

Mr. Chairman, Senator Chambliss, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here today as the President's nominee for the Chief Financial Officer of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I also want to thank Senator Casey for his kind words and his leadership, intelligence and integrity in representing the State of Pennsylvania.

With me today are my wife Tracy and our daughters Tess and Ariel. In addition, joining me are my father, Jerry Segal; my oldest brother, Eric Segal, and my niece Julia and nephew Jory; my sister-in-law, Deborah Mills Houston and my nephew, Geoffrey Mills.

My journey leading to today's meeting began over 30 years ago, where I worked several summers in my father's factory – sweeping the floors, picking up shop towels, assembling products and running production machines. It was a great opportunity to learn the business from the bottom up and to develop relationships with the people whose hard work and sweat are the backbone of our country.

I had the opportunity to attend Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where I earned both a B.S. and MBA from the Tepper School of Business and had the opportunity to learn many skills, tools and concepts that prepared me for my business career. One of the strongest lessons was the opportunity to work in teams with highly talented people in a high-pressure environment.

I then joined Scott Paper Company as a Financial & Strategic Planning Analyst. At Scott, I was able to actively participate in the management of a large organization with many complex operations. I learned the importance of disciplined systems, structures and processes, lessons that would serve me well throughout my career.

After several years at Scott, I decided to return to Pittsburgh and join my father at Dormont Manufacturing Company. Dormont manufactured flexible stainless steel gas appliance connectors, a metal hose that is used to attach gas appliances to the gas supply line. Over the next 20 years, we significantly expanded the business and created many new jobs. We were highly focused on integrating world-class management processes into our business and scaling them to help achieve our goals.

Along with an incredible group of talented people, we began to utilize quality management tools including Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma. We focused on developing and training our people to manufacture and deliver the highest quality gas connectors in the world, at a competitive price, with an unmatched level of customer service. The ability to effectively execute and implement our goals enabled us to create a highly successful business. In addition, I had the opportunity to work with a wide range of customers, suppliers and end-users all across the United States and around the world. For all of our customers, regardless of size, which ranged from some of the largest corporations to small family businesses, we were committed to their success.

Over the past three years, I have been fortunate enough to be able to give back through my active involvement in several philanthropic organizations. These different

experiences have given me many invaluable lessons that upon confirmation, I think will help me succeed in the role as the CFO of the USDA.

First, there was a phrase that my father taught me: “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” In this case, caring means a deep respect for the people that you work with, the conscious need to listen to their ideas, thoughts and opinions, and the desire to help them succeed. Whether it is in the workplace, the global arena or on an athletic field, success starts with people who are willing to work together towards a common goal.

Second, a successful organization is highly focused on implementation of its strategies and goals, recognizing that it needs to work smart and to utilize the skills, tools and knowledge to meet and exceed those objectives. This starts with active listening, learning from past successes and failures, and building on the cumulative wisdom of the organization. The next step includes the development and alignment of the organization’s mission with its strategies, goals and objectives. Next is perhaps the most challenging part, successful execution. This includes the development and regular monitoring of well-defined goals and metrics. Finally, it includes working collaboratively with all stakeholders to implement changes that help achieve the agreed upon goals.

Third, through our commitment at Dormont to world-class quality and zero-defects, I learned the importance of utilizing the skills and talents of our people, combined with well-defined processes, to increase quality, improve efficiencies, eliminate waste and lower costs. It is possible to improve customer service and lower costs through collaborative teamwork and effective implementation of proven systems and processes.

I understand that USDA is a highly complex organization that supports a wide range of missions in its various areas of responsibility. It is also a department with many highly talented, experienced professionals who work every day to help fulfill the mission of the USDA.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including Financial Systems, Financial Policy and Planning, Financial Operations and the National Finance Center. The activities include active involvement in strategic planning, ongoing accounting operations, audit and internal control functions, financial reporting and cost-effective systems and services to other Federal organizations. And fortunately, the OFCO already has a tremendous staff that does an excellent job every day in fulfilling these important responsibilities.

I look forward to this wonderful opportunity to serve our country in working with this talented team of professionals. I understand the critical importance of carefully managing the financial systems of the Department, and upon confirmation, I will work effectively, collaboratively and with great diligence to support the goals of the Obama Administration for the Department of Agriculture. In addition, I want to state my

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July 7, 2009

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commitment to civil rights at the Department. I will work hard to ensure that USDA's employment practices will not tolerate any forms of discrimination.

I will build upon my experience, knowledge and lessons learned - as a successful business owner, a corporate executive, entrepreneur and educator - to provide the leadership and the financial management skills to support the Department and its stakeholders.

Finally, I want to thank my wife and family for providing unconditional love and understanding in all of my endeavors. Their support has enabled me to realize the many successes in my career and allowed me to be here today. I also want to thank the members of the Committee for this opportunity to appear before you today.