself how regulations are applied to farmers and how they are able to get the access or denial to those services. I Left Farmers Home and went back to doing what I'm doing now working with small family farmers with Arkansas land and farm development corporation, then some other agency and initiatives I was involved with. We are also a partner with USDA. So as I stand here before you I want you to clearly understand that I am one who has been denied services, I am also one who has worked directly within the system of USDA I'm one who also, who served as an advocate in working with farmers for policy that would be more supportive of what these people are talking about here today, what we're all talking about here as far as special projects and programs to meet the needs, some of the special needs that exist with minority farmers and also with small

family farms in general, but particularly right now we're talking about minority farmers. I would say also in relation to that where we are now, Mr. Secretary, is where we were Mr. Borrell said, back in the 70's. If you examine the records, you'll find that USDA has some of the same findings on some of the same things that are being said here in 1997 that were said in 1976, 1973, well, is Jimmy still here, was it '73? Since 1973 and again in other hearings that were done back in the mid to latter part of the 1970' s. I would suggest two things: one that hopefully before we leave here tonight that there can be something very specific that is said that can be done, that will alleviate this issue and what we're dealing with here tonight. That it won't be a continuation. That we won't be dealing with this in a way where we are looking back on the past and saying that this is the cause of the situation that we are in today that happened in the 70 farm bills, the 80 farm bills, ...I've got one minute? I didn't even get my recommendation.

Jerry Lee: Go ahead, continue.

Secretary Glickman: We say in Congress without objection, the gentlemen's given an additional five minutes so ...

Mr. Stefferson: That we will not be dealing with this situation coming up in 1998 that we are not seriously addressing this issue in a way that will take us out of it. Not dealing with regulations and policies that does not respond to what these needs are and what the issues are. Some specific issues and needs and one you've already heard it: farmer friendly employees. That is a goal of USDA and I understand is a goal of USDA. The other is we need to identify the issues that were discussed in the 70's, look at those issues and see how they are comparable today. This sort of comparison analysis. If you do a comparison analysis of the issues identified in the 70's and these same issues are identified today, that should give a message. For some reason we have not gone anywhere in dealing with the situation we're faced with now. That we on the ...equal access.. you've heard that, don't have equal access. Recommendation on equal access: is that we have to initiate programs that allow us, and Mr. Secretary, we met I think last December last month, specific recommendation, I still recommend that to create a land banking approach through institutions working with the banks, not through the system itself that will create a greater opportunity for farmers to capitalize on the loan guarantee program called equity deposits. And that we also do more to support our 1890 land grant institutions. In building our capacity. We cannot say that the 1890's are not doing anything and people I just want to say

this for the record. They are doing a lot, but they're losing also because they also have been a victim of the taking away of resources just as the minority farmers have been also. So there's definitely more support and need on building the capacity of allowing them to do more in our local areas with our minority farmers and create more partnerships to address the diverse needs that are out there. Other point of direct recommendations on special targeted programs: youth has been referenced, you have youth programs you're supporting right now I think we need to expand and disseminate those programs more that specifically deal with African American or minority youth to encourage them to pursue careers in agriculture to get into farming. Mr. Mills who spoke here tonight is one that's gone through a youth program that we initiated back in 1990 supported by the USDA and by the private sector, he's now an entry level farmer. Roughly his third year into farming. Meaningful cost share programs. This is at the committee level. Now if you really look at the committee makeups, you know we've got a problem. I asked today when you were in Fargo, everyone who clearly understands, I'm talking about employees, I'm not talking about farmers, all the employees and I ask this to you today, that clearly understands the regulations as it intends to implement the law and everyone who clearly understands the law under the 1996 Farm Bill, please raise your hand. And that's

