

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

LQ = Larry Quinn; DG = Dan Glickman

00:00:34:23 LQ: Today is January 12, 2001. I'm Larry Quinn with the Office of Communications at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington and today we're talking with the 26th Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman. Mr. Secretary you were sworn in on March 30, 1995. Before that, 18 years in Congress representing the Fourth District of Kansas.

00:00:56:07 It must have been a tremendous training ground for what you found here because you were on the House Agriculture Committee for much of that time.

00:01:02:12 DG: Actually, I started my political career as a member of the Wichita, Kansas School Board in 1973, so actually we are about 27 years after I first came into political life. And every-- the School Board and then Congress has had a lot to do with developing my political career and also how I've handled the job up here.

00:01:27:26 In particular, the years in the Congress helped

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

a lot in this job because one is I-- they helped me understand the legislative process. In Article I of the Constitution is the Congress and I've always told people while all branches of government are equal, one is slightly more equal than others and that's the Congress.

00:01:47:14 Even more equal than the Department of Agriculture. So it has helped me understand the Congress and legislative process and also allowed me to make lots of friends on Capitol Hill which was particularly helpful in dealing with all the problems we faced here.

00:02:02:11 LQ: So you were on the Committee and led a lot of the work in writing for foreign bills, so I guess what was easier, to write the legislation or administer it?

00:02:13:14 DG: Well, I always say that Congress is the greatest job in the world if what you want is personal freedom. You have all the freedom of the world and no responsibility to speak of. Whereas in a job like this, you have a lot of responsibility and not a heck of a lot of freedom because you work for the President and you

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

have to be very careful what you say all the time.

00:02:32:03 And you could affect the markets. But, you know, clearly, the writing of farm legislation, being involved in agricultural policy was very, very interesting. It didn't require you to know as much about, oh, the implications of programs.

00:02:50:02 And you tended to be more parochial. When I was a member of Congress, obviously I was focusing on the interests of Kansas which were largely wheat and cattle and, you know, little other livestock and some corn and soybeans and grain (unint.), but certainly not representing the diversity of agriculture which we have in this country.

00:03:09:11 The fresh fruits and vegetables, horticulture, cotton, rice, peanuts, the agriculture of the northeast, as well as the other big part of this department which is the timber industry and forestry. So my involvement in the House Agricultural Committee helped me understand the program crops and understand a little bit how the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

department was organized for the purposes of getting farm programs out there.

00:03:38:19 But I didn't know what I was into until I got here in terms of what we did in this place.

00:03:45:03 LQ: You were known as one who took very much a bipartisan approach in Congress. Did that approach help you here?

00:03:51:14 DG: Yes. I have tried to recognize that agricultural policy is historically less partisan than others like health care, for example, or, you know, education. Some of these issues tended to have ideological divisions. But when it came to agriculture, what you ultimately ended up finding out is that there wasn't a tremendous partisan difference.

00:04:15:25 And so, therefore, you had to really work these programs kind of as if there was only one party running them. And I think that was also helpful to me. And I've told people here when I would get in the office in the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

morning, especially when we were working on farming stuff, and I'd look at my call sheet, I would call the Congress before I would call the White House people.

00:04:41:06 And it wouldn't matter which party they were talking about. That's just the way you have to operate here.

00:04:48:14 LQ: You also participated in writing much of the legislation to reorganize the department and it was still in that process, or really just starting, when you came. Talk about that a bit.

00:04:57:21 DG: Well, it did appear to me that this department was rather archaic and antiquated, and that even from Congress it appeared that there were too many agencies, too many offices. We weren't operating in the modern era, particularly even back in the early '90s when we were beginning to get into modern telecommunication techniques.

00:05:20:29 And this was especially true with respect to

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

the organization of the offices that's tended to serve agricul-- farming in rural America which was the OESCS or the farm service agency, the NRCS and the rural development offices. So I actually took a role in seeing what we could to put some of this together.

