

**STATEMENT OF SCOTT HUTCHINS, OF INDIANA TO BE UNDER SECRETARY  
FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, & ECONOMICS,  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Good morning. Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to the position of Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I'd like to thank President Trump for this opportunity and Secretary Perdue for his confidence and support. I am myself a product of the U.S. Land Grant System and therefore feel a great sense of honor to be considered for this position and, if confirmed, will dedicate myself to fulfill the mission as outlined by Congress and achieve the goals of USDA as outlined by Secretary Perdue. I would also like to thank my family here with me today. My wife, Jan Hutchins from Alabama, who has been a full and equal partner for over 38 years. She is a registered nurse and we have three wonderful adult children and seven grandchildren age 6 and under; no one could ask for a better life-long partner. My sisters, Dawn Skelley and Candy Kellner from Georgia, who are incredibly supportive siblings -- we shared the most amazing parents, Cecil and Robbie Hutchins, who regretfully have passed on, but are here with us here in spirit. My cousin Randy Pfaff from North Carolina, a U.S. Army Veteran and retired fire fighter; we travel each year on Motorcycle vacations with our spouses and in fact have enjoyed riding in most of the great states represented by this Committee.

Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to developing innovations and novel technologies in support of agricultural production, including organic production -- working every day to provide tools that allow farmers to not only succeed in their businesses, but to do so with a progressively smaller footprint in the environment. For example, I was the global product development manager for spinosad, a naturally derived insect management tool that is today the most widely used insect management tool in organic agriculture within the USA. Indeed, I have witnessed extraordinary progress and positive change in agricultural production and sustainability over my career.

My professional journey as a scientist began at Auburn University as an undergraduate student in the late 1970's where I benefitted from excellent teachers and mentors in Agricultural Entomology and became passionate about helping growers manage devastating pest problems.

During one formative experience, as a Cotton Scout in central Alabama in 1980, I saw the real world in living color – devastating crop losses from the cotton boll weevil, with extensive chemical control required which subsequently “released” several species of secondary pests (e.g., “worms”, thrips, whiteflies, and plant bugs), creating a pesticide treadmill of sorts. If you compare that reality of 1980 to cotton production systems of today, the boll weevil has been largely eradicated due to the great work of the USDA and Land-Grants, worm species are controlled via biotechnology-powered host plant resistance, and the remaining species are managed with tools that are far less toxic with a smaller environmental footprint versus their predecessors. Similar progress has been made in many other agroecosystems within the United States and I am pleased and proud to have contributed in some measure to this progress.

Impacted by this experience, I elected to pursue graduate studies at Mississippi State University where I studied the impact of narrow row soybean production on insect pest populations, beneficial species, and control options while learning the art of research. I became a student of integrated pest management (IPM) and followed this interest to Iowa State University to study under the tutelage of Dr. Larry Pedigo, who was a world-renowned pioneer in the field. Through his mentorship and an extraordinary graduate student team environment, I developed a passion for understanding how and when farmers should control pest problems and elected to also pursue a minor in agricultural economics to link farm management to IPM. I have carried these learnings and lessons from all three outstanding Land-Grants with me throughout many roles. I also have been fortunate to have worked closely with numerous university teams and administrators throughout my career, along with scientific societies, to create and advance public-private partnerships. Notably, as a member of the Governing Board of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) for 9 years, including as ESA President in 2007, I have sought to build consensus on positive change while encouraging a culture of inclusivity of all members and member categories in planning the future role ESA will play for its members. I was deeply honored to have been elected as a Fellow of ESA in 2009, the first member with a long career in the private sector to receive that honor in the history of the society.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Perdue and his team to fulfill the expectations of Congress and the Administration to ensure U.S. Agriculture remains the most effective and efficient producer of food and feed in the world. Because any model for sustained

progress requires a focus on best practices and land stewardship, the Land Grant Mission is timeless in not only research, but also research-made-relevant through education and extension. This includes not only research on the healthy and productive use of the land, but on the animal and human consumers of these agricultural products. I was honored to have met in person the Nobel Laureate Dr. Norman Borlaug, who first inspired all of us to fulfill what is now the current mantra of USDA and Secretary Perdue: *Do Right, and Feed Everyone*.

Inasmuch as Congress has designated this role to also serve as the Chief Scientist for the USDA, if confirmed, I will fulfill these responsibilities to the best of my ability through continual outreach to stakeholders and deliberate, yet decisive formulation of recommendations to the Secretary, the President, and the Congress on key scientific issues and opportunities facing U.S. Agriculture.

Moreover, if confirmed, I commit to actively work with and lead the REE team to create strategic themes in line with the goals and objectives of the Secretary and Congress. The women and men of the REE agencies are truly world class with a tremendous history of impact -- my goal is to ensure their full potential is realized for the continued benefit of U.S. Agriculture with a renewed focus on tangible results. I have many years of directly applicable experience in administering large, complex, and diverse research organizations. I am also fortunate to have had unique professional experiences through two major mergers with roles in Human Resources, Six Sigma Quality Improvement, and numerous program and portfolio management assignments that, I believe, will prove useful to the administrative goals of USDA, if confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Stabenow, Members of the Committee, I am truly honored to have been nominated for this critical USDA role and, if confirmed, I pledge to do all I can each and every day to expand the long term competitiveness and sustainability of U.S. Agriculture and further develop the framework and capabilities of REE scientists and professionals. In closing, I would like to thank you for allowing me the privilege of appearing in front of the Committee today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.