

**ORAL HISTORY
I. MILLIE GONZALEZ
UNDER SECRETARY
RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS**

00:00:26:25 Q: Today is December 7th of the year 2000, I'm Larry Quinn with the Office of Communications and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington and today we're visiting with Millie Gonzalez who is the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics. Secretary Gonzalez, let's talk about some of the background that you've brought to the Department of Agriculture and into this position.

00:00:48:23 A: Okay, Larry thank you it's good to be with you this afternoon and I, in sort of preparation for our visit, you know I thought what were the things that would bring a certain element of experience and hopefully success to the work that we've done here at USDA.

00:01:10:17 And I grew up on a farming ranch in Arizona and so have a background in production agriculture, worked both nationally and internationally in this area. Started out in high school agricultural education program and went on to the University of Arizona to work on degrees, all along you know the connection to USDA and to the land grant system has been part of my

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background.

00:01:33:03 And worked on the faculties at the University of Arizona, Penn State University where not only was I a faculty member and a 4-H specialist, but also I finished a Ph.D. while I was there. Went on to Iowa State University to work with programs in agricultural education, extension, teacher training, in-service education for both extensions agents and high school agricultural teachers and international work as part of my work at Iowa State.

00:02:01:05 And then to New Mexico State where I was before coming to this post as Under Secretary. And so all of those experiences with research, the research agenda, the extension programs, our attention to academic training of scientists and we were all sort of part of the fabric of the experiences and background that I had.

00:02:22:19 And so when I was asked if I would be interested in coming to USDA to serve, it was sort of a dream come true, sort of complete the connection if you will of

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having been a member of the land grant system and then to come to Washington to experience first hand really some of this history of the good work that the Department has done.

00:02:41:26 And I was recently relating a story to one of my faculty members that you teach about USDA, you teach about this federal role and all of those things, and then having had the opportunity to come here and actually live that, it just gives you a completely new set of perspectives if you will about the Department and the role of the federal partner with land grant universities and at the local level of working with communities and county and state governments.

00:03:09:29 So it's been a terrific experience.

00:03:12:17 Q: And just prior to coming here you were on one of the research and education advisory committees as well, so you became even more in tune with USDA just before coming.

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00:03:22:24 A: Exactly, well in '96 as a representative of the Hispanic Serving Institutions, this Secretary had asked if I would serve on that committee and as a member of that committee for a year before becoming Under Secretary so. Again those were experiences that you know you couldn't have planned.

00:03:38:27 They were terrific in the sense of having that continuity continue to be involved with recommendations for the kind of research that we needed to be doing at USDA and with our federal partners. The focus on education and extension which have been very much a part of what I've done with the university community.

00:04:00:15 And we were representing actually those of us that were on the committee wore different hats. I had been an extension and I had been doing some work with research at an HSI, at a major land grant university, several major land grant universities. So all of those things really worked out well in serving in that capacity as a member of the advisory board.

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00:04:20:28 Q: Having that background and that experience, did you have some goals for yourself as you entered this job?

00:04:27:11 A: Well yes I did. Interestingly enough having had that experience on the board, you know I think the awareness and sort of opportunity to focus on generating more funding for that research and education, economics agenda was certainly one of those. In 1997 we were in a period where you know a lot of cutbacks in budgets and so on.

00:04:53:21 And that was the case for the budgets for the universities and colleges. We weren't as inclusive as we could have been I thought. And so having had the opportunity to come and turn that around and get increases for all of our agenda at REE and for the Department generally.

00:05:13:10 But we worked closely with the Hill, certainly the leadership that came from Secretary Glickman and Deputy Secretary Rominger, our interaction with OMB and OBPA to a kind of reacquaint them if you will with the

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importance of the research agenda and particularly in the '96 farm bill where there were a lot of things that were changing and the research title was really pulled out of that and set up as separate legislation which didn't occur until the spring and summer of 1998.

