

**Testimony of Agriculture Committee  
Chairman Frank D. Lucas  
House Administration Hearing on Committee Budgets  
November 30, 2011**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I appreciate Ranking Member Collin Peterson joining me to outline our Committee's proposed budget for 2012. As you all know, we have a long and proud history of bipartisan cooperation, and I plan to continue that spirit of cooperation as we proceed with the work of the Committee next year.

In addition to bipartisanship, the Agriculture Committee has a strong history of fiscal responsibility. The modest spending and cooperative nature of our Committee spans back more than two decades, under the control of both parties.

In support of leadership and this Committee, our budget submission for the 112th Congress included a 5% reduction from the previous year's funding, but allocated a larger amount in 2011 than in 2012 in anticipation of increased travel needs for field hearings to prepare for the 2012 Farm Bill. Salaries were budgeted to remain the same for both years.

I am pleased to report that we successfully implemented the 5% reduction into this year's budget by making conservative staffing decisions and stretching our resources as far as possible. We rehired staff that were with the Committee previously to retain institutional knowledge, combined staff responsibilities where appropriate, and have postponed filling staff vacancies. In the operation budget, all purchases were kept to a minimum and savings incurred where possible by limiting travel and shopping around for the best prices on equipment and supplies.

The Committee will continue to support leadership in implementing an additional 6.4% cut. However, I am concerned about the long-term impact on the ability of the Committee to retain qualified, experienced staff. In order to implement this additional cut, we will have to continue to make conservative staffing decisions. Additionally, we will have to consider if we have the resources necessary to do our traditional series of farm bill field hearings.

We intentionally allocated more money in 2011 for travel for the farm bill field hearings. We had planned to hold those hearings this fall. However, we had to delay those hearings in order to work on a reduction package to submit to the Super Committee. Therefore, we anticipate holding the farm bill field hearings early next year and will need the resources to do that.

Because we did not split our funding evenly between the two years as most Committees did, we are already experiencing a reduction in funding for 2012 of \$71,970.50 or 1.2%. By taking an additional 6.4% reduction off of the authorized 2012 amount, we would really be taking a 7.6% reduction as compared to other Committees. We ask that you take this into consideration when determining the final authorized amount for 2012.

Mr. Chairman, we truly have our work cut out for us this Congress. But, we firmly believe that we can accomplish all of this on fewer resources. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our budget request. Please let us know if we can provide you any additional information.