for every employee that's here in USDA tonight and I'm sure that I'll have all hands go up. Are there any employees here? (Laughter) Okay, we have some employees. Now everyone who clearly understands all those regulations, what the intent is of those regulations for implementing.. to be implemented to enforce the law, raise your hand. (No hands) Problem. My point is, Mr. Secretary, we have problems within that are having a devastating effects on the people that they're supposed to serve. That itself is something that has to be addressed and be dealt with. That's in-house. Marketing support, investments and marketing support programs that directly enhances the capabilities of institutional organizations that are creating those markets for small family farmers in particular minority farmers in the alternative crop area. The gentleman gave reference to that area that's a problem we need to also get investment dollars out of USDA to support programs that are targeted for new market development. We talked about the equity deposit, Mr. Secretary, I guess in my closing point let me say this, my ten minutes are just seven, uh, and my closing point is this: we have heard comments tonight about both discrimination, defamation of character, and much more. (silence) I'm sure you'll hear a lot more as we go through. Attorney Wilson, Representative Wilson also asked that I make two other comments that I was fairly sure I'll be respectable in, in dealing with the time basis that, the cost

share basis, cost share programs, building the capacity of these farms is important. We have never had equal access to support on cost share programs, or building soil capacity the gentleman just talked about that, not having access to irrigation, that's important for these farms if you're going to be more competitive, increase yields, more volume, making farms more economically sustainable, that's a direct recommendational area. My closing point is that as far as employees are concerned. I want to make sure that we understand that we're all in this boat together in a lot of ways. In the 90's under this administration, one of the goals is to increase the leadership in decisionmaking positions with minorities and African Americans within USDA. That has not happened. Recently there seems to be more of a decline. Certain ground has been lost and then with the consolidations and the mergers and the restructuring of the USDA. I think that's something that should be looked at both from the committee level perspective on different county committees and also within administrative positions that we need leadership positions within the system where they make decisions administratively and feel comfortable in doing that as well. When they're seriously attempting to deal with the needs that are out there. I'm going to close at that point and I will be hoping we can get some specifics on what the both the follow up and follow through will be.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Let me give you this address one more time and indicate to you that any written comments that you wish to submit should be in to Washington office no later than January the 12th, 1997 which is next Monday. I believe. That address is United States Department of Agriculture, Civil Rights Action Team, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC, 20013. Or the fax number: 202-720-9030. Now, let me ask you this question, I can't read anything left on my list. Have I missed anyone? Or is there anyone that would like to make a statement. Yes, sir?

Yes, my name is Willie O'Neill from Somerville, Tennessee. I'm very familiar with Farmers Home Administration I used to be a borrower from Farmers Home administration, but it got so... I'm just going to break it down... it got so racially until you were unable to talk to the supervisor and you were talking about that tape that you all were taping this meeting? I've got some tapes too that was taped by the supervisor. If you all would like to listen to them. The only way that I

think that we can correct this problem is put some people in those office who understand the problem of the people and just don't have certain people to deal with. If you would go to the Somerville office and check the ratio on black people, black farmers in general you will find that the ratio on every one of them ... and don't use those good ole boys. When he can't get it over, when the supervisor can't get it over, then here come the good ole boy. Put some people in the office that's able to stand up and be men and women. We had a person in the Somerville Office that tried to help black people, and she was rooted out. I sent my son to college he majored in agriculture he was interviewed for a job in Nashville. In the interview, the first thing this lady asked him, did he know this particular lady that I'm talking about that was put out of the job in Somerville. He answered if this job caused me to do my people wrong, I don't need it and he hasn't has another interview. He applied for a job with FHA he majored in agriculture.

Jerry Lee: Okay. Others?

Paul Alexander: Hello everybody, I'm from Aikram, Kentucky and I did a lot of business with FHA. I never was denied a loan, I got over \$700,000 from them. I was the only full time black farmer in my county. In 83 we had a drought, so it hit me pretty hard and so one of the main men from FHA was over my supervisor, he was in Washington, so he told my county supervisor that make sure I got a write off on my loan. But my supervisor in my county, he wouldn't do it.

Everytime I'd go there to get it done he'd have something else to do. So we never got it done I gave him the farms back and then I leased back, buy back from him for a while, then so I gave that up, and then I told him I didn't want nothing to do with it so I stayed there a while then they .. I talked to a guy that bought them farms, so I still had to go make the deeds to them to get the .. sign it over to them and everything after I give it back to them, I still had to do that. So, after I did that, I owed some tax down there to the courthouse. I owed IRS \$4000. so I told the supervisor about that, and he bought one of the main men IRS there and so I went to the courthouse before he could change the deed over he said all this occur, you don't owe the IRS nothing. So, it went on for about two months, maybe three, I got a bill back from the IRS, I still owed them money, so and I finally got that taken care of and I took care of it myself, they didn't take care of it, so they told me a bunch of stuff about that, but I still managed to save one of

my farms , still got it now but I wasn't done right on it, so that's about all I got to say. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you.

