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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSERVATION

COMPLIANCE PROVISIONS OF THE FOOD

SECURITY ACT OF 1985

Subject:

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1992

Mr. Norman Berg
Soil and Water Conservation Society
751 NE Ankeny Road
Ankeny, IA 50021

Referred to:

.....

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1279

1280 STATEMENT OF NORMAN A. BERG, WASHINGTON, D.C.

1281 REPRESENTATIVE, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY, ANKENY,

1282 IOWA

1283 Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, I'm Norm Berg, as you mentioned.

1284 I'm a 40-year veteran of a combination of the U.S. Marines

1285 in World War II and USDA, including the privilege of being

1286 the sixth chief of the SCS. I'm also a volunteer member of

1287 my Conservation District Board in Maryland.

1288 We're pleased with the timing of your hearing. It

1289 coincides with the release of the Society's evaluation of

1290 the implementation work that's been under way on both the

1291 1985 and the 1990 farm bill conservation provisions. We've

1292 limited our testimony today to the conservation compliance

1293 feature, but the full report addresses all of the

1294 provisions. It deserves to be fully analyzed, for the

1295 provisions are related when we look at it at the field

1296 level. An example is the CRP. This has been opened 11

1297 times by USDA, another signup coming up in June, and that's

1298 the incentive operation for farmers with highly erodible

1299 crop land.

1300 Compliance is one of the provisions viewed, of course, as

1301 a disincentive, along with Sodbuster and Swampbuster. You

1302 and I know that policy can be written and enacted into law

1303 by Congress, interpreted into rules and regulations by the

1304 agencies responsible for administering it, and it has
1305 absolutely no meaning if simply left on the shelf.
1306 Implementation in this case at the field level is a payoff
1307 as to whether law and policy is more than simply another
1308 piece of paper. Our society has evaluated the
1309 implementation because we supported the legislation, we
1310 commented on the proposed rules, and we testified since 1985
1311 for additional resources needed not only for technical
1312 assistance and cost sharing, but also for extension and
1313 additional research in some areas.

1314 Our written testimony today reflects 3 years of evaluating
1315 field-based implementation of a demanding and sometimes
1316 controversial provision, the conservation compliance
1317 provision. Why did we undertake this action? Well, we are
1318 an independent, nonprofit association of professional
1319 conservationists representing every environmental
1320 discipline, and in that capacity, our members have the
1321 ability to synthesize the results of research, experience,
1322 and custom in developing a knowledge base for natural
1323 resource issues. We've been criticized in this study by some
1324 of our own members as some of the findings have been
1325 distorted, taken out of context, and in some cases
1326 established the need for improved implementation by the
1327 agencies responsible for that work.

1328 We do support the fact that more and more needs to be done

1329 in terms of why this policy. In 1985 the American public,
1330 through the Congress, asked the Nation's farmers to practice
1331 a degree of land stewardship in return for a package of
1332 Federal farm program benefits, and the compliance starts
1333 with the producer certification that they are complying.
1334 This significantly changed, as you and I know, the Nation's
1335 approach to agricultural conservation policy. After 50
1336 years of voluntary programs, this linkage of conservation
1337 with farmers' eligibility for traditional farm program
1338 benefits if they crop highly erodible land did change the
1339 way that business is done at the field level. This
1340 leveraging dramatically altered, in some cases, a farmer's
1341 motivation to practice soil and water conservation, and
1342 environmental considerations became an integral part of the
1343 day-by-day business decisions made by the Nation's over 1
1344 million farmers with highly erodible land.

1345 The pervasive questions that have arisen included: How
1346 has implementation gone from a procedural point of view?
1347 What have been the provision's impacts on the Nation's
1348 agricultural soils? Have the economic impacts on the
1349 Nation's farmers been positive or negative? This study
1350 seemed appropriate at the time we launched it in view of the
1351 Society's mission. We advocate the conservation of soil,
1352 water, and related natural resources here and abroad, the
1353 debates that led to the 1990 farm bill, and the pending

1354 reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. From the outset,
1355 the project was designed as a field- oriented fact finding
1356 exercise. We were out in the field with people, but we made
1357 no recommendations from this study. We just simply laid the
1358 facts in the study.

