

Written Statement for the record  
Steve Killpack

My name is Steve Killpack. I currently farm 700 acres of corn and soybeans with my father on our family farm in southwest Iowa near Neola. We farm in the rolling loess hills, and we have always been conservation minded, however, over the last four years I have become increasingly aware of our inability to function as a sustainable farm. Soil erosion is prevalent in the loess hills, even under no-till conditions. Our farming operations need to change to support our sensitive soil types. We as producers need to strive for sustainability, to push the learning curve of soil systems, and to understand that we may need to change practices to allow future generations the opportunity to farm. Soil sustainability is at the top of my list, the soil is our livelihood, and it is a resource that must be preserved. As our farm transitions to a sustainable farm I look forward to the future, and to the privilege of calling myself a farmer for many years to come.

The Conservation Security Program should be the focus of the 2007 farm bill, because conservation should be our main priority; to protect our air, soil, and water. I believe that farmers and ranchers who actively practice conservation should be supported to continue promoting conservation. The CSP program is an opportunity to show that we have grown as a nation, and that we care about our resources. It is an opportunity to invest in our future by promoting conservation and to reward farmers and ranchers who have invested their time, money, and hearts into something that they care about. I believe that funding for the Conservation Security Program could potentially be derived by diverting funds from direct and counter cyclical payments as well as loan deficiency payments into the CSP program. I think direct payments promote farming every acre possible while the CSP promotes conservation. Direct payments should be drastically reduced to limit their impact on farm rental rates and to encourage farmers to focus on conservation. I believe that farmers and ranchers should benefit from the additional income from the CSP program and the public benefits of better water quality, air quality, soil quality and increased wildlife habitat. Part of the funding for the CSP program should be in educating producers how to properly enroll and what they need to do to meet the requirements of the CSP. There is very little information available at this time on what is actually needed to be successfully enrolled into the CSP program. My hope is that through the CSP program and the support of our government, we will be able to secure a future for many more generations of farmers.

Our wildlife is a natural resource and we should strive to promote their existence. Wildlife programs should continue with increased funding in habitat restoration. Reestablishing tall grass prairie should be a top priority in habitat restoration. We should focus on the native flora and fauna to promote a sustainable ecosystem. Stream habitat should also receive increased funding to promote water quality and to protect our precious riparian areas.

Small family farms continue to decline, as with any business, changes occur. However, the opportunity for small family farms to find niche agricultural markets is still available. I believe support should be made available to grow and develop niche markets and specialty crops. Funding, however, should not be from direct subsidy payments but from market assistance programs which develop markets in local areas and promote locally grown food and fiber. The opportunity to sell produce continues to rise as trends in organic and locally grown food

increase and I feel we can continue to improve our economy by supporting these changes. I believe we should eat healthy and promote nutritional quality in our schools by purchasing locally grown produce. Opportunities are everywhere we are only limited by our ability to comprehend them.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to speak today; it is an important opportunity to stress the true needs of our society and the importance of agriculture for securing our future.

- "All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself." - Chief Seattle, 1854