My name is Lem Anderson from Eudore, Arkansas. And I want to talk to the whole staff up there and let them know how I've been treated. I've been treated pretty rough, I'm a potato farmer and I raised vegetables and sweet potatoes I've got my grandson trying to help me, I've even borrowed money for him ... loan for my grandson to farm, too. I'm trying to keep him in with me, but every year for the last three years I've been taking ... I had to go to hearing to get my loan through. In 94 I went to a hearing for my disaster and I haven't got it back yet. They even took - I went three times for this hearing they told me that they had taken their judge that award me the disaster money, told me they had taken him to a hearing cause he award me the money, now they're taking him to a hearing. I don't understand it at all and so farming is getting rough. (laughter) I don't know if I'm going to have anything to do with farming this year, but I'm trying. I lost 30 acres of potatoes by being late getting my money to farm with. When you

bid your potatoes out in march you bid them out, you're supposed to have your money before March, I get my money in June or July, that ain't no farmer. You cannot make a farm that way, so people need to be doing something about us trying to farm. And when you're trying to raise your kids into farming, you need somebody to stand up for you. I've been going to hearings for the last 3 years trying to get money to farm with then I'd still be late getting it. And this year I don't know whether they're going to let me have a penny or not, 'cause I lost all of my money in the field and the said it's no disaster, but if you've got disaster you have to go to a hearing to get it, what good is disaster if you don't ever get it? So, I don't think disaster's worth nothing at all, but I've been through too many of them trying to get my disaster money and I don't get it and I have some friends, and I don't call colors friends, I call humans friends, they white friends. They said they got their money for the disaster. I still ain't got mine and if you take the judge to a hearing what's wrong, nobody believe nobody? So I'm just a poor farmer trying to keep on farming, but it looks like I'm going to have to give it up. So, that's what I want to let you all know I still ain't got what I was supposed to get. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you.

Secretary Glickman, USDA employees, farmers, my name is Jim Day I work with Tennessee State University in Nashville on their small farmer assistance program. Secretary Glickman, you were asking earlier the lady from Arkansas what specific items she might have on you could better assist farmers out there in the field. From my experiences working with farmers, the most important thing they need is equity. If they have equity in their farming operations they can get credit and in order for them to build equity, they need to have land. One of the ways they can gain equity is by purchasing farmland. The direct FO funds I understand have been consistently cut year after year. These need to be fully funded for the USDA loan program. Also I understand that the need to privatize such as the guaranteed loan programs, I understand that the year that these were originally set up, that there was interest assist money to buy down the interest rates to make those more attractive for the producers. If this could be refunded, on an annual basis this would help limited resource producers, minority farmers go to the lending institutions and be able to get loans at affordable rates. Also, restructure the way cost share programs are administered. Oftentimes what happens, the larger farmers, by being in or around the FSA office, know when these programs are going to become available. And since they're administered on

a first come, first serve basis, they know when the signup dates are there and therefore they take advantage of the programs. So the smaller farmers may be out in the field and not able to be at the FSA office when these things sign-up dates ... when the sign-up dates are administered and therefore they're not there to take care of the money when they are available. Also, when programs are developed, such as the CRP programs the consideration needs to be given to how these programs will affect sharecroppers and tenant farmers. When CRP land is pulled out of production, people that would normally farm that land are forced to look elsewhere to find rental land to farm. This drives up the cost of rental land and they're having to compete with farmers who own their own land and it puts them at an unfair competitive advantage. These are just some of the points that I had that I thought might be of assistance. Thank you.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. This gentleman.

My name is Norman, I had the opportunity to meet you in Epps, Alabama this summer I'm from Mead County, Kentucky. I'm a small farmer, I'm having trouble you promised up in Epps, Alabama that you'd look at the cattle prices.