00:05:46:04

And so it really, think about some of the goals, it really gave an opportunity for us to focus in on what the new elements would be for a research and education agenda. And we had a strategic plan in place, we were able to modify that. Initially I thought gosh, we you know, we didn't get a bill passed in '97, everything was looking good for something to happen in November of that year.

00:06:11:01

And so there was a bit of a disappointment when that didn't happen, but it actually gave us the time to re-visit some of the agenda, some of the items to increase participation of minority institutions for example, to put in something for extension and research for the 1994 institutions, the internationalization of our programs which given the global environment that we

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find ourselves in was tremendously important.

00:06:38:07 So out of that situation I think we were able to take some of our goals and aspirations and sort of fit them into the language that came out of the '98 legislation, so it was a good thing for us.

00:06:49:14 Q: And agricultural research funding has suddenly turned around, perhaps due to your leadership?

00:06:55:18 A: Well we, I think a couple of elements, not only the opportunity to increase the awareness within the administration and also on the Hill, but we took the message to our partner research institutions and we talked about the relationship of USDA research with NIH, you know this continuum of food production to consumption and the benefits to the American consumer.

00:07:23:23 The health benefits of some of the science and technology and agriculture. We increased the partnership and I served both on the directorate for biological sciences at NSF and Mary Clutter (ph.) from

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NSF served on the advisory board to REE. So again that helped to increase the awareness and the communications across agencies.

00:07:44:16 And we did it with Energy and with EPA and with Commerce and a number of these places where in the past we've had the connection and this gave us an opportunity to raise the issues in terms of the importance of agricultural research and extension and education and how they fit with other partners.

00:08:04:04 So we, I think that was where some of the success came when we went up on the Hill to visit with the Congressional delegations from different places to talk about the importance of the agenda to the farm community in the Midwest, to specialty crop producers in the South or in the Northwest or wherever that might be.

00:08:25:01 We were able to talk about what these results, the results of this research would do their local areas, to their states or districts. And so I think it was part

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of that educational process that people would really see a benefit at the local level and why they needed to be on our agenda, if you will.

00:08:44:22 So that made it I think more successful in terms of saying not only do we need the increases in funding for these areas, but these are the reasons why and this is the local end result, the local impact.

00:08:57:15 Q: You've had a long time partnership with the land grant university system, but there's been some new avenues open for community colleges and other colleges, talk about that?

00:09:07:07 A: Okay, yes, well as I said one of the goals of course was to be more inclusive in terms of the education and research community to work with non-traditional partners if you will and having come from the university community and having done a number of cooperative agreements if you will with MOUs, with community colleges in Iowa and in Pennsylvania, started out with some of that early work in Arizona, it really

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did give us an opportunity to take a look at removing that seam if you will between the two year and four year programs and adding continuity in terms of both research and education.

00:09:45:29 And we moved forward, I use the example of the HSI, the Hispanic Serving Institutions and the Native American schools that many of them were two year schools and are two year schools. And so that gave them an opportunity as two years institutions to participate in the research agenda and the extension program and to help build that linkage if you will, the bridge from the two year to four year to perhaps doctoral and post-doctoral kinds of programs.

00:10:15:18 And our agencies at USDA were very instrumental in helping us to accomplish that. Pretty soon our students found out that USDA is a diverse set of 29 agencies where if you have a degree in law or accounting or chemistry, perhaps production agriculture background, you know all of those things are part of the work that we do.

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- 00:10:39:27 Food programs, food assistance in national and so it was really a matter of kind of retelling the story for some of these folks to understand both the opportunity and the capability that we had at USDA.
- 00:10:54:17 Q: So it wasn't just the dollars for research, but re-establishing the foundation for attracting a diverse populace into the agriculture research and extension and education community?
- 00:11:06:01 A: Exactly and part of that story was to tell the same, deliver the same kind of message with NSF and NIH and at Commerce and we worked with the government university research roundtable. And so agricultural and natural resource subject matter became part of the discussion and so we would begin to talk about the genetically modified organisms, genetically enhanced organisms.
- 00:11:36:14 The biotechnology and so they weren't single issues, they were much broader than just agriculture, the

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nutracitacles (ph.) and the pharmaciticles (ph.) and so we actually I think worked on making sure that the message was much broader than just production agriculture, although by doing those things in the research and education extension program, we could come back and help the producer community.