00:05:40:00 And then, of course, 1994 Congress passed a reorganization act. Both Senator Lugar on the senate side and I had a lot to do with it. But so did other people as well. And then my predecessor, Mike Espay, had the responsibility of actually starting it and getting it implemented, along with Deputy Secretary Rich Rominger.

00:05:58:03 They've done a very good job under very difficult circumstances. This place is not easy to manage and turf is too often-- still is a fundamental fact in terms of how we organize different parts of the USDA. But I think we've come a long way in getting folks to work together.

00:06:16:09 LQ: One of the other issues that was very active when you stated your term was food safety.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:06:22:03 DG: Well, we had actually started... Mike Taylor, who was the Acting Undersecretary for Food Safety, had started working on a new program called HACCP, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Program. Basically, a kind of a science-based food safety system. And we have taken that and implemented it throughout most of the meat and poultry plants in this country.

00:06:47:11 We've also worked to cooperate with other agencies of government. The FDA, Centers for Disease Control, the universities and the food industry have been very cooperative in this. And so we have dramatically modernized the system and it has had an impact on reduction in food-borne illness as well.

00:07:05:17 And so that's a big achievement of this administration.

00:07:08:25 LQ: Were there other things that struck you at the very beginning as difficult challenges that you were going to have to find answers to and deal with?

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:07:16:25 DG: Well, the farm issues obviously...

Probably the reason I was picked for this job is because they wanted somebody who could work on the reauthorization of the farm bill which was supposed to be reauthorized in '95 but didn't get reauthorized until-- actually until '96.

00:07:34:11 And those issues are tough. There are no silver bullets in terms of how to solve them. And that was one that I found myself in immediately. We wrote that bill at a time when the farm economy was pretty good. Wheat prices had reached in some cases in excess of \$6.00 a bushel and corn was at some \$3.50, \$3.60 a bushel.

00:07:55:17 So things were... Soybeans were in some... I think they were over \$7.00, maybe over \$8.00 a bushel at the time. And so that bill was written during pretty good economic times and I think that accounts for why the bill looked like the way it did.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:08:08:05 And then, of course, the markets collapsed later on. But that was something that I had to deal with and the complexity was probably greater than I had expected. Certainly the civil rights issues were things that I never expected that I'd have to deal with.

00:08:22:20 All my years in Congress I don't think the issue of civil rights ever came up once or, if they did, it was in a very non-major way.

00:08:31:10 LQ: You presided over one of the largest settlements the government has ever made on an issue like that. Could you talk about that a bit?

00:08:37:15 DG: Well, it was clear that this department did not have a stellar reputation when it came to how we treated our employees and their customers. Now, in most cases, I had found that our folks treated people very well and there was-- most people did treat folks with dignity and respect.

00:08:55:17 But we had a long history of-- perhaps of being

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

a facilitator in getting black farmers off the land in this country. And I could see in our employment situation there was a lot of tension here and much of that was based on racial division.

00:09:11:18 So I have expended a great deal of personal effort, as have the subcabinet and senior staff to try to modernize this place. And out of the process, we've been involved in lots of litigation, including the case of Pickford v. Glickman which was settled. It's one of the largest, if not the largest, civil rights class action settlements ever done with the government as a defendant.

00:09:36:14 And we've had other litigation as well. But I think we have actually made significant progress. In fact, I think if the history is written of the civil rights issue as it relates to the entire government, there will be more progress at USDA during the last eight years than any other agency.

00:09:52:05 LQ: When Freedom to Farm came into being, I

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

heard you from the beginnings talk about the safety net.
And you're still concerned about that, aren't you?

00:10:00:22 DG: Yes. I think that if you look at the exodus of farms from agriculture, especially smaller farms, it continues at a-- kind of an unabated rate. Although, in the recent year or two there seems to be a slowing down on loss of small farms which is quite positive.

00:10:17:05 But, you know, no farm bill has really stemmed this tide. Now this last farm bill was adopted when things were really good and it was really the President who said, "Well, times are great now, but wait till the market drops and then the safety net in that '96 farm bill will prove woefully inadequate".