1359 From early 1989 through 1991, multidisciplinary teams of
1360 conservation professionals visited 30 counties in 20 States
1361 to assess progress. Detailed information was collected from
1362 1,500 farms, and USDA field offices cooperated fully on this
1363 activity.

1364 My testimony, before I run out of time, has several
1365 warnings about our study, and I'm not going to repeat those
1366 here, but this will help prevent misinterpretation. We
1367 simply ask that the full study, the full activity here that
1368 we've done, be looked at before they pull out any 1 feature
1369 of it.

1370 One point I do want to make is that the conservation
1371 compliance plans we examined included only farmers who were
1372 scheduled to actively begin implementing their plans at the
1373 time of our visits. These farmers may well have been the
1374 more conservation-minded than some of their colleagues who
1375 choose to put off implementation until later on in the time
1376 period.

1377 We have several findings that we've listed in our report.
1378 In the time that's limited, we simply want to say that

1379 progress is being made with conservation compliance plan
1380 implementation, and we have found 69 percent of conservation
1381 practices required an application in place, on schedule, et
1382 cetera. Two-thirds of the plans examined depend heavily on
1383 crop residue management, and we can talk about that in more
1384 detail. Monitoring has been uneven. Staffing levels and
1385 additional assistance in terms of financial help will
1386 continue to be a problem, and as I mentioned, we have
1387 testified in favor of more of that activity.

1388 The surveys show that in many cases the conservation
1389 compliance requirements coming from the farmers and the
1390 industry itself have had relatively minor impacts in terms
1391 of the economic indicators, and conservation compliance does
1392 have the possibility of significantly reducing soil loss in
1393 this country as we move on through the implementation
1394 process.

1395 We also made a Conservation Reserve Program study. We're
1396 concerned about the 10th year on these contracts. The
1397 American Farm Land Trust and the Soil Conservation Service
1398 is going to follow this implementation process by asking
1399 1,000 farmers in 100 counties to give us their views on
1400 what's going on.

1401 Thank you for the time.

1402 [The prepared statement of Mr. Berg appears at the
1403 conclusion of the hearing.]

1532 Mr. ENGLISH. Thank you very much, Ken. I appreciate that,
1533 and I appreciate the work that you all have done in the past
1534 working with this subcommittee. As I said, I think there is
1535 a balance to be struck, and that's what we've got to
1536 constantly strive for. I don't think there's any question
1537 about that.

1538 Mr. Berg, one of the questions I had, first of all, for
1539 you was, you were mentioning 1985 and the concept that came
1540 about in 1985 with the plans, which were tied to various
1541 benefits that farmers were receiving. Some of them were
1542 conservation benefits you could receive, the rest was tied
1543 to the farm program in general. But we have seen
1544 substantial cuts in those programs since 1985, substantial
1545 reductions in benefits that farmers have received. Does
1546 that have a bearing with regard to those who may--does that
1547 dampen the enthusiasm, I guess is the word I'm looking for,
1548 as far as implementing the plans as opposed to where we were
1549 in 1985?

1550 Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, I think the way in which the
1551 producers are viewing their decisions will change, and the
1552 expenditures for farm programs has been reduced since the
1553 mid- 1980s. However, the 1990 farm bill added some
1554 additional areas that could be jeopardized if stewardship
1555 wasn't practiced. Now, the question ahead is, if there is
1556 not this leverage, what is the way that we get stewardship

1557 of the land?

1558 Mr. ENGLISH. I think that's a very important point, and I
1559 think it's a key point, because even after we were doing the
1560 1990 farm bill, in fact within days after we passed the 1990
1561 farm bill, we had the 1990 Budget Reconciliation Act, in
1562 which agriculture was required to take 10 percent of the
1563 cuts through the entire Federal budget, even though we're
1564 less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the total budget. So
1565 obviously we took on a very heavy load, reduced
1566 substantially the load, and as you pointed out, it seems to
1567 be now that the direction is to go more toward using a stick
1568 instead of trying to provide incentives and assistance to
1569 farmers. Would that be an accurate statement?