This year, I worked from sunup to sundown, I'm farming 120 acres. Price of cattle is down to 32 cents a pound That's gasoline way up, fertilizer going up, I'm going in the hole. I'm farming by myself, my income on the farm this year, I won't make \$10,000 dollars. Price on my farm, expenses, \$12,000. I already lost \$2000. We're broke on tobacco, I got \$1.92 tobacco, fertilizer on the price of tobacco, broke even. Price of gasoline, fuel and oil, no expenses on the tractor, put a new clutch on the tractor, \$32/hour. My expenses ... zero. I worked all summer long for zero. And you were talking about the 30's and 40's we had incentive for gasoline, well gasoline was down 37 cents a gallon, the farmer got it for 18 cents. Fertilizer \$89 a ton, farmer got it for \$30 a ton. Seed corn, we planted seed corn, \$5 a bushel or \$110 a bushel and call it a unit. They've got so many units, you got 120 grains of corn in a unit and you had to plant 80,000 grains of corn per acre. You have to have 120 bushels an acre to make a profit. If I don't plant an acres of corn, if I don't get 120 bushels per acre I lost. What can we do? Your people, they are down here in Tennessee and Alabama and Arkansas have the same problem. Beans, soybeans, potatoes, we had a story in Alabama, we met a guy in Washington, I've been in Washington. Potato farmer, Arkansas, North Carolina, he's a hog farmer. He plant the pig farmer, he raises pigs, selling pork chops \$1.99 a pound, \$2.00 a pound, farmer getting what?

\$40 a hundred. Can you raise a hog for \$40? Can you raise a bushel of corn for \$200? We're all going broke. And you Mr. Epps, I met you in Alabama, you promised you were going to help us. You haven't done it and looked at me dead in the face and said hey, baby I will take care of you. You haven't done it. I'm here, I came from 450 miles here just to see you and smile in your face and say hi. (laughter, applause)

Good evening, I have listened to a number of the comments that were made My name is Robert Boone, I also work at Tennessee State University, but more importantly, I have been working with and doing research in the area of African American landowners since 1975. In 1979, I co-authored a book entitled, The Black Rural Landowner: An Endangered Species. As has already been mentioned we went from 1910 15 million acres to today less than 3. All of the concerns that have been raised here clearly point out that there are problems with African American farmers in relationship to attitudes and the reality that they experience as they have worked with various agencies. When we talk about the future and attracting young persons to, in many instances, take over the existing farm or existing assets or to get into owning land, the only way you can have that

happen is that ... we're a country that operates based upon 2 things. One is success stories and the other is role models. And when you speak of African American landowners unfortunately, that's where all the sad stories are. Lack of success stories and the lack of role models. It seems to me that one of the things I know we can do and that is we can begin some serious monitoring and evaluation of the present structure. Some have said we need to replace everybody, I don't know. I guess if the question was raised what kind of evaluation or monitoring process is in place now. I don't know what the answer would be I think I know what the answer would be. I know that we are living in an age where the congress is talking an awful lot - not doing much, but talking an awful lot, about term limits and I think one way, Mr. Secretary we can help the situation out at the county level is look at some term limits. We ought to look at term limits. We ought to look at qualifications. Ought to be specific guidelines for qualification. We ought to look at ways to avoid nepotism, brother, sister, uncle, cousin setting up a dynasty that continues to perpetuate the system. Because logically we have here is a system that continuously perpetuates itself. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. And I also would suggest that I have read and studied the last report that was done of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. I believe it was, I may be wrong, but I believe it was 87 - I don't recall the exact date, I've

got a copy of it in my car and it addressed many of the same issues we are addressing now. I think clearly that some mistakes have been made in terms of our monitoring these things to ensure that the money that comes to states have spent in a blind manner. When I talk to landowners and I talk to elderly people and by the way, research clearly shows that persons who own the land are persons who are in the age of 55 and above, senior level. When you look at it from the African American perspective. And if you go back to our history - we also know our history in terms of various things that went on there with respect to discrimination, we are dealing with a population that may not be that well educated or informed as in many instances their counterparts. We know that there are problems with the information getting down to them, you know, at the individual level. I think we know what the problems are and I also think in a positive way we can really begin to address some of those problems. I think the solution is really very simple: we need to simply utilize the forces we already have in place, with the land grant colleges and universities, but let's have some real efforts this time, let's not play games. let's look seriously at the county committee structure. And let's look seriously at persons who continue to be there let's look seriously at the statistics that will show those individuals who have benefited from programs and it will also show who the ones who have not. That,