00:10:39:04 And then about a year later the markets dropped and he was right. And the safety net has proved woefully inadequate and so what Congress has done in the last several years is just made up the difference. And in some cases more than made up the difference.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:10:55:18 So we have a farm bill that does not adequately deal with the economics of agriculture and it's gonna have to be changed.

00:11:03:13 LQ: Farmers have long been known as conservationists, but during your years as Secretary of Agriculture, you've done a lot to give them some support and being more active in conservation.

00:11:14:00 DG: Well, what we have done there is to do with a lot of things legislatively. We have revamped the Conservation Reserve Program, which is the largest of our conservation programs, and to make it significant in size and more actual dealing with the most serious land erosion practices.

00:11:32:10 And that's a very popular program. We have also created or revised the Wetlands Reserve Program and wildlife programs and we have a variation of the Conservation Reserve Program called "The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program". And-- so we got a lot of

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

great programs on the book.

00:11:50:03 Farmers like them because they are more, what you call, positive help programs rather than regulatory programs where the government comes in and really holds a club over farmers' heads. And I think USDA in the last eight years in conservation programs is viewed much more as a friendly partner rather than a regulator.

00:12:08:28 This was always of concern to farmers because they think they felt the EPA in many cases was not the friendly partner. And in many cases that wasn't actually accurate, but at least the perception was there. So our conservation programs are, frankly, perhaps the most significant part of the farm programs that we in the administration have pushed during the last eight years.

00:12:30:20 And my prediction is that they will even be more key in the future.

00:12:34:26 LQ: You also presided over some important decisions related to our nation's forests. Roadless

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

issues, road issues.

00:12:42:08 DG: Well, coming from Kansas where we have about three trees, the ~~first~~^{Forest} Service wasn't something that I knew very much about and to find that it's the largest employer within USDA, is the U.S. Forest Service, was just-- I mean, it was almost a shock.

00:13:01:00 I had been in Congress. I had been involved in some forestry issues.. I had been one of the co-authors of the Tongue~~s~~^{as} Timber Reform Act in dealing with the Tongue~~s~~^{as} National Forests in Alaska, but I had not really become very engaged in forestry or federal land management issues.

00:13:21:02 And I get here and all of a sudden I'm dealing with an issue called "The Salvage Rider" and that has to do with a rider in an appropriations bill that basically allows timber cutting to deal with salvage timber. And we've got every environmental group and every forestry group at each other's throats.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:13:38:23 And the President's involved and the Chief of Staff's involved and I get engaged and, you know, I'm thinking to myself, "Boy, I tell ya. This was not a problem we faced in Kansas". But the truth of the matter is that for years and years and years, the Forest Service operated often as if it wasn't part of the Department of Agriculture.

00:13:59:03 It was a separate entity. And I do think in the last eight years we have brought it back in. In fact, we now call it "The USDA Forest Service". And we've had a good chief here. Actually, the last two chiefs under-- that have been here have been very good.

00:14:15:07 This-- Mike Dombeck's done a great job of changing the mission of the Forest Service a little bit. It's now an integral part of USDA and it's a very important part of the legacy of the Clinton Administration.

00:14:28:10 LQ: One of the largest budget items for USDA has to do with food programs and you've taken a very

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

personal interest in community ~~of~~ food security,
gleaning. Talk about some of those issues.

00:14:37:11 DG: Well, the heart of their food programs, of course, are the federal programs that we operate. Food Stamp Program, The National School Lunch Program, The WIC (ph.) Program (Women ^{Infants and} ~~for~~ Children) and other commodity programs. And we're expanding those a little bit, the school breakfast and after school and those kinds of things.

00:14:53:24 But I have been particularly interested in the fact that a lot of hunger is not totally dealt with by those federal programs and that we need also community-based solutions, not just federal, top-down solutions. And so we have adopted a Community Food Security Act implementation where we are providing funds to encourage local community-based solutions to hunger.