1570 Mr. BERG. I mentioned the fact that one of our reasons for
1571 the study included the possible and potential and pending
1572 reauthorization eventually of the Clean Water Act, and I
1573 think that group, considering the options, is going to look
1574 more closely at what are the options beyond the kind of
1575 programs that this committee has supported and the
1576 incentives that we had had for 50 years. So there is a mix
1577 of things that are happening. There are also some States
1578 that are doing some things and have done some things in
1579 regard to what they'd like to have done on soil and water
1580 conservation, reduction of soil loss, and so forth that I
1581 think becomes part of the future.

1582 One thing I'd like to mention that I left out of my
1583 testimony in the interest of time is that our study found
1584 some evidence that farmers were still questioning at that
1585 time the USDA's resolve to really implement these various
1586 features. Now, I'd like to endorse the fact that within the
1587 last year and a half to 2 years, the signals coming out of
1588 the agencies, especially SCS, have indicated that this is a
1589 very serious matter, that it needs to be taken in that
1590 light, and that time is running out, and I think that's a
1591 plus.

1592 Mr. ENGLISH. As I mentioned with regard to the question of
1593 benefits, incentives, we have a delicate balance from the
1594 standpoint that, particularly looking at it as far as the
1595 1990 farm bill is concerned, 1 way to get out of all of this
1596 is to simply get out of the program. You just don't
1597 participate in the program. And in years we have strong
1598 market prices, that seems to be the direction that farmers
1599 are inclined to go. Where do we reach that point in which we
1600 have a ratio between benefits and burden?

1601 Mr. BERG. Well, we can look at the dollar figure. There is
1602 still around \$8 billion or \$9 billion going into the farm
1603 policy activities, contrasted to about \$1 billion being
1604 spent on the conservation effort.

1605 Mr. ENGLISH. Well, if you look at total incentives,
1606 though, if I recall correctly, in 1986 we spent about \$25

1607 billion, did we not?

1608 Mr. BERG. True.

1609 Mr. ENGLISH. So we've gone from \$25 billion down to \$8
1610 billion or \$9 billion, and it seems to keep continuing to go
1611 down. So you've had the benefits to the farmer cut by 2/3.
1612 If you're sitting out there on the farm and saying, ''I've
1613 got to do this and I've got to do that in order to comply
1614 and to receive these benefits,'' aren't you moving closer
1615 and closer to the point where you just throw up your hands
1616 and say, ''I can't handle this. I can't handle it
1617 financially. It doesn't make sense for me to do it. If I
1618 work it out on paper, it doesn't make sense''? Don't you
1619 eventually get to that point where in effect, as you add
1620 more burdens without some kind of compensation, you're just
1621 simply driving people out of the program?

1622 Mr. BERG. We would hope that the response from the
1623 majority of the farmers in this country is that they're
1624 going to practice good stewardship. They've indicated that
1625 in the past, and they'll continue to do that.

1626 Mr. ENGLISH. Let me stop you right there. You do that so
1627 long as you can afford to. Isn't it also true when we find
1628 that farmers are under financial stress, find themselves
1629 facing economic difficulties, at that particular point the
1630 paramount issue is survival, saving their family farm,
1631 saving their way of life, trying to hold onto what they've

1632 got? They're not worried about what it's going to be like 5
1633 years from now or 10 years from now; they're worried about
1634 whether they're going to be able to survive this next year
1635 and make their payments. Isn't that true?

1636 Mr. BERG. There's no question about it. We've said for
1637 years we've got to have a good economic base, a farmer that
1638 feels that he is secure in his business, but we also found
1639 during the time when we did not have the farm program
1640 benefits and the plow-out that we had during the 1970s when
1641 grain stocks were down that we lost a lot of our good
1642 conservation work because we didn't seem to have the right,
1643 as you say, mix to encourage that stewardship that's needed.

1644 Mr. ENGLISH. I agree with you 100 percent. The point that
1645 I'm making, though, is that this is a delicate balance that
1646 we've got to strike here, and for those who would simply
1647 say, "Well, gosh, this country doesn't want to spend the
1648 money," or "We've got budget priorities elsewhere," or
1649 "Well, we'll just apply the stick and not worry about
1650 helping farmers," in effect what you do is drive them out
1651 of farming, and you probably are going to end up with a
1652 disastrous conservation result. Is that correct?

