

**Statement of Richard T. Crowder  
Nominee for Chief Agriculture Negotiator  
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative  
Before the Senate Finance Committee  
December 15, 2005**

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Baucus and other members of the Committee. It is my privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Chief Agriculture Negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. I am honored by the trust and confidence placed in me by President Bush and Ambassador Portman. I also want to thank the Committee for taking the time to hold this hearing. I know it's the end of the Session and this is a very busy time for the Senate.

Mr. Chairman, I am excited about the possibility of representing the United States in our trade negotiations. My roots in American agriculture are deep. My ancestors from the 1600's through my father were farmers in Virginia. And, even though I left the farm, throughout my career I have had the opportunity to stay in touch with farmers at home and abroad.

I have worked in agriculture most all my life, for nearly 40 years. This experience covered the food chain from seed to restaurants. I hold B.S. and M.S. degrees from Virginia Tech in Agricultural Economics as well as a PhD in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State.

Agriculture is a vital part of the American economy and the American way of life. I am fully aware of and appreciate the challenges and demands of the job as well as its importance to U.S. agriculture. I stand ready to accept the challenges and responsibilities of this position. If confirmed by the Senate, I will approach the job with a dedication and a diligence that is equal to its challenge and importance.

Mr. Chairman, American farmers are the best in the world. If they are given the chance to compete on a fair playing field, they will win. The proof is in our exports. The United States is a net agriculture exporter. Fiscal Year

2005 saw another record year for U.S. exports reaching \$62.4 billion and the Department of Agriculture expects a surplus in 2006.

Because we grow more than we consume, my top priority, if confirmed, will be to work to open markets to U.S. agriculture. I will work to see that tariffs and barriers to our products abroad are lowered or eliminated. And I'll work to ensure that new barriers are not raised to keep our products out.

I've been lucky, during my career in both the private and public sectors, to have been given the opportunity to advance the interests of U.S. agriculture at the international level. I've seen first hand the commercial and development benefits from the international trade in agriculture and agriculture-related intellectual property.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of my management style, I've always held to the philosophy that all stakeholders should have the opportunity for input into the process. I look forward to working closely with you, Senator Baucus and all the Members of this Committee if I am confirmed and become the Chief Agriculture Negotiator. Your input will be critical to my success of fulfilling the responsibilities of this important position.

Mr. Chairman, neither my wife nor either of our sons could be here today. However, before concluding, I would like to express thanks to each of them for their patience and support over the past forty plus years. They have willingly accepted a husband's and a father's career that has involved a lot of time away from home, has spanned multiple locations and, as noted, has included public service and private sector positions..

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I express my appreciation to you and the Committee, including the Committee staff for taking the time to meet with me, as I have made my way through the process.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