00:15:21:04 I have also been very interested in the issue of food rescue and gleaning where we have-- we've seen billions of pounds of food thrown in the garbage or the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

dumpster every year from hospitals, hotels, cafeterias, restaurants, even from homes. So we've encouraged more gleaning.

00:15:38:20 USDA has actually taken a lead at that personally. We now rescue food at our own cafeterias and send it to DC Central Kitchen. And people all over the country now are becoming much more engaged as-- in that way as well.

00:15:52:29 LQ: You've also turned an interesting thing that was already there, Farmers Market^S, as an avenue for people in the WIC Program and other food programs to buy their food from Farmer's Market^S to help the farmers as well.

00:16:04:11 DG: Well, I would say that under the leadership of both Undersecretary Shirley Watkins and Undersecretary Gus Schumacher we have seen a couple things happen. Number one is we've seen a-- just a proliferation of farmers markets in this country.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:16:19:08 We probably have four times as many today as we did in 1990. And it's a very good way, by the way, for farmers to get income. It's a very profitable part of agriculture. It's not suitable for everybody, but it's highly profitable. And so we have helped facilitate farmers markets and encourage information about them and how to get it started.

00:16:40:16 And I think that's been good. In addition to that, we've tried to encourage it so that food in farmer's markets can go to the poor and that-- because a lot of that food is fresh vegetables and fresh fruit which often people don't get.

00:16:56:22 And so using food stamps or using related coupons to be used by the elderly particularly in farmer's markets, that's been another innovation of this department.

00:17:08:19 LQ: International trade and international food aid have been very critical, both for the farmers and for the people we've helped around the world during your

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

term.

00:17:17:08 DG: We have... In some ways, the United States Department of Agriculture is one of the foreign policy leaders in our government. Last year we provided about 10 million tons of food aid, food assistance to hungry people in let's say Africa, horn of Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia.

00:17:36:28 North Korea, for example, got 800,000 tons of food from the United States through the World Food Program. This has been a big, powerful, important part of America's commitment to the world and, as a result of that, USDA is now at the table with our other foreign policy agencies in dealing with some of the foreign policy issues.

00:17:59:16 Just recently, the President has proposed and we're adopting a new program, a variation on this theme where we take some of this food and we direct it into schools and educational institutions in developing nations. It's called "The Global Food for Education

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

Program".

00:18:16:27 It was an idea of Senator George McGovern, but it's also adopted with Senator Bob Dole and others (unint.) adopted it. We're gonna try to take about \$300,000,000.00 worth of food this year and as opposed to just sending it through the non-governmental organizations to the hungry people, we're gonna take it and try to see if we can get it into the schools so they will establish a school meals program and, therefore, it will do some nation building as well.

00:18:46:28 LQ: Biotechnology has been an interest of yours and that's also been a source of some of the friction we've experienced with some of the other countries of the world.

00:18:54:20 DG: Well, we are on the cutting edge of biotechnology. Just as we talk and as people watch this show, the newspapers this morning talked about how we have genetically engineered a monkey that has the characteristics of a gene from a jelly fish and, you

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

know, makes you wonder where this technology is going.

00:19:16:18 But it just happened to be this morning as we're talking. But, the fact is that when it comes to production agriculture, biotechnology is very much an important part of the future of agriculture.

00:19:29:17 I think that properly regulated with arms-length regulation so that the industry doesn't run the show, so that we insure people of confidence that their food is safe and their environment is safe. Biotechnology can make food that is healthier, that is safer, that perhaps uses less water, less pesticides so it can feed a hungrier world.

00:19:55:02 And it might even provide an opportunity where food will have a pharmaceutical component to it so you could actually get your medicines by essentially eating your foods. We might be able to increase the antioxidant content on food. I mean, it has a tremendous amount of possibilities.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:20:10:29 And so we gotta make sure that research goes forward. Some parts of the world they're scared of this technology. They think that we are modifying nature. But, of course, we've been modifying nature ever since humans came on this earth, you know. We build structures. We build dams. We build cars.

