

I welcome you all this morning to this hearing to review the U.S. Grain Standards Act. I appreciate our witnesses and members of the public being here as well as those who are listening through our website. I know we have some fine folks from the Georgia Department of Agriculture and from GIPSA's Brunswick, Georgia, office listening today.

While reauthorization of the Grain Standards Act may not be the hottest topic of discussion in Washington, it is extremely important to all of agriculture that we review and reauthorize the Act. As we'll soon hear in greater detail from the Administration's witness, in fiscal year 2004, GIPSA provided inspections on nearly 61 percent of America's \$50 billion total grain production and facilitated the marketing of \$14 billion of U.S. grain exports. Authorities provided under the U.S. Grain Standards Act and those who carry out the law certainly contribute to the excellent reputation the U.S. grain inspection system holds worldwide.

We are here this morning to hear from interested parties about issues the Committee should consider during the reauthorization process. As chairman, I plan to introduce a reauthorization bill soon after the Memorial Day recess, and I plan to move the bill this summer. This hearing will help us gain a full understanding of issues to consider as we move forward in this process.