to me logically as an educated person, that would indicate a problem. So I think it's really very simple in this regard because we need to have the kind of programs that are in essence color blind. I have no problem with local control so long as, at the same time, in my opinion, everybody works well, so long as they're monitored. We all would do the right thing. You know there are a lot of us that wouldn't observe the red light if we thought we wouldn't get a ticket and I just think we need to have some policing so that we can do a much better job and make sure that all our citizens benefit from what this great country has to offer.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. We have time for about three more statements at the most so let me once more indicate to you that you can write your comments if we don't get to you and that you can mail those comments or fax them. The address is United States Department of Agriculture, Civil Rights Action Team, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013. The fax number is 202-720-9030 and your comments should be in no later than next Monday. The fax number is 202-720-9030. Other questions about that.

Mr. Abraham Carpenter: This is just one statement I'd like to make, one recommendation that I left off and that is those farmers that are not familiar with

the minority farm bill. I strongly recommend the Department fully fund the minority farm bill number 2501 at the level that was recommended 10 million dollar level to give support to new initiatives as well as existing initiatives to deal with these issues that we're hearing here tonight.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Another statement back here

Mr. Borrell (?): Thank you. Mr. Secretary, you asked for specific recommendations from a young lady that was up earlier, what I'd like to do is follow up on something I said to you earlier. I think that the specific recommendations I urge you to appoint someone and while I'm thinking about it I recognize a few people up there on the committee, perhaps Mr. Cole could do it, Mr. Peer could do it. But you have in your files a complete record of specific acts of discrimination and discrimination that's not alleged, it's proven from people who work for Farmers Home in Arkansas specifically if you go back and look at these records of those people who have maybe they started 10 years ago and you see the progression that these people have made and continue to move

up into areas of supervision of Farmers Home or where they can inflict their own ideas on people. You immediately remove these people from Farmers Home. In the County, state offices, wherever they exist, you just go back and look at the record. The other thing I'm going to say and this might appear to be somewhat unusual, but I say to you, Mr. Secretary, that no person should become a county agent in a county who has lived all of his life someplace else where he had no minority people at all. To be more specific, it is very difficult for someone from the northern part of Arkansas where the only Black folk they ever come in contact with are basketball players at U of A or the football players and they become a director of Farmers Home and you send them to Crittenden county, Arkansas, in Eastern Arkansas. It's going to be a problem and those kind of people unless you put them through some kind of educational program some sensitivity training to understand who they're dealing with and who they're dealing with because they just do not have the sensitivity to deal with people over there. I've spent time over at ASCS and I can tell you specifically that it occurred then and continues to occur. The other thing that you should do -

Someone asked how the big farmers always get knowledge of the information and the smaller farmers are left out. It's very simple: the County committee does the hiring and who do they hire? Well, I don't want to tell you this but just check

in Arkansas and see who the people are in the county offices throughout Arkansas. They simply pick up the phone and call the farmers and say, look you need to come sign up today. You need to be here tomorrow. But they don't call Mr. Joe Smith because they don't know him and they don't look like him. So they're never going to call him. It's more of an institutional type racism. Where sometimes people are discriminating and don't even realize they are, they don't even think they are. But they are, because they don't know the person. And it happens. And you have to put the people over there. Let me just share a little story with you and I'll be through. I remember when I worked for ASCS, just to show you how it works, you had a Farmers Home Director who was a man named David K. Landers in Crittenden County. He's not there now, the Lord blessed him with a fatal heart attack, so he's not there anymore. I remember when I went over and I worked in the office with ASCS and my supervisor Billy Realms had asked me to go over and see if David would loan me some money to build a house. If you drive through Arkansas, you can always tell the houses that Farmers Home had financed that are over 10 years old. They all look just alike. They are all white frame houses with single carport and throughout the delta, they look just alike. I wanted to build a brick home and he said to me that we don't build brick homes for Negroes. I told my supervisor, and he said oh, David