00:20:28:17 We're modifying nature. So I think that I don't accept that argument. I do think that we have to make sure that our regulatory system is sensible.

00:20:39:03 LQ: Organic foods. You've spent several months and working with your staff and evolving a first, final, clear definition of what they are.

00:20:49:09 DG: Well, organic agriculture is highly profitable for farmers and there's a segment of the consumer community that likes it. So... But there are a lot of claims out there. You go to the grocery store, "100% natural" or they've used the term "organic" and nobody really knew what they meant and there was no standards.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:21:10:09 So we have finally at the end of the administration put some national standards on there. And hopefully that will encourage the growth further, the organic food industry both here and then overseas.

00:21:21:27 LQ: And competition in agriculture, consolidation of the industry. Because we don't have big dollars often in agriculture compared to some industries, we've had a lot of consolidation and that's been a concern of yours.

00:21:32:21 DG: It's a big concern and it's-- the fact is that in the 1920s the-- one of the first major antitrust actions was taken in the meat-packing industry when I believe it was five companies that had roughly about 50% of the market.

00:21:47:04 And today, we have three in the beef industry, in the processing side, that have about 80% of the market. And it's happening in poultry and in hogs. And the way you produce food is changing, particularly in the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

livestock industry.

00:22:00:16 It's not quite as acute in the grains and the program crops, but it's more consolidated there as well. And then it's also a problem with respect to intellectual property rights in terms of the whole issue of genetic engineering, and who owns what and what kind of rights farmers have if you have fewer and fewer people owning those intellectual property rights.

00:22:20:29 So these are very important issues. They worry people in production agriculture because there is a concern that if there is no competition on the side of who are purchasing agriculture commodities, then, in fact, farmers will be victimized by a pretty closed market place.

00:22:38:19 And so we've done some things here at USDA. Not really as much as I would like, but we've done some things. My guess is Congress is gonna have to take a real serious look at our antitrust laws to see if they are suitable to deal with those problems in the future.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:22:53:16 And I might also add that we created an advisory committee on concentration, an advisory committee on small farms here so we could set up the institutional networks so that small farm-- smaller farm agriculture would have a place at the table here to talk about these issues.

00:23:08:23 Often times, people viewed USDA as just being the mouthpiece of big agriculture and I've tried to determine that we would be the mouthpiece of all agriculture.

00:23:19:10 LQ: You're completing one of the longest tenure terms of a Secretary of Agriculture. Almost six years. And there's a lot of stress and pressure in a cabinet-level job, but yet you use humor a lot. You did before you came to USDA. Has it helped you make it through the almost six years as Secretary?

00:23:36:11 DG: Well, I think it's made it so people didn't wanna kill me which is perhaps the big thing. You

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

know, you get-- you're genetically made up from what produced you and my parents produced me and they were both very, very engaged in humor. They felt that humor was a big part of their lives.

00:23:55:19 Both my dad and mother did. And my dad grew up-- they both grew up in the Depression. My dad used to say if you didn't laugh, you'd jump off a building. And so that's-- he laughed instead of taking catastrophic steps during the '30s.

00:24:08:21 And he also found that if people liked you and they laughed with you, they would probably buy stuff from you. And he was in that business. Well, we're not in the buying business or selling business, but we are in the buying and selling of ideas here.

00:24:24:01 So I have found that using humor judiciously and appropriately could sometimes make people feel better, especially here at the department. And also it could defuse a lot of hostility to your positions. And you might not always get what you wanted, but they

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

wouldn't hate you in the process.

00:24:44:10 And may... So that's where humor can be used not as a tool in and of itself, but as a tool to actually get your policy positions through.

00:24:53:00 LQ: Several demonstrators have made you a target for things.

00:24:57:19 DG: Yes. I've had naked people throwing things at me. I've had clothed people throwing things at me. I've experienced a lot of that and actually it has helped my joke material as I go out and talk about this department because I've probably been the most assaulted member of the President's cabinet.