1653 Mr. BERG. Well, we would hope that that would not happen
1654 in terms of--

1655 Mr. ENGLISH. But if we go that direction, do you agree
1656 with that conclusion that's what would happen?

1657 Mr. BERG. There has to be balance, and one of the concerns
1658 that we have is, what are the responsibilities of the
1659 private property owners that operate and produce food and
1660 fiber in regard to the balance that's needed in terms of
1661 society's concerns about what happens primarily off-farm in
1662 terms of the impacts on other environmental issues?

1663 Mr. ENGLISH. But you agree that if you go totally to the
1664 stick and forget the other and farmers find themselves in
1665 financial trouble, you might as well forget it from a
1666 conservation standpoint?

1667 Mr. BERG. Mr. Chairman, with my experience, I know-- and I
1668 worked in the field--that we're going to have to have time
1669 and stewardship, and--

1670 Mr. ENGLISH. I just want you to say yes or no. Am I right
1671 in my conclusion?

1672 Mr. BERG.--conservation has to be sold, yes. It has to be
1673 sold.

1674 Mr. ENGLISH. Is my conclusion right or wrong?

1675 Mr. BERG. You're right.

1676 Mr. ENGLISH. Thank you.

1677 Mr. COOK. Mr. Chairman, may I respond to that question?

1678 Mr. ENGLISH. I'll be right back to you, Ken. I've got to
1679 go to Mr. Coleman, but we're going to have several rounds.

1680 Mr. COLEMAN. Thank you, because I have to leave. I
1681 appreciate it, Mr. Chairman.

2182 possible'' proposals that we're talking about may have been
2183 the only features contained within those plans, the only
2184 requirements that were contained within those plans for the
2185 farmer to come into compliance?

2186 Mr. COOK. It's possible.

2187 Mr. BERG. Our study showed that at least 3/4 of the plans
2188 depend heavily on crop residue management. Now, that is a
2189 real challenge, because I can remember back during the
2190 1980s, there was a call for additional research, especially
2191 dealing with the cotton problems in terms of residue, and I
2192 think we're still faced with that. We found in our field
2193 evaluation--and I was out on some of these, Mr. Chairman--
2194 that we had to go outside of the agency to find the tape
2195 that we went out to the field with. Since that time, I'm
2196 very encouraged by the Conservation Tillage Center providing
2197 a handy kit for measuring crop residue.

2198 Now, the Chief of the SCS, after our Society meeting in
2199 Kentucky last year, was instrumental in helping convene a 2-
2200 day session on crop residue management, and we've got a
2201 publication on that that I think will be helpful. We're in
2202 a learning curve here, I think, that is going to
2203 dramatically increase, because we've got that kind of
2204 interest rebuilding. But there is a challenge as to what
2205 that plan called for and what can be done.

2206 Mr. ENGLISH. I guess the question--I'm trying to bridge a

2207 gap here is what I'm doing. I understand the suspicion, on
2208 1 hand, that Mr. Cook has raised and others; on the other
2209 hand, I'm also very aware of the fact that we did not do a
2210 very good job of putting plans together from 1985 through
2211 1990. And as you pointed out in your testimony, there's
2212 some question as to the seriousness that was conveyed by the
2213 Department of Agriculture as to what this really means. I
2214 mean, you've got a plan, you've got to have it on record,
2215 you know, but it's kind of like it's not for real. You get
2216 ''Do a little paperwork here to get you in compliance.'' And I wouldn't doubt there was some of that going on, maybe
2217 a whole of it going on.

2219 Mr. COOK. Maybe.

2220 Mr. ENGLISH. But what happened when we passed the 1990
2221 farm bill, when we passed this provision in late 1990 that
2222 was hammered out between you and others concerned in this
2223 area and farm organizations, everybody came together and
2224 joined the party, and then all of a sudden this stuff is for
2225 real because we've got to implement these plans. I guess to
2226 me it doesn't sound too far out to say we got a lot of folks
2227 scrambling at that point.

