

Simpson Participates in Farm Bill Field Hearing

Idaho Congressman takes part in discussion with Idaho Ag producers in anticipation of new Farm Bill

Washington, DC – Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson assumed the temporary role of a House Agriculture Committee member during a field hearing in Nampa today that explored potential changes to legislation impacting our nation's agriculture policies. The field hearing, held by the House Agriculture Committee, was attended by six members of the House of Representatives including Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN), Ranking Member Frank Lucas (R-OK), and Idaho's lone member on either the House or Senate Agriculture Committees Walt Minnick. Simpson was allowed to participate under an agreement between the House Agriculture Committee and the House Appropriations Committee.

"First and foremost, I want to commend each and every Idaho witness at the hearing today for their insight and outstanding testimony," said Simpson. "Some of Idaho agriculture's best advocates spoke today and provided the Committee with an idea of the strengths of the agriculture industry and some of its biggest challenges. I believe my colleagues heard some things today that will make them think very carefully about how we put together a new Farm Bill and how such a bill impacts the very people it is intended to help."

In addition to Chairman Peterson and Ranking Member Lucas, attendees included Representative Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin (D-SD) and Representative Jim Costa (D-CA), along with Minnick and Simpson.

Idaho witnesses at the hearing included Fred Brossy representing Idaho's organic agriculture industry, Scott Brown representing the Idaho grain growers, Doug Gross representing Idaho potato growers, Kelly Henggeler representing Idaho fruit growers, Galen Lee representing Idaho sugar growers, Brian Kernohan representing Idaho forestry, Ron Bitner representing the Idaho winegrape industry, Charlie Lyons representing Idaho beef producers, Adrian Boer representing Idaho dairy producers, and Cindy Siddoway representing Idaho's wool growers.

The hearing took direct testimony from each of the Idaho witnesses about the state of their industries and the impact federal farm legislation has on Idaho producers. The Committee is seeking testimony in several field hearings across the United States in preparation for consideration of a new Farm Bill beginning next year.

"The impact of the Farm Bill on Idaho's farming and ranching families cannot be overestimated," said Simpson. "Our ability to maintain a cheap, safe, and domestic supply of food in the United States is tied directly to the policies put forth in the Farm Bill. Too few people in our nation appreciate the complexities of maintaining a domestic supply of food while too many under appreciate the work, money, and emotion that goes into being a farmer or rancher. We have to do everything we can to keep our food grown right here in the United States and the hearing today helped move us in the right direction."

"I want to commend Congressman Minnick for his leadership in bringing the Committee to Idaho and thank the Committee for allowing me to take part in the hearing," said Simpson.