

Testimony of Gregory Ibach
USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture
For Marketing and Regulatory Programs
before the
United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition &
Forestry
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Good Morning, Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss my desire to serve the American public as President Trump's nominee as Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

I am honored to be nominated by the President and humbled by the trust and confidence that Secretary Perdue has shown in selecting me for this position. I also want to thank Senator Fischer for her kind introduction and steadfast support throughout the nomination process.

I am joined today by my wife Teresa. Her support and love for the last 29 years have provided me the opportunity to serve the citizens of Nebraska as Assistant Director and Director of the state Department of

Agriculture for almost 20 years. We are the incredibly proud parents of triplets, who are age 25, and our daughter Emily, from Denver, is with me today. Our son Evan, who lives in Minneapolis, and our son Alec and his wife Meredith, who live in Nebraska, were unable to join us due to work obligations. Finally, I am honored to have Steve Nelson, President of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, Craig Uden, current President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, here representing our Nebraska Cattlemen, and Lynn Crisp, representing Nebraska Corn Growers, and President-Elect of National Corn Growers supporting my nomination proceedings today.

I am proud that my children represent the fifth generation of my mother's family and the sixth generation of my father's family to farm and ranch in northeast Dawson County Nebraska, near the small town of Sumner.

Our family farm consists of row crop and cow-calf enterprises. As is the case with many farm operations around the country, ours weathered difficult times because of persistence, communication, and teamwork. I applied those traits as the foundation of my work ethic and I look forward to bringing these same principles to USDA, if confirmed.

Working on my parents' farm defined who I was and what I have become. That daily participation led me logically to our county's 4-H program. And from there, I made the obvious decision to attend the University of Nebraska and majored in animal science and agricultural economics.

Following college, during the heart of the historic farm crisis, I spent six years working in the Farm Credit System in Nebraska and Iowa in the latter part of the 1980s. I returned to the farm to pursue my love of production agriculture and joined my grandparents, who assisted Teresa and me as we started our own family farm and raised our three children.

Those years also provided key opportunities to become involved in the organizations that represented our family's farm endeavors. I was involved in our county and state Farm Bureau and county, state and national cattlemen's organizations, securing leadership positions at both the state and national levels.

I was honored in 1999 to be asked by Governor Mike Johanns to serve as Assistant Director of Agriculture, and then, by Governor Dave Heineman and Governor Pete Ricketts, to serve as Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. During my tenure as Director, I

was also elected to serve as the President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

I have approached my tenure at the department with service to Nebraska's nearly 50,000 farm and ranch families in mind. I believe my status as an active producer has been essential to my leadership role within the department, providing me the best perspective from which to serve my fellow farmers and ranchers. That said, I recognize and have an appreciation for the structure of government and its role in protecting and serving all citizens.

The MRP mission area is comprised of many programs focused on improving market competitiveness for the overall benefit of consumers and producers of American agriculture. If honored to receive your confirmation, I will work to faithfully implement the authorities outlined by Congress.

The balancing act between the two programs: the first representing and promoting the interests of farmers and ranchers and the second, overseeing some of the entities that regulate them – can be a difficult task. However, the word ‘balance’ is the key to that equation.

By achieving balance, MRP can achieve Secretary Perdue's Department-wide goals of supporting job creation, prioritizing customer service and ensuring our customers access a safe and secure food supply. I am committed to promoting the market opportunities and protecting the integrity associated with the organic seal, and preserving and protecting our natural resources and plant and animal health and well-being.

If confirmed, I will help the Secretary achieve his goals through ensuring sensible and effective regulations, responding to our customers in a timely and straight forward manner, focusing on plant and animal health program effectiveness, and fostering safe innovation that is farmer, consumer and environmentally sound.

To achieve realistic and meaningful balance has guided my decisions throughout my governmental leadership career. My thought process regarding regulatory programs and promotional activities will improve the opportunities not only for my neighbors in Sumner, Nebraska but Americans across the country. While doing so, I recognize the weighty responsibility to maintain consumer confidence in the products produced and the production methods followed.

If confirmed, I intend to bring this same thought process and philosophy to Washington, DC. I will be guided by the desire to serve agriculture

and the hard-working families that strive every day to produce the food, feed, fiber and fuel for families not only here in the United States but for families around the world.

If confirmed, I pledge to be available to listen to you, other Members of Congress, and to the many diverse voices in agriculture who will have ideas and input for the programs under my supervision.

Thank you again for your attention and consideration of my nomination. I will be humbled to serve if confirmed and would look forward to working together to serve American Agriculture.