2228 Mr. COOK. I think that's right. Scrambling is exactly the
2229 word.

2230 Mr. ENGLISH. Right. And I think they're trying to get the
2231 plans together, trying to get this thing lined up where

2282 Mr. COOK. That's correct.

2283 Mr. ENGLISH. And I think that there--you know, you may have
2284 a strong, clear message that's coming out from USDA, but
2285 you've got a lot of different folks out there that have got
2286 different ideas as to what their own interpretation may be,
2287 and that's the problem with any large organization is
2288 sending that message home loud and clear.

2289 Now, we have had, according to Mr. Berg, and I believe
2290 you're saying the same thing--that's what we're seeing right
2291 now coming out of USDA and have for the last year or so,
2292 this is what they're coming down, but we're talking about
2293 some major changes, and we're talking about playing for
2294 real. The only point that I would make is that under those
2295 circumstances, it's probably going to take USDA a little
2296 while to identify who those people may be, and it sounds
2297 like you're giving them some help on that, in identifying
2298 who those folks may be and making sure that they carry out
2299 the directives of the Secretary and the law. So what we
2300 have is not a grand conspiracy on the part of people within
2301 the Department of Agriculture, but we may have some
2302 individuals out there playing cowboy and running their own
2303 show.

2304 Mr. Berg, does that sound--have you ever seen that happen
2305 in your--

2306 Mr. BERG. We've got problems that stem even from the

2307 Congress. I was very disturbed in testifying before the
2308 Appropriations Committee when I heard them say that the
2309 authorizing legislation is 1 thing, but they put it into
2310 whether it's going to be implemented or not with the
2311 resources that they control. And that is a confused signal.
2312 I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I think what you
2313 people have done is the law, what the USDA has to do
2314 requires implementation, and this is a voluntary effort on
2315 the part of the farmers in terms of engaging in the farm
2316 programs, and the resources to carry it out just haven't
2317 been made available.

2318 Mr. ENGLISH. I can appreciate that, and I'm sure that my
2319 colleagues in the other committee, fine folks that they are,
2320 certainly would not advise any farmer to break the law, and
2321 this is the law. And that's what we have said here. You
2322 know, we may differ as far as where the appropriations
2323 should go. In fact, I've already voiced some concerns that
2324 I've got. There are some areas here that I think need to be
2325 funded, quite frankly, that are not being funded, and that
2326 does, granted, skew the impact and the effect and achieving
2327 the objectives they want. But that's a different matter
2328 than what we're talking about in following the law and
2329 making certain that in each county each farmer has a
2330 legitimate plan--a realistic plan, I should say--that is going
2331 to be carried out in keeping with the law, and that's what

2332 we're attempting to try to determine here.

2333 You know, I've got to say--we've still got to hear from the
2334 Department of Agriculture, and I've got to go make a vote,
2335 and we'll come back and do that, but my own feeling just
2336 listening to what we've got here, I strongly suspect that we
2337 have a difference of 18 percent, assuming, Ken, you're in
2338 the neighborhood of what that is, and that difference is
2339 probably going to come down to those 3 or 4 reasons that I
2340 was talking about and not some grand scheme to try to get
2341 around the law, thwart the law, you know, keep this thing
2342 from being implemented and having its desired effect. And,
2343 you know, so long as that is the case--and I'm going to make
2344 it very clear to the Department of Agriculture we expect
2345 them to identify those individuals who don't believe in
2346 following the law and take appropriate action in making
2347 certain that the farmers in their area are not penalized
2348 because some guy out here just wants to do his own thing.
2349 And he's a threat to the farmer. Not only does he thwart
2350 the law, but he's a threat to the farmer, and that's
2351 something that no Member of this committee wants to see
2352 done.

2353 The law is clear. It was signed off on, as I said, by all
2354 of the Members of this committee, by folks from the
2355 environmental community, farm organizations. Everybody's in
2356 the same boat, and we expect that law to be carried out.

2357 So if you all would excuse us for about 10 minutes, we'll
2358 go vote and be right back. Thank you.

2359 [Recess.]