00:11:57:19 New technologies using GIS in the case of (unint.) safety issues you know we've been able to bring some of the research to bear immediately, pierces disease, with out grape and wine industry and that didn't happen with just a USDA single agency approach.

00:12:21:16 We actually worked with international partners, we worked with other of our federal agencies, with state agencies in the case of California. We did some things for example when we had the freeze in California with the oranges and you know USDA mobilizes and immediately we helped the producer community.

00:12:41:11 And for the first time we added the elements of being able to help the farm worker community that was

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responsible for the picking of those oranges and the processing of those oranges. Basically we provided some funding both in California and in Florida for those individuals that are directly related to agriculture but are not the producer community per se.

00:13:03:07 So I think people began to understand this broad role that USDA has in helping people at the local level which is sort of the extension, you know helping people help themselves. So we brought a little bit of that added to an already excellent research agenda and increased the opportunities for the extension and education piece.

00:13:24:29 Q: And during your tenure, during the past three years, the Agricultural Census became something new for the Department of Agriculture to do, it came from the Department of Commerce to here.

00:13:34:10 A: Exactly, well interestingly enough you know we did the first census at USDA, it was published early in 1997 time frame, the agency brought on board some

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terrific people to help us accomplish that. The response from the producer community was very, very positive.

00:13:53:19 I remember attending a meeting out in Arizona with the inter-travel agriculture council and they said when do we get the forms, we want to be able to provide that information? So I think it gave, because it was at the Department of Agriculture for the first time. It gave everyone sort of a new awareness in the importance of being able to be counted if you will.

00:14:12:16 And we actually were having calls come into us as to how soon the forms would be ready and how they contribute. So it was, I think a very successful, when we did the layout in February of '99 to talk about the accomplishments if you will, we not only had the data early, but we had new information about what farms look like, the size, the type of farm ownership, other things that became important in terms of providing the information that we needed for policy formulage.

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- 00:14:41:01 So it was a... we take credit, we think it was a very successful program.
- 00:14:49:26 Q: And that becomes a foundation work on which a lot of decisions, policy decision are made.
- 00:14:55:18 A: Absolutely, absolutely, in fact thinking of the four agencies in the mission area with that foundation that came from the NAS (ph.) activities and the census, economic research service was able to then take some of that information and look at the typology of farms, looking at ownership and looking at size and the kind of production.
- 00:15:17:19 One of the factors that we found that made a difference in terms of the producer community was the level of education and so those were things that both thought of NAS and ERS interaction we were able to provide in the sense of policy formulation than when we gave our briefings on the Hill, that we were able to share that information with the committees, the appropriate committees.

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00:15:40:12 And I remember in the last year and an half we probably have done as many briefings and testimony for the science committee as we have done for the agriculture committees because the science and agriculture, I think people are becoming more and more aware of the importance of our research agenda, the fact that it's broad-based, new products, new uses.

00:16:01:14 Our bio-based products and bio-energy area, the shifting in the South from tobacco production to another alternative crop that also has high cash value. Some of our research that's addressed that area, so a number of these places as I've shared with the groups that I've visited with, all the answers for the solutions to the producer community aren't only at USDA, but with all of the other agencies that serve at the local level.

00:16:34:03 And so I think we've been able to communicate that message and particularly for our minority farmers. I used the example of the South, but I think our minority

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producers in any part of the country where perhaps you know the lack of resources or credit or other things that impede their opportunities, we've addressed and we've begun to make some changes that will help them.

00:16:58:11 Additional research focused at the small farm and ranch community, we've provided some monies through the NRI for that, the new initiative for agriculture approximately \$113 million that we were able to provide in the... in this year 2000 for new research areas and to really address some of the real critical needs in our producer community.