00:25:17:08 But most of it has been because people feel very strongly about food and about animals. And there have been others who have been pied like the head of Microsoft was pied. I think Prince Charles was pied or had a tomato thrown, I mean. But I've been one of the few that have been able to turn quickly and evade the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

attack.

00:25:41:22 LQ: As you come to the close of your career as Secretary, do you have some fond things you wanna remember about things, accomplishments that you've made that you wanna be remembered by?

00:25:53:01 DG: Well, you know, from a personal prospective, this has been a-- just a phenomenal opportunity for me, you know. Never in my life did I dream that I would have the opportunity to shape policies that affect so many Americans every day.

00:26:08:28 And you couldn't do that without the enormous talent of people here. And one of the things I've learned is that in the career civil service, there is enormous talent. And you can do almost anything if, you know, if you marshal your forces together.

00:26:26:19 And so I'm proud of the fact that we've been able to marshal the forces of people throughout this department to help people. And let me just mention a few

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

areas.

00:26:37:10 In the farm area where times have been tough on the farm, we have distributed billions and billions and billions of dollars to farmers with a workforce that's completely understaffed and underpaid, but done it in a way that it probably has kept a quarter of a million people on the land who would have otherwise been thrown off and would have gone into bankruptcy or whatever.

00:27:02:20 So I think that's been a real, real constructive step. And I talk about our-- the civil rights issues that I think have been important and, you know, certainly the food safety issues and the timbering issues. But the one nice thing... Our department touches more people's lives than almost any other department in government.

00:27:21:27 And so every day people are affected by what we do and it-- and so it does make a difference. And working for this department has made a very big difference in people's lives and I've been proud to be a

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

part of it. One thing I would, for anybody watching this in the future, I would say is that it's very important that this department's many functions be properly communicated.

00:27:48:05 For years and years we were viewed as the Department of Production Agriculture and that's an important part of what we do. But because so few Americans work on the land anymore, in order for this department to have political clout to be able to get what it needs, we can't ignore communicating our food safety functions, our forestry functions, our rural development functions and our nutrition functions along with production agriculture.

00:28:15:11 So maybe... I've felt for some time we ought to rename this department "The Department of Food and Agriculture" as have many other state departments of agriculture. So maybe somebody will be watching this and say, "Hey, that's a good idea".

00:28:28:26 LQ: Will you miss this job?

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:28:30:06 DG: Yes. I will miss the job. I-- you know, it's-- I'll miss the people more than anything else and I'll miss the ability to have the kind of influence over people's lives. You rarely find that, that you actually can wake up in the morning and make a decision that might make somebody healthier or might keep somebody on the land, and that's fairly rare.

00:28:54:12 LQ: Any advice to your successor?

00:28:56:27 DG: Well, fortunately we have a very good successor coming in and she has great experience in this department. But I would say a couple things. Number one is keep up that sense of humor. She's gonna need it every day. You get to work and there's a catastrophe or calamity on your desk that you had no idea even existed and then you have to, you know, deal with that.

00:29:20:10 One day I came to work and the folks at-- in our Marketing and Regulatory Programs told me that they had found this fungus in wheat called "karnal ^{bunt} (~~unint.~~)"

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

and it could destroy the ability of the US to sell wheat everywhere in the world. And I'm thinking, "Oh, my goodness. How did this happen?"

00:29:34:18 You know, these are the kinds of things that sometimes happen. So she's got to have a good sense of humor and be prepared for the unexpected which is... The second thing is, of course, keep up the good relations with Congress because that's the make it or break it in terms of a Secretary of Agriculture particularly.

00:29:55:22 And the third thing is to keep up the efforts to try to make the department more of what I call a "corporate culture" rather than an "affiliate culture". This department for too long has operated as a conglomeration of separate, independent entities in which each one has its own separate power base, it's own separate legislative operations, it's own separate budgeting operations.