2360 Mr. ENGLISH. The hearing will come to order.

2361 Our last witness today is Mr. William Richards, who is the
2362 Chief of the Soil Conservation Service for the Department of
2363 Agriculture.

2364 Mr. Richards, if you would come to the--excuse me. I'm
2365 sorry. Before you do, I did have another question or 2 for
2366 Mr. Berg and Mr. Cook.

2367 You guys are getting off easy there. I was getting ready
2368 to let you go.

2369 Mr. BERG. I was out the door, Mr. Chairman.

2370 Mr. ENGLISH. I know you were moving fast. I could tell.
2371 I did have another area that I wanted to pursue a little bit
2372 with you.

2373 In looking at this issue and what we've been looking at,
2374 what's happening now and what's happened in the past, I
2375 think it also behooves us under the circumstances to begin
2376 to kind of look to the future a little bit on what we're
2377 going to do on some of this. As I mentioned, it seems to me
2378 that we need to strike a balance between the
2379 responsibilities and obligations that we're going to place
2380 on farmers to deal with these problems, and that has to be
2381 balanced, then, with compensation either for the acts that

2382 are carried out through the farm bill or however it's done.
2383 I agree, Mr. Berg, and I know, Ken, you feel the same way,
2384 that there are some areas of the 1990 farm bill that have
2385 not yet been funded that need to be funded, and I fully
2386 agree with that. I think that we need that, and I'm going
2387 to urge the Members of this committee to join in talking to
2388 some of our friends over in the Appropriations Committee and
2389 see if we can't get that done. That needs to be carried out.

2390 But I think also that farmers are getting a lot of stuff
2391 coming at them from a lot of different directions. We're
2392 also seeing situations now where farmers are being sued, and
2393 some of the stuff is not tied in directly. We've heard
2394 cases of water that has been polluted, and then a dairy farm
2395 or something else supposedly is the cause. Some of this
2396 stuff gets a little bit on the hazy side, and the point I'm
2397 making is, it appears to me that the exposure of farmers to
2398 a lot of this stuff is growing, and we need some way in
2399 which the farmer can, I think, receive some kind of
2400 assurances that 'If I do these things, this is what is
2401 reasonable, I've done my part, I've taken care of the
2402 environment, I've protected myself against lawsuits, I've
2403 done all this kind of stuff,' and I was wondering what each
2404 of you thought about--

2405 Oh, the other point that I wanted to make is that every
2406 farmer is a little bit different, as we've seen, and, of

2407 course, that's the reason we have compliance plans as it
2408 applies to that individual farm. We have also the same kind
2409 of a situation when we talk about pesticides and fertilizers
2410 and all the other farming practices we go into. Some things
2411 are safe for some farms, other things are not safe for other
2412 farms. And the thing I'm wondering about is if it doesn't
2413 make sense for us to start looking to the future and putting
2414 in place a plan for each farm that covers the whole
2415 waterfront, gets it all.

2416 Basically, of course, what I'm getting at is a site-
2417 specific approach to farms and taking the information that
2418 we have and trying to put together that kind of approach as
2419 opposed to what we've been doing. It seems to me with the
2420 conservation compliance proposals we're moving in that
2421 direction anyway, but pull everything else in there and make
2422 that a part of it. Does that make sense to you all?

2423 Mr. BERG. My training in SCS in the beginning, back in the
2424 early 1940s, included the fact that you looked at the total
2425 resource, and we developed what we called a complete plan.
2426 Now, for a variety of reasons, including the handling of the
2427 ACP cost-sharing technical assistance that came in later and
2428 some other things, and now increasingly the fact that we've
2429 got plans that deal with conservation compliance,
2430 Conservation Reserve Program, there will be 1 required for
2431 the wetland reserve, there are plans out here for nutrient

2432 management--all of these things, as you say, can be very
2433 confusing to the land user, to the land owner. What is it
2434 that we're required to do here, and are we going to be
2435 legitimate in terms of what we do?

