

Testimony of Ted McKinney
U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary of Trade and Foreign Agricultural
Affairs Nominee
before the
United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
September 19, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Stabenow, and others of you on this committee that do so much important work for American agriculture. I appreciate the opportunity very much to be here in front of you, and thank the President, Secretary Sonny Perdue, and others for their faith in me to perhaps lead this important agency as USDA Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

I also want to thank my long-time friend and fellow Hoosier Senator Joe Donnelly for that very warm introduction and welcome. I am grateful for your support, friendship and collaboration over these many years.

I will add that it has been my pleasure to meet, or in some cases re-meet, many of you in these recent days as we made our way to your offices and learned more about your sense of priorities in this area of food and agricultural trade.

Before I proceed, I would like for you to meet my family, nearly all who are with me here today. They are my rock and have been supportive over these many decades of work in the food and agriculture world, so it is appropriate I begin there. My wife of 35 years – Julie, who just recently retired after 19 years of teaching 2nd graders; son Brad and his wife Kristie, who live nearby in Falls Church, Virginia; my eldest daughter Brooke, who lives just north of Cincinnati with her husband and three young children; and finally, daughter Caroline, who resides in Indianapolis. Our grandchildren, three with Brooke and one with Brad and Kristie, are all age 6 or under, and just may have made this meeting too rowdy, so we'll introduce them to you at a later date. I love you all.

I suspect many of you would like to know more about me, my background, and perhaps

what I might bring to USDA and this new and dedicated function that will focus on agricultural trade. First, my roots are on the farm in North Central Indiana, two which are Century Farms, so the family represents six generations in that area. The farms have always been based in corn, soybeans, swine, and occasionally wheat. Over the past four decades the farm brought on value-added operations like seed corn and seed soybean production, seed corn detasseling, custom spraying, seed sales, and now Precision Planting technologies. I'm very proud that my twin brother and his wife, and my Mom and Dad (age 86), continue active involvement in the farms' management and growth. My formative years on the farm were very important and I've tried to look through a farmer's eyes since.

4-H and FFA were also prominent – 10 years in 4-H and service as a State FFA State Officer helped hone my leadership skills as I engaged with various projects and organizations. Thereafter, I attended four years at Purdue University studying agricultural economics, then to industry. I spent 28 years in a number of plant science industry jobs that included sales, product development, product marketing, issue management, communications, government relations, and industry affairs, many of them involving international issues. A jump in 2009 to lead Global Corporate Affairs with Eli Lilly and Company's agriculture division, Elanco, allowed a deep dive into the animal world, again with a great deal of work on international issues and affairs. I'm grateful that since 1981, I've had one leg squarely in the plant sciences and cropping world, and the other squarely in the animal world, both which have brought a great deal to my experience pool

In early 2014, the opportunity to finally do public service, a long-sought goal of mine, became reality when then-Governor Mike Pence invited me to join state government and serve as Director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. This job has been quite broadening, and the place where everything comes together. Notable to this job is the interface with many programs and touch points within USDA. These include work with several titles of the Farm Bill, MAP, FMD, Specialty Crop Block Grants, Trade Missions, Policy, and more. In short, it was so valuable to have a career in the private

sector, but also valuable and additive to then spend quality time in the public sector.

The other relevant piece of my current job came when the Governor added to my portfolio the responsibility for Agribusiness Economic Development. Two plus years in, I will share that it has been transformative, and, should I be confirmed, that experience will play well into this new role at USDA representing exports of US food and agriculture.

As for this new opportunity, the mission of the Agency is well stated: *To link U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security.* I agree with that statement, and anticipate investing significant time in other countries -- building trust, opening doors for our farmers and processors, removing trade barriers, and otherwise being a high trust and high delivery person to deliver our product portfolio to other countries.

Not unlike you, I have observed the continued practice by many other countries of non-scientific trade barriers – many of them sanitary-phytosanitary – as a means to limit the import of U.S. made products. This is, perhaps, the biggest challenge to science generally, and our ability to export completely specifically. There exists a double standard with many trading partners. Addressing this growing problem will not be easy, but I intend to collaborate with our friends at USTR, Department of State, Commerce, and anyone else involved in trade to find solutions.

In my discussions with many of you, the question of priorities and countries came up frequently. My promise to you is that I will first meet with Secretary Perdue and his team, then quickly establish a priority list, then get going to visit and know them and it is likely that such a priority list already exists. No doubt it will include NAFTA, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, EU, Latin America, and others. If confirmed, I look forward to diving into these trade agreements with sister agencies to bring these to fruition as quickly as possible. Our farmers need them resolved.

An addition to this new agency is that of Codex Alimentarius. I am troubled that yet again, the approval of some newer agricultural products or technologies are being politicized and rejected. For years, the consensus-based style of Codex worked well, largely because it was based on scientists' assessment and review of products. We must return to those science-based decision making because products globally, that help developing nations, are being denied. Many countries around the world as it is their approval system as they cannot afford the high quality regulatory system like that in the U.S. So, with the support of our scientists across USDA and government, and with our trade experts involved, I look forward to tackling and helping resolve what has been a very good system until the last decade or so.

In conclusion, I offer these concluding thoughts.

- 1) I applaud the action of the Congress and Secretary Perdue to have this agency stand alone in its focus on trade. It is time, and our farmers and food companies need the focus.
- 2) I promise the very best of teamwork -- within USDA, across the many agencies that are involved with trade, and certainly with this committee and constituencies.
- 3) American agriculture will have my undivided attention and passion to lift up our exports, and sustain or grow our trust with these very important trading partners.

Thank you all for this time, and I am honored to be with you today.