

**Opening Statement**  
Chairman Jack Kingston  
FY 2012 Budget Hearing  
US Department of Agriculture - Food Safety  
March 15, 2011

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Today the Subcommittee meets to examine the fiscal year 2012 budget request for USDA's Food Safety Mission Area, including the request of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). I want to welcome Dr. Elisabeth Hagen, USDA's Under Secretary for Food Safety, Mr. Al Almanza, the Administrator for the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Mike Young, USDA's Budget Director.

The President's FY 2012 budget request seeks a funding level of \$1.01 billion or *a net decrease of \$7 million* below the fiscal year 2011 current CR level of \$1.018 billion. While we meet today to discuss the merits of the requested increases and decreases, my initial reaction is generally positive since I see that the Agency proposed net savings while committing to deliver improved performance in the critical area of food safety.

One thing that I want to point out is the net decrease in the President's budget request is the combination of **\$34.3 million in requested decreases** *as well as* **\$27.2 million in requested increases**. I will have questions regarding the authenticity of some of your proposed decreases, including the proposed elimination of funding for the catfish inspection program as well as a proposed 43 percent decrease in Food Defense / Homeland Security.

Lastly, as we continue our discussion on funding for FY12; I need to remind folks of the federal budget deficit. Just last week, the CBO reported that the U.S. government posted its largest monthly deficit in history in February at \$223 billion. That figure tops last February's record of \$220.9 billion, and marks the 29th straight month the government has run in the red — a modern record. I just want to let everyone know that despite all of the work being done by the FSIS on behalf of the American people, we will have to make some tough choices when deciding if the specific budget increases are in the best interest of our country.

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