2436 The burden on SCS and other agencies that can provide
2437 technical advice is really very demanding. It begins with
2438 the definition of the area. How do you define what's highly
2439 erodible, and does the land owner/user understand that that
2440 is highly erodible? What is wetland, and can they be
2441 guaranteed that that will stand up in the test for the
2442 future? What are the requirements in terms of water quality
2443 as it may affect some downstream area? These are the
2444 problems that I think have to be addressed in some sort of a
2445 holistic manner, and the time that it takes to do that is
2446 demanding. And right now we've run off in several different
2447 directions to implement the features that we've talked about
2448 today and other things that have come on board, and we have
2449 not provided the technical resources, some research needed,
2450 additional extension work needed, additional financial help
2451 needed to put these things in place in some sort of a
2452 comprehensive way.

2453 Mr. ENGLISH. Ken, what do you think?

2454 Mr. COOK. Well, I agree with what Norm said. On the
2455 question of farmers facing more and more exposure, I think
2456 that's certainly right. I think in some ways, things--we

2507 if you would, and begin laying the ground work for the 1995
2508 farm bill and pulling all this stuff back toward a site-
2509 specific approach. Now, that's a pretty tall order, I
2510 realize, even in the number of years that we have left.

2511 Mr. BERG. Could I offer something here that may be
2512 helpful?

2513 Mr. ENGLISH. Sure.

2514 Mr. BERG. There are several organizations, and some of
2515 them in the room here, that have cooperated with over 80
2516 organizations looking at water quality problems. It's
2517 called Water Quality 2000. Their report is now out in draft
2518 form for a congress that they formed to approve sometime by
2519 mid-summer. They're going to move into implementation.
2520 They'll have some effect on the reauthorization of the Clean
2521 Water Act. That group talking, I think, across many
2522 categories that include both quantity and quality of water,
2523 surface and ground water, ties very closely to what you're
2524 concerned about, an ally in this process in terms of how do
2525 we get the total resource picture together in terms of that
2526 land owner's responsibility and protection of his rights.
2527 Now, I read the SCS as giving this reinforcement in terms of
2528 how to do business, and I think that's a plus.

2529 Mr. ENGLISH. I would agree with that. What we're going to
2530 have to have--and quite frankly, it becomes even a problem
2531 here within Congress, because we've got a lot of different

2532 committees that deal with various pieces of legislation that
2533 some way hook around and tie back into agriculture and the
2534 farmer--what we've got to do is to put together, it seems to
2535 me, a site-specific approach and then make sure that we get
2536 hooked in, linked up, whatever, with any of this legislation
2537 that is coming down the road, whoever is presenting it, so
2538 that that is compatible and links into that site-specific
2539 approach, and the same thing is true with regard to if there
2540 are any appropriations that deal with that in which
2541 agriculture may be a part. It needs to be brought back to a
2542 single site-specific plan, if you would, as opposed to just
2543 having this stuff scattered all over the landscape and most
2544 of the time the farmer has no idea what there is.

2545 Mr. BERG. And so much of the burden is going to fall on
2546 non-Federal governments, State and local and the private
2547 sector, in terms of how this is going to finally be
2548 implemented, because we're all faced with the deficit in
2549 terms of what we've got to deal with.

2550 Mr. ENGLISH. That's true. But it's going to take a
2551 reorientation as far as the way, I think, that the
2552 agriculture community approaches a lot of these issues.
2553 We're going to have to kind of get this thing reworked
2554 around so that we're able to handle it, but it seems to me
2555 that that is in the farmer's best interest as well as in the
2556 best interest of the general public to make that kind of a

2557 move, as opposed to sitting here and seeing law after law
2558 after law pile up and nobody even knows where it is or what
2559 it is or what impact it has, and the people who pass it
2560 don't know what that does to agriculture and whether there's
2561 even a better way of doing it. There might be a better way
2562 for everybody to do it than what we've been doing.

2563 Well, that was the question I wanted to ask, and I thank
2564 you both. I appreciate your testimony. I sure do.

2565

2566 Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Richards, I appreciate your willingness
2567 to take this approach. I think it's been helpful for us to
2568 listen to the testimony and then to get your thoughts on the
2569 matter and where we are from your point of view, and
2570 hopefully any questions that might remain or any questions
2571 that have been raised that you want to respond to, this
2572 would be a good way to do it. I appreciate you doing this.
2573 I really do. Thank you.