didn't mean it, I'll change him so he went over and talked to him and he told me to come back over and bring another plan he'd let me build what I wanted to build so I carried over a brick house with 4 bedrooms, 2 fireplaces a two car garage, and he bought into the whole thing because my supervisor had told him to do it. So I'm simply saying to you that in Arkansas, it might not happen anyplace else, but I know it does in Arkansas, in Arkansas we still have a system in place in Arkansas where some of these farmers who want to borrow money from Farmers Home, if they've got someone else who can go down and tell the supervisor to let them have the money, they'll let them have it. On the other hand, if they tell them don't let them have it, they won't get it either. So what you have to do, Mr. Secretary, where there's history and a pattern of this, and we know it exists, specifically remove these people from office. Some of these people are appointed so you can remove them anytime you get ready. You don't even have to have a cause. You don't have to charge them with anything. Just don't like the way they comb their hair, you can just simply tell them to go home. And these kind of people should be removed. And if some of these people from Arkansas will tell you the truth, they'll call them by name for you. It's not that difficult and if they don't give you the names, I'll give you the names of some of them because they've come and talked to me about them. Thank you very much.

Jerry Lee: Thank you. Okay, who wants to be last?

I'm Userell Gordon from Mead county and I want to say a few words to the Secretary. I've got a son that I've been boosting him into farming and he's getting out of college in the next year and I went to a meeting about a week or so ago and they were saying that you've got to have 10% and FHA will go along with 30% and you've got to get 60% from somewhere else. Now I don't care what color you is, white or black, now that's going to be a hard situation to get 60% from somewhere else and he's got to come up with 10% because he's just getting out of college. Now, I don't care what color you are, that don't look like putting the farmer in business, that looks like that's trying to keep the farmer from going into business. 'Cause you know when you're dealing with three personnel you've got to get 10% from him, 30% from FHA and you know you've got to got to the bank. It'll be a while before you get a farm. That's my impression, you know. What can you do about that?

Jerry Lee: Thank you. We're going to cut it off at this point and if you have some written ...

Someone from audience: Is it possible that you could provide a list to all the people who are here, to let everybody know who else is here? Is that possible?

Jerry Lee: Do we have mailing addresses on the registration? Can someone tell me if we do?

Larry Blick: If you signed your name, address and phone number, if you remember that was optional, some of you didn't, if you signed your name, address and phone number it is possible for us to put together a list.

Jerry Lee: Any problem with that? Staff?

Pearlie Reed: We'll put together whatever we have and send it to everybody that signed in.

Jerry Lee: Okay? Let me say that you for coming. It's been my pleasure to host you ...

Secretary Glickman: Jerry, why don't you let me make just a quick comment. Before you all leave, let me just make a quick comment if I might. First of all, thank you all for coming. Many of you came a long distance and I appreciate it and we have a Team here as you've seen that has been copiously taking notes that have been charged with providing specific recommendations to me. I can assure you of a couple of things, there's two theories I could go on one theory is the old slogan that I have in my house which says that after all has been said and done, there's alot more said than done. Now I've heard the stories about the late 70's, the protests, we're going to make sure that theory doesn't work. The other theory is another slogan out of my house that says today is the first day of the rest of your life. And that hopefully is the theory that we're going to be with because I don't want my legacy as Secretary to be clouded with a problem of how we treat our people, how we treat of customers, how we treat our employees. I can't promise miracles but I can promise that we're going to treat our people with dignity. I can't promise everybody's going to make a profit in agriculture anywhere in this country, if I did, I'd wouldn't be in this job, I'd be in some other job. Maybe I'd be down with that preacher back there. But I can promise that we're not going to be known as the Department that is not in the modern world in

terms of how we treat every human being in this country, so we've gotten a lot of input here. I can promise you it will result in substantive changes in the way we do business and the way we treat our people. A lot of it has been expressed to me tonight is you need people who are decent, friendly, humane in the way they treat other people. That is 3/4 of life anyway. And we will do our best to make sure that you will not be disappointed by this process we're going through and again as Secretary I thank you all for coming here tonight. I appreciate it. (applause)

Jerry Lee: Thank you, Mr. Secretary for honoring us with your presence here in Tennessee.