00:17:22:10 So all of those things sort of have happened in the last two or three years and we've managed to really talk about the importance of integration of research with education and with our extension component.

00:17:35:13 Q: And on the economic research side, agriculture doesn't always follow the pattern of the rest of the economy, current situation is an example of that where the US economy's done reasonably well but the

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agricultural economy hasn't. So some of the research that you're doing that help those agricultural producers understand what's happening, must be very important?

00:17:57:13 A: Tremendously, when we think of the issues of concentration, the issues of the changing structure if you will of agriculture and we see it in other sectors of the economy, the dot coms and the banking industry and health and insurance and any number of places that we've seen that.

00:18:19:25 But it becomes critically important to us in agriculture production that the small and intermediate producer have access to some of those things and can sort of enjoy the same terrific economic upturn that we've had in other parts of our economy. And that hasn't been easy. It's been a major challenge in a couple of things.

00:18:44:06 I think one is to understand on the part of the producer that it's a consumer driven economy but we

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need to not only sell corn and soy beans, but we need to repackage it. That we need to look at the industrial uses of some of our traditional products and I think I mentioned bio-based products earlier, that we have the soy diesel.

00:19:04:26 That we have a lubricant made from soy beans, that we have of course the ethanol that comes from corn. That we're able to use sugars for new uses and new purposes. And so these are areas where the commodity prices have been low but if we can add to the opportunity if you will, for that production to be used not only for food but for industrialized or industrial uses it adds to the opportunity.

00:19:28:12 And I think those are the things that we're really as we continue to think about the research and education agenda, how do you link those with the management of risks on the part of the producer with the enhancing of the marketplace, the opening of markets in China and in other major areas where if we're competing with, if you will, competing with the Brazilians in soy bean.

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00:19:55:02 But our soy beans can go into soy diesel or other products, then it adds to the marketplace and I think sort of eases if you will, some of those areas where everyone's producing a lot of the same commodity.

00:20:07:25 Q: During your time, what have been some of the key research advances that have happened? I know of taxol (ph.) for instance and it's been proved ways to create this that can help in treatment of cancer that came out of agriculture research?

00:20:23:21 A: Yeah well that's a perfect example of the I think part of our message of the important of ag research to the sort of the health agenda. You know the President's statement I think it was this past year when he talked about that in our lifetime we would cure cancer and other diseases that people are very much aware of.

00:20:44:19 And at the same time the opportunity for agricultural research to be a part of that. That with the

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modification of foods, the attention to nutrition, the quality if you will of the product and the understanding of general population of how blueberries or whatever the food item might be, the anti-oxidants that are contained therein.

00:21:15:01 The tick spray that we use, the pre-empt for solving of the salmonella, our work for early detection and rapid detection of e-coli. So you had the two agencies the regulatory looking for the mechanisms and the research bases for helping to do that.

00:21:35:04 And then working with engineering and other areas outside of agriculture to make sure that we can make this not only the science's there, but the technology so that it's rapid, it's hand-held, it's affordable, these things can take place quickly and there's more and more attention now on the part of other, of our federal partners in other areas that are saying, well we contribute to that food safety agenda.

00:22:02:03 Certainly our attention to fruits and vegetables in

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this new area where we're working with FDA and food safety, ARS, the university community, the international community. I was just in Mexico to visit with the new Secretary of Agriculture there under the new administration.

00:22:18:06 And they're very much, their goals and objectives and their attention to the science and agriculture agenda, very much like ours. The area of financial resources, you know the environmental concerns, all of those pieces I think are... the global and more people are aware of those.

00:22:38:26 Q: The long history of the county extension agent and the local extension support to the farmers, this changed quite a bit in recent years. What do you see during the time you've been here, been one of the more significant changes in that area?

00:22:52:17 A: Well extension again as I think back to our discussions with the Office of Science and Technology Policy or with the council, with a number of other

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agencies. When they find out that the extension system exists, 3150 counties that were everywhere, sort of the rich history and tradition of helping people at the local level.

