

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service  
Farm Bill Listening Session

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Whitten Building, Room 107-A

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As a former Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, I have seen firsthand the profound importance of creating opportunity for American farmers and ranchers. FAS does tremendous work in this space and I commend your tireless dedication to trade and development. The reality is that modern food systems are hyper-globalized in ways our forefathers could never have imagined. What is not always clear to casual observers is how our domestic prosperity and security is intimately linked to the prosperity and food security of others - sometimes in far off places.

I've come to appreciate this even more in my role as Vice President of Public Policy at World Food Program USA. WFP USA works to support the mission of the United Nations World Food Programme here in the United States. We do that through private sector fundraising and work

on Capitol Hill. And it is a privilege to champion an organization like WFP in a nation that has committed itself over and over again to the proposition that no child should go to bed hungry—here at home or abroad.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is among the greatest examples of American commitment to international food security and is a program that clearly reflects our values as Americans. Sometimes it is the only the meal a child will receive during a school day. McGovern-Dole can be transformative in that it helps increase school enrollment, especially for young girls. And we're learning that the key to building prosperous and fair societies today means making investment in women and girls. Simply put, it improves educational outcomes and protects children in moments of instability. It is a program that provides far more than food—it delivers hope for an entire generation of children.

WFP knows school feeding perhaps better than any other organization on the planet. Last year, the organization reached almost 20 million children in 71 different countries with meals, all the while building capacity of governments to take these systems over. McGovern-Dole played a big part in making that happen.

The 2018 Farm Bill will help WFP and other humanitarian organizations deliver hope through school feeding even more effectively. What WFP has learned over decades of experience is that successfully graduating out of these programs—something we ALL want to see—requires not only sufficient government capacity and political will in host countries, but also sustainable supply chains to feed the schools that are feeding the children. We commend provisions in the Farm Bill that allow up to 10 percent of McGovern-Dole funding to be put toward local and regional procurement. As I've mentioned in previous Congressional testimony, this approach helps build home-grown supply chains and those homegrown supply chains reinforce local political support for school nutrition programs.

School feeding programs are some of the most widely implemented safety net systems on the planet—but they aren't the only food-based social protections. Here in the United States, USDA administers SNAP benefits to almost 40 million people each year and WIC benefits to millions of children and new mothers. Together, these constitute some of the most sophisticated food-based social protections anywhere in the world.

Section 3308 of the 2018 Farm Bill offers new authorities to USDA to share its immense expertise in this sphere with countries seeking to scale up food-based social protections of all kinds. We look forward to working with USDA in implementing this provision because we know that workable safety nets are important not just to individual beneficiaries; done right, they contribute to civil stability and productivity. Done wrong, they can have unintended consequences.

For several reasons, I believe the Foreign Agricultural Service is well suited to play a central role in implementing section 3308. First, FAS already has a framework for interagency coordination in the Interagency Coordinating Committee on International Affairs (ICCIA). And second, my time chairing those meetings helped me appreciate how much relevant expertise resides in different agencies. FAS knows trade and development. FNS holds expertise on benefit delivery and data optimization. ERS is expert in modelling economic effects over time. Our Extension Service is great at public education. APHIS and FSIS know plant, animal and food safety like no one else. I could go on.

My point is that USDA does many things well and is a diverse and deep reservoir of practical expertise. Under section 3308 of the farm bill, we have an opportunity—together—to leverage that expertise to improve

lives and civil society (and stability) around the globe. We already share our harvests with the world through McGovern-Dole and Food for Peace, now we have the potential to share much more. WFP USA would welcome an opportunity to work with USDA—as a convener, as a sounding board, as a partner—to ensure that section 3308 of the farm bill meets its potential.

I want to thank Administrator Isley and the entire FAS team for their thoughtful management and implementation of these critical, life-saving programs and I appreciate the opportunity to share the perspective of World Food Program USA here today. Thank you.

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