00:30:23:02 And so a lot of the problems of operating this place is that it's hard to operate as a total unit and

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

often times when you talk to staff, they talk about how we're doing and "we" turns out to be some subagency as a - some subagency here, rather than the whole department.

00:30:39:17 So under Deputy Secretary Rom~~an~~ger's leadership and others, we've tried to continue this effort to bring this institution more into a kind of a corporate, and I don't mean that just like a company like General Motors, I mean but in a corporate organization where we don't have any-- so many subpieces floating throughout the agencies here.

00:31:01:23 LQ: Talk about some of the special memories you must have in working with President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and your fellow cabinet members.

00:31:09:09 DG: Well, of course, I remember the things like the pie-throwing incidents with Secretary Shal~~la~~la (ph.) and then in the House Agriculture Committee with Secretary ^{Daley} ~~Daily~~ and Ambassador Barshefsky (ph.) where we had an individual who was obviously having some problems who had broke a bottle and threatened-- I don't know who-

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

- he was threatening everybody around him.

00:31:28:08 I was fortunately far enough away, but Ambassador Barshefsky was very close. So I've had, you know, those kinds of things happen. But I would have to say that the President has-- it's very interesting. I've told people before. I've said that he knows more about agriculture than anybody else in the White House.

00:31:49:20 And maybe including me. But it was very nice to have a President who, himself, was engaged in the issues. He's from a rural state. He knew them. He did not try to micromanage what we did here. That isn't to say that, "Oh, Aunt Bea didn't try to micromanage us on occasion". I think that's just a given.

00:32:08:03 But he was very supportive and I think he was also very proud of our performance, particularly in the rural development area where he was really into these projects. The ^{Enterprise}~~(unint.)~~ Zone Projects, the water systems, sewer systems, cooperative development projects that we did that he felt very strongly from being-- especially

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

being from a small state.

00:32:35:18 The Vice President was particularly helpful to us on (unint.), and a lot of our science and research activities. And, you know, both were very engaged in what we did here.

00:32:47:14 LQ: And you've had a long-term relationship with Rich Rominger who was the Deputy Secretary for this entire term.

00:32:52:17 DG: Well, I was very lucky I have to tell you. Rich was here before me. He was picked by the President. You know, he came on board about two years before I came on board. And he is what I call the "solid glue", the "solid foundation" during these years.

00:33:14:03 One is as Deputy Secretary he's the Chief Operating Officer so he tends to manage the day-to-day operations of the department which he did very well. He had to deal with his department during the waning months when Mike Espy was Secretary when there were all the

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

legal problems that were occurring there.

00:33:31:23 And then he carried forward and was Acting Secretary for three months after Mike left and kept this department on an even keel. We all-- we get along very well and we tend to have similar views on issues. We tend to both be kind of moderate types and although my personality tends to be more impetuous and volatile and he tends to be more reflective and sullen. And so I think it was a useful balance for ~~he~~^{him} and ~~I~~^{me} here.

00:34:04:09 LQ: If you could pick one thing, what do you think they'll remember the 26th Secretary of Agriculture for?

00:34:09:10 DG: I think probably, it depends on who "they" is. I think probably the employees of this department will probably remember us more for what we did in the area of civil rights than anything else. I mean, I personally think that the most significant thing done was the modernization of our food safety system.

USDA
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN
1/12/01

00:34:34:19 And I hope that continues. The second most significant thing is probably the revolution in forestry and the role of USDA in working with the forest service to kind of change the way they do-- did business.

00:34:52:02 And the third thing was our administration of our farm programs to make sure that they were done fairly. But I think internally they will remember us at a time when we really focused in on our internal personnel problems and how we treated our employees and customers.

00:35:11:04 LQ: Thank you very much Secretary...

00:35:11:29 DG: Okay. Thank you Larry.

00:35:12:18 LQ: ...of Agriculture Dan Glickman. I'm Larry Quinn with the Department of Agriculture's Office of Communications in Washington.

END OF TAPE