00:23:16:06 In most cases there's quite a bit of surprise. Well we didn't know about this, how can we use that? And I think the producer community as I was describing earlier with the changing of the types of farms, ownership, type of product and so on, opportunity for new uses and new products has changed the role of extension.

00:23:37:29 And so we probably can no longer do what we did in the '60s and '70s, but we really do need a new approach, added partners for economic development, industrial uses, some of these things that I've been talking about. And so the extension agent at the county level particularly, their role has changed.

00:24:01:10 And I think we have an opportunity to serve in a broker role of education that will bring the people from the

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food stamp and community health organizations to work with us on nutrition education. We have the RAF-net program. Under Secretary Watkins you know we've added and increased some of the attention to, certainly to the food stamp and other nutrition programs.

00:24:27:13 And so we've done that jointly at the federal level and I think we have a wonderful mechanism at the local level to do that. In the area of production agriculture again tied back to the environment and natural resource concerns, you know how do we do that better? How do we do..., the work I think is a single agent can't do that.

00:24:45:11 But if they work with NRCS and they work BLM and they work with these other agencies then we have technical expertise and then we have an educational mechanism to help deliver some of that. And I think more and more people are becoming aware of the kind of thing that we can do at the community level, which I think extension, you know we need to take advantage of the long history and expertise that we have there.

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00:25:10:23 And probably reformulate that a little bit, resources from other places, after school programs, working with the Department of Justice and so I think the opportunity... we know what the concerns are, we know what the needs are, we have mechanisms in place and it's a matter of reaching out into a broader community of players to help us address those needs that young people have.

00:25:34:15 Q: And speaking of young people, 4-H is one of the areas that certainly you have experience in before you came here. How has that organization changed for today's youth?

00:25:44:04 A: Well it's again you know it's exciting when you think of 4-H and I remember working with some community development projects in Pennsylvania and we went to the parents and said these are the things we're doing now. And they said, but we don't live on the farm and you know our kids don't have livestock or some of the traditional thinking.

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- 00:26:00:11 And it was about community involvement and understanding leadership and getting them involved in some of these new programs. Last year we signed an MOU, the Department of Army took that 4-H on military bases around the world. And so military families move and they can go from an overseas base to some place here in the States.
- 00:26:22:18 And by having that 4-H membership you know, you're again part of the community right away. There's a set of possibilities for students, in this case for after school programs perhaps or any number of things. So we saw that as a wonderful step in the growth of 4-H.
- 00:26:43:28 We've talked to other organizations about partnering with the Girl Scouts of America for example, any number of other groups where the focus on youth, you know the green jacket and the sort of the wanting to belong and the identity is still part of it.
- 00:27:03:12 But the fact that the needs are so great for young

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people that we're able to think partner in a number of ways. We added an MOU to work with FFA, the food, land and people programs that again make sure that third and fourth and fifth graders and everyone in that K-6 system understand the role of agriculture and where food comes from.

00:27:17:06 And some of the things that we talk about with adults, you know with children we can make that happen quickly. And so it's through organizations like 4-H, we signed another alliance with Colin Powell and his activities and the group that he works with. And 4-H we did the MOU, Deputy Secretary Rominger signed that this past year.

00:27:45:26 Again, getting back to the message about reaching out, being more inclusive, partnering with some of the other youth organizations that have been major players, Boys and Girls Clubs in urban American. You know the population change and shift and the importance of agriculture production and food to our urban cities.

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- 00:28:06:13 The fact that 4-H can contribute because of the leadership development programs to school programs in urban America. And we see that both in our urban extension programs. We have something in the neighborhood 35 to 40 urban high school agricultural education programs.
- 00:28:29:19 Some of those are located with community colleges, some of the more successful programs in Yonkers, New York and Philadelphia and Kansas City and Phoenix and LA. I mean Chicago, when I tell that story to people, they say wow, we didn't know that this was taking place.
- 00:28:45:20 So our attention to the next generation of educators, the next generation of scientists in urban and rural, non-traditional majors, all of those things I think are coming together very nicely in preparing the next generation of persons who will work at USDA, the next under secretary for research, education, economics.
- 00:29:11:04 Q: And you know around the world, internationally they're very envious of our extension system aren't

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they?

