

Farmers Advisory Council Meeting Minutes • March 13, 2009

Issues Discussed:

I. Farm Bill Implementation

- In June Congress passed the 2008 Farm Bill, overriding President Bush's veto. Rep. Wittman supported the Farm Bill, voted for it and to override the President's veto because of the importance of agriculture to our region.
- Completion of the Farm Bill is very significant to farmers, the rural economy and our nation. The bill provides vital support for nutrition, conservation, research, food safety and many other programs.
- This farm bill includes important reforms while at the same time ensuring food security, protecting the environment, promoting renewable energy and maintaining a reasonable safety net for farmers.
- This Farm Bill also includes significant funding for the Chesapeake Bay region, to promote programs that protect and restore the Bay.
- Rep. Wittman looks forward to working in the 111th Congress and with the new administration, including Secretary of Agriculture Norm Vilsack (Iowa) to implement sound farm policy for the U.S.
- USDA is continuing to implement and roll out 2008 Farm Bill Programs
- 500,000 cap suggested by President should be on net and not gross.
- The poultry industry is important to area farmers.
- The Farm Bill does not allow farmers to plan for the future.

II. Chesapeake Bay and Agriculture

- The Farm Bill included \$188 million for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
 - The first \$23 million (nearly \$7 million for VA) was released in January to support nutrient management, cover crops, crop residue management, vegetative buffers and other agricultural conservation practices that help reduce pollution flowing into the streams, creeks and rivers that feed the Bay.
 - The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative is administered by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

III. FY10 Appropriations Process

- FY10 Appropriation Process is underway. I will be carefully watching to see how the administration proposes to funding important agriculture programs.

IV. Update of the Rappahannock River Valley Refuge by Joe McCauley, Refuge Manager, US Fish & Wildlife

- The issue and problem of Canada Geese on farmland.

V. Action Items that will be researched by Rep. Wittman & staff:

- The USDA holding back information. Contact Kelly for add'l info.
- Stimulus money for farmers? Perhaps. Will check with SBA and SBDC.