

Testimony of Ricky Wiggins  
Vice-President, Southeast Area  
Alabama Farmers Federation  
Before the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture  
May 15, 2010  
Troy, Alabama

Chairman Peterson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for scheduling these hearings to get input from those of us directly impacted by farm legislation.

My name is Ricky Wiggins and I am a partner in a family farming operation along with my son, Russell, and father, Gene. We currently work about 2500 acres of row crops and pasture in Covington and Escambia counties, located in South Alabama. We've been at the same location since 1952 and have a history of growing corn, wheat, soybeans, watermelons, tomatoes, grain sorghum and hogs. We currently grow peanuts, cotton and cattle.

My wife, Sharon, and I have four children and ten grandchildren. Our concern today is whether or not they will have the same opportunity to pursue the American dream in the future. Overwhelming national debt, deficit and uncontrolled spending cast a dark shadow over their futures. As a farmer, I stand ready to work to pass a fiscally-responsible 2012 farm bill. However, I'm not prepared to sit back and watch agriculture take disproportionate cuts while runaway spending is allowed to continue in other parts of our budget.

Farmers understand that this next Farm Bill will not be written in a vacuum. We know that tough choices will have to be made. Effective farm policy maximizes scarce resources by triggering programs when prices and conditions warrant and by giving farmers the flexibility to respond to changes in supply and demand. Good farm policy is not only important to us who live on farms, but also for every American that enjoys an affordable, reliable and safe food supply.

These are trying times for Southern agriculture. Several years of prolonged drought along with several devastating hurricanes have taken a toll on many in the Southeast. Couple these weather events with increased regulation, higher production cost and prices for cotton and peanuts that are at or below levels we saw two decades ago, and you can see that Southern agriculture is hurting.

The current three-part safety net of marketing loans, direct payments and counter-cyclical payments has worked fairly well for Southeastern farmers. We do have some issues with USDA regulations on eligibility and see the need for Congress to be more specific on intent. Policy should encourage maximum participation without regard to farm size or structure.

With more costly environmental regulation on the horizon, now is not the time to be shifting funds out of the commodity title and into other causes. Providing for the continued stability of American farms is the best way to strengthen rural communities, conserve natural resources and ensure a safe and affordable food supply.

We also understand the issues with the WTO and that America tries to set the example of adhering to compliance, but that usually puts us at a disadvantage in the world of trade. It is frustrating to have trade agreements be negotiated that will truly help us and Congress chooses not to take them up.

In summary, we think that the current bill works well. If policy changes are inevitable as part of the 2012 Farm Bill, we remain ready to work with your Committee to explore alternative programs that can provide the needed safety net to our industry in a manner that is consistent with our international trade obligations and within our budget constraints.

Thank you for listening to me today.

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Information Required From Non-governmental Witnesses

House rules require non-governmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

1. Name: Ricky Wiggins
2. Business Address: 11190 Wiggins Farm Road  
Andalusia, AL 36420
3. Business Phone Number: 334-222-1511
4. Organization you represent: Alabama Farmers Federation
5. Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee:  
I have been directly involved in crop and livestock  
production on a family farm for over 50 years.
6. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:  
I studied Ag Science at Auburn University. I currently  
serve as Southeast V.P. of Alabama Farmers Federation, V.P. of  
Covington Gin, Inc., President of Andy Peanut Company, Inc.,  
and ex officio member of Alabama Peanut Producers Association. (attachment)
7. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold:  
Southeast Vice President of Alabama Farmers  
Federation.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules\* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2007.

Name: Ricky Wiggins  
Address: 17111 Rockhole Bridge Rd., Andalusia, AL 36420  
Telephone: 334-222-2651  
Organization you represent (if any): Alabama Farmers Federation

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2007, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: None Amount: -

Source: - Amount: -

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2007, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: USDA Value Added Producer Grant Amount: 31500.00 USDA  
31500.00 Matching Funds

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Ricky Wiggins

\* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: *Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

I am a former Board member of Southern Cotton Growers  
Association, Cotton, Inc. and Gulf Coast Farm Analysis  
Association.

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