00:29:16:06 A: Of all of the things you know I've made numerous visits, I went to China and Egypt and went to India with the President, Latin America and always and in fact I just, the Deputy Secretary and I just made a trip to Mexico and Costa Rica to talk about the research and education extension agenda. And you're absolutely correct.

00:29:39:18 The, in fact the visit that I had in May of this past year in the Ukraine, in Kiev, was the focus on how they develop their extension programs. The research capabilities there, the engine if you will is there and then how do you transmit, how do you get this technology and this science to the local level?

00:30:01:04 And so yes, almost without exception, the discussion is always about extension and how to renew that. And in fact we've had those conversations recently as we look at the hemisphere and the kinds of things that have happened because of NAFTA, our trade relations, all of

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those things, with scientific basis for decision making and that extension of information to the consumer is of tremendous interest and importance.

00:30:27:01 Q: There have been some neat tools added to help them carry this research method to the public.

00:30:32:14 A: And that's beauty I think of the time period that we're in, capturing the information technology, the fact that I was in a restaurant in Costa Rica, in Senze (ph.) and one phone rang and I don't how many of these phones flip open, you know because everybody's connected, the ability to get information to and from these places using the net, Internet connections.

00:30:59:25 It's just wonderful and many of our developing country situations they don't have to go through all of the infrastructure development that we had. Now that the technology's available, they can do that much more rapidly. Last year we did an MOU and signed an MOU with Sub-Saharan African countries.

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00:31:19:01 SIMIT (ph.), USDA and the historically black colleges and universities, the HBCUs, again taking advantage of the talent that's there, taking advantage of the technology and the science to look at bio-technology and its application in Sub-Saharan African countries. Those were activities that took place after a visit by the Secretary.

00:31:42:00 But Under Secretary Schumacher (ph.), you know a number of other people had been involved and so it really does for someone that doesn't know about USDA, when you begin to tell the story about all of these things that we do as a department and particularly when you focus on the research and education component, it's almost a surprise to many people.

00:32:01:25 They say, well gosh we didn't know that you did that in agriculture.

00:32:05:06 Q: So the open access to information has just exploded.

00:32:07:17 A: Absolutely, the work that we've done at the National

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Agriculture Library and in fact having said that it reminded me that as we celebrated the millennium that different events, we named the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

00:32:27:09 The building in which we find the National Agricultural Library, the Abraham Lincoln Building for the National Agricultural Library to recognize the contributions of many people, but particularly President Lincoln and Secretary Wallace, Vice President Wallace and his attention to research.

00:32:49:24 We are connected in working with numerous libraries around the world from the National Ag Library. So the research progress that we're making is readily available. We have any number of web pages where people can link in and get to the kind of information that we need.

00:33:06:06 And it's not only in agriculture but sort of the science and technology component that everyone I think

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as an interest in.

00:33:14:19 Q: Seems like a lot of progress for you in three years?

00:33:16:27 A: Yeah, I don't know if I can take credit all of that.

But there's certainly a lot of activities that many people I think have become aware of the importance of the research and education, economics extension agenda and fortifying some of these areas where we found outside challenges, problems that we've had.

00:33:38:27 And we haven't resolve them but I think the steps that we've taken are terrific. I think of the impact that we've had with the minority community, the opportunity to as I mentioned, farm workers before but any number of areas the research and science and extension component for the tribally owned and controlled colleges, getting and addressing the needs of our Native American population.

00:34:03:28 Things like diabetes and other diseases, health and nutrition and so initially when you think of USDA and

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you think of that community, production agriculture would certainly come to mind. But the fact that we're dealing, our extension programs are dealing with a really broad-base working in those communities, the Latino community as well.

