

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Topic: The nomination of Richard Fordyce, of Missouri, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture Farm Production and Conservation

23 July 2025

Highlights:

- The purpose of this hearing was to consider the nomination of Richard Foyce as Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) at USDA.
- There were no direct references to Tribal food and agriculture. He also raised the importance of reaching beginning farmers and ranchers and the challenges they face in accessing credit; expressed his support for raising guaranteed loan limits and improving communication about FPAC support.

Witness:

- Richard Fordyce, Nominee for Under Secretary of Farm, Production, and Conservation at USDA – [Written Testimony](#)

Summary:

Senators noted Fordyce's efforts to reach farmers who had no experience in USDA programs during the pandemic in his stint during the first Trump Administration as Farm Service Agency lead.

One specific area that Fordyce said he would continue to improve upon was in improving outreach and communication to beginning farmers and ranchers. He conceded that the access to capital to get an operation going remains a significant challenge, but is an ever increasing obstacle for those starting out.

He noted that improving communication would be his mission area's goal when trying to encourage greater conservation program utilization as well, citing the lack of clear communication on these wide areas as a challenge for many producers.

When pressed as to how some of the FPAC mission area agencies could carry out their missions with approximately 4,100 – cited by [Senator Amy Klobuchar \(D-MN\)](#) – employees having left their jobs, Fordyce noted he believed they could deliver the services they were set up to do.

Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) asked several questions about specific commodity and farm production issues, noting that across numerous sectors producers are facing serious continuity challenges with their operations, raising the specter of a farm crisis. Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) asked what the nominee's views were on payment limits were for farm operations, saying he preferred a limit that can support small and medium operations. Fordyce deferred to the Congressional definition of the limits' application, but Grassley asked him "to review what they are and see if they haven't gone too far, because when third cousins can start getting some benefit from a family farm operation, it's not right."

Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA) asked Fordyce, if nominated, to review challenges that he dealt with in the first Trump Administration in the [Market Facilitation Program](#) and the [Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program +](#) (now known as [Emergency Relief Program](#)), specifically concerning the limits placed on specialty crop farmers trying to access the ERP? Schiff also raised the challenge many specialty crop

producers – mainly in California – have in securing crop insurance, citing that only 9 percent are currently insured under a system that rewards livestock and commodity crops. Fordyce committed to improving communication and engagement with these producers and their associations under [USDA Risk Management Agency](#) to improve this gap.