

**Opening Statement of Chairman Frank D. Lucas**  
**Committee on Agriculture Business Meeting**  
**To consider organizational matters of the Committee in the 113th Congress**  
**January 23, 2013**

*As prepared for delivery*

Good morning and thank you for joining me for the first business meeting of the 113th Congress.

Before we begin the business at hand, I would first like to say I am honored to serve a second term as the Chairman of this Committee. Many of you know my background, but for those who do not let me tell you. I am a fifth generation farmer, an agricultural economics major at Oklahoma State University, and a member of this Committee since I was first elected to Congress. It is a privilege to continue in this leadership role, as a voice for production agriculture, on behalf of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural constituents.

Second, I would like to highlight the work of our Committee in the last Congress. I am proud of our efforts and I thank every Member who played a part. We provided valuable oversight of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that our agricultural producers are not burdened with unreasonable and costly regulations.

And, we advanced a strong, reform-minded, fiscally responsible farm bill during a Committee markup that demonstrated the true spirit of bipartisanship. We worked together to make certain policy was responsible to the taxpayer and worked for all producers in all regions of the country.

This is a new Congress and a new opportunity to reauthorize a five-year comprehensive farm bill. And, I pledge to work with the Secretary, Ranking Member Peterson, members of this Committee, my House and Senate colleagues, and all interested parties to complete our work and ensure our investment in American agriculture. It will take all of us working together to get it done.

That process begins **today** by formally organizing the Committee and welcoming our new members.

We will be voting on the rules of the Committee in the 113th Congress. We will maintain the enhanced transparency standards that were ushered in under the leadership and initiative of Speaker Boehner in the last Congress.

This includes placing the text of bills online for our constituents no fewer than 24 hours before a business meeting. We will also continue to provide both live and archived webcasts of our hearings and markups.

At this time, I would like to welcome back our veteran members and introduce the eight new GOP members who are joining us this Congress.

Let me begin the introductions in Alabama where we welcome back an old friend. Mike Rogers brings with him Committee experience and knowledge of agriculture that will be an asset to all of us.

Dan Benishek is serving his second term as a Member of Congress. He comes to us from Northern Michigan where he worked as a general surgeon in a private practice.

Not only is Jeff Denham an almond farmer from California, he also served for 16 years in the U.S. Air Force. His military service includes fighting in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

He's joined by another Californian, Doug LaMalfa, who kicks off our freshmen introductions. Doug earned his degree in Agriculture and Business and manages the family farm operation that his great-grandfather founded in 1931.

We'll have another strong voice for agriculture in Richard Hudson who hails from the Tar Heel State. He is no stranger to the legislative process or agriculture issues.

Rodney Davis comes to us from central Illinois where he has worked in a variety of public service positions.

Chris Collins is an entrepreneur and small businessman from New York with both private and public sector experience.

And finally, Ted Yoho, is a large animal veterinarian from North Central Florida's third congressional district.

Again, I welcome all of you to the Agriculture Committee. I look forward to working with my colleague and friend from Minnesota, Ranking Member Collin Peterson, along with our veteran and new Committee members as we move forward with policies that will support a strong and vibrant rural America.