

Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Opening Statement of Chairman Jack Kingston
USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs Hearing
March 10, 2011

The Subcommittee will come to order.

With us this morning is the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Ed Avalos; Rayne Pegg, the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service; Cindy Smith, Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Dudley Butler, Administrator of the Grain Inspection, and Packers & Stockyards Administration; and Mike Young, Budget Director for USDA.

Welcome to all of you.

Marketing and Regulatory agencies have had a long record of strong, bipartisan support from this subcommittee. This Subcommittee will do its best to support the vital work that you do in protecting and obtaining markets for American agriculture in the United States and around the world. However, I feel the need to remind folks of the dangerous financial situation this Nation faces right now. We just heard on Monday that the federal government posted its largest monthly deficit in history in February at \$223 billion, according to preliminary numbers the Congressional Budget Office.

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 tremendous work being done by these Agencies, we will have to make some tough choices when deciding if increases or decreases are truly necessary.

And now, I'd like to turn it over to the ranking member, Mr. Farr, for any welcoming remarks that he may have.

Subcommittee members, we will proceed with this hearing under a "five minute rule". Members will be recognized for five minutes, in the order of seniority at the dais at the beginning of the hearing and then in order of appearance – alternating between the majority and the minority. I would ask every member to adhere to this rule today, and in all of our hearings.

We may have several rounds of questioning to allow everyone ample time.

I would also ask that if anyone in the room has any electronic device, please turn it off. If our proceedings are interrupted, you will be asked to leave.

Mr. Avalos, now I am going to turn it over to you to make your opening statement, the statements that you and each of the administrators submitted will be printed, in full, for the record.

I would ask you Under Secretary to focus on the highlights in your oral testimony.