

Mr. Chairman, Senator Harkin, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am deeply honored and humbled to have the opportunity to appear before you today as a nominee of the President, for the Board of the Farm Credit Administration.

Before I begin my comments, I would like to take a moment to recognize some very special people who are with me today.

I take inspiration in my wife of 29 years, Twyla, as she has been my partner in the raising of our family, the farm in Illinois, and in the many activities I have participated in over the years. Twyla's family heritage is also in agriculture, as her grandparents at one time, were neighbors to mine. Our oldest son Derek, is here with his wife Kim. Derek is currently a student at Northwestern University, and is working on the final stage of his PhD in particle physics at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois. Our daughter Amber, holds a degree in Animal Science from Southern Illinois University, and is employed by the USDA at the National Wildlife Research Center in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Our youngest son Tyler, is a Junior at Iowa State University, where he is enrolled in the College of Agriculture studying Ag Business and Economics. As you can see, my family has a passion for the worlds of science and agriculture.

I am also very proud to appear before you today with the support of my Senators Richard Durbin and Barak Obama, as well as my Congressman, Speaker J. Dennis Hastert.

Being here today is far from the small dairy farm on which I was raised in Kane County, Illinois. In the late 1800's, my Grandparents settled in the picturesque rolling hills of the Fox River Valley about 40 miles west of Chicago. At the time, a good days journey from the city. One of my earliest farming experiences was at the age of 10, when my brother and I purchased a used John Deere 14T baler and pulling it behind an Allis Chalmers WD45 tractor on loan from Dad, began doing custom hay baling. Fortunately, my brother was older, and did most of the wagon loading until I got a little bigger and could actually "throw" a bale of hay. Those experiences provided me a strong understanding of the value of a good day's work, along with the satisfaction of a job well done. Today, the city has reached our farm, and my small community is faced with the challenges that population growth brings.

Similarly, the Agriculture Industry faces many challenges today. The issues of globalization, technology, energy and trade, are only a few examples of the myriad of forces shaping the agricultural landscape of the 21st Century.

Over the years, I have had the honor and pleasure of serving the agriculture industry in a variety of ways, from being a board member of our local farm service cooperative and organizations such as Farm Bureau, to serving as a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Advisory Council on Agriculture, Labor and Small Business.

In regards to this role I have been nominated for, I hope that you may find me uniquely qualified from an experience standpoint, as I have been a member borrower of the Farm Credit System for nearly 30 years. Shortly after becoming a borrower in the late 1970's, I was asked to run for the board of the local association and was elected in 1981. I have over 25 years of service to that organization as well as serving nine years on the Board of AgriBank, one of the

System's district banks. Over the last 3 decades, there have been many other roles and assignments I have served that have given me a deep understanding and great respect for the role the System plays in the Agriculture sector and in Rural America. My service to the Federal Reserve has given me a better knowledge of how the Farm Credit System fits into the overall industry that lends to agriculture, which includes the commercial banking sector as well as other sources of agricultural credit.

During the ag crisis of the 1980's, I gained a deep understanding of the issues that confront the agriculture and lending industries, and how important having sound business practices can be to reaching success. I have a profound respect for the importance of the role that the Farm Credit Administration plays as the arms-length safety and soundness regulator of the Farm Credit System.

In closing, I would like to say that I take a strong interest and pride in community and public service. From coaching youth sports at home and serving on my local church and school boards, to the Federal Reserve and the Farm Credit System, I have always considered the calling of public service a high priority in my life and, hopefully, something I can pass on to my children and future generations.

If you should find me worthy of this position, I look forward to working with you toward a strong and prosperous Agriculture and Rural America.

I thank the Committee for their time and consideration, and look forward to your questions.