00:34:25:20 Some of the broader initiatives that we've had, rural development and REE and other of the agencies have been critical to bringing new resources. Back to your question earlier of you know how do you contribute to the local economies and local communities from agriculture and it's not just production but it's the infrastructure for processing and for many other things that can take place.

00:34:50:10 Jobs, you know the employment which this administration has been tremendously successful at creating new employment opportunities and the local processing of energy or whatever they product might be. Areas I visited in Texas, canaff (ph.) and auto products that come from that particular product.

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00:35:10:18 So again maybe the timing was right, you know we took advantage of transitions that were taking place, of bringing new partners together to help with that agenda.

00:35:21:11 Q: Did you find it any little stubborn challenges, ones that were more difficult to deal with? Looks like to me like much of your job has been a negotiator and finding new partnerships, this kind of thing. But there are some things that are not easy to solve.

00:35:36:15 A: Well I think sort of given the areas that we wanted to concentrate on and some of the increases that we wanted to bring, explaining if you will the benefits of increasing funding for these areas, was a major challenge. Tying performance to budget and to impact, you know the GPRA component, some people thought well this is going to go away.

00:35:59:22 But it really made probably as good a sense as anything that we could take advantage of the work that... the excellent work that has been done in the past and then

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saying and this is what we've achieved as a result of that and this is how it will take us to the next step beyond.

00:36:17:03 I think all of those were things that were working in our behalf and so when I came in there was sort of a downward trend in funding for some of these areas. We were able to reverse that and some large increases that had not happened in 15 years for the research and education piece.

00:36:33:29 But I attribute the success of that to a number of players, as I indicated early the understanding on the part of the Office of Management and Budget for these things, our own inter-relationships in the department of understanding the research agenda with the regulatory, the food assistance programs with a research base.

00:36:58:24 All of these things I think contributed to that. And certainly the fun part was and has been to go to new groups other than agriculture and talk about this

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agenda and gosh the response from them, the sort of the surprise, the gee whiz kind of thing.

00:37:19:07 You know that's where I think one gets a real charge of having those folks respond that way because they say, wow this is terrific you know. In fact I've had conversations on many, many trips that I've taken on the plane where someone said, well gosh that's terrific you know, anything we can?

00:37:37:23 This could be a person in engineering or in doing work completely unrelated to the things that we've been talking about, at first glance. But very much a beneficiary of some of the work that we're doing. So that once you make that connection for people, they say yeah well we want to support that.

00:37:54:25 Q: So as a farm boy in Arizona and working through New Mexico, Iowa, Pennsylvania, you've had a lot of experience of going to this point. Any special memories that you will take from this time back to your next opportunity?

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00:38:10:00 A: Well you know I started my career teaching and working in this area. But my first experience after my first year of teaching was to go to Venezuela and work on a ranch. And I think the international part of this, the global environment in which we find ourselves, the interest on the part of other countries in the very same items.

00:38:38:05 My earlier conversations this fall were with (unint.) groups that are here in the hemisphere that are working on increasing funding for research and education extension and they're sort of regionally and globally. And yet one of the messages is how do we do that within countries, how do we tell our, you know get our ministers on this agenda?

00:39:00:27 So I think of the memories, some of the impact of having been able to interact with those groups, to take advantage of my bi-lingualism, you know to be able to go and tell that message and I've given those speeches in Spanish. And so again you know, those are the

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little things that one does that continue to build relationships and cement the working relationships that we've had.

00:39:23:02 Many of these folks have been working with us for many, many years and so to have a presence at USDA that we can work in almost everyone of our countries to the south and north and do it in another language and you know be more inclusive, I think has been fun. It's been a terrific experience for me.

00:39:44:26 Q: Thank you very much Millie Gonzalez, Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics for being with us to talk about your tenure at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I'm Larry Quinn with the Office of Communications at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington.

END OF TAPE