

## Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

29 July 2024

### **Reauthorization of the US Grain Standards Act**

#### **Intro:**

The hearing focused on the reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act, which is set to expire at the end of September 2025. The Act governs the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), which provides official inspection and weighing services for U.S. grain exports. These services are critical for ensuring quality and consistency in U.S. grain exports, supporting price discovery and market transparency, and maintaining the global reputation of U.S. grain as a reliable and high-quality product.

#### **Consulting Officials/ Congressional Witnesses:**

Nicholas Friant, Chairman of the National Grain and Feed Association's Grain Grades and Weights Committee

Brandon Wipf, Board of directors' member at the American Soybean Association

Kia Mikesh, President of the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies, Fargo, N.D.

#### **Key Points:**

- Importance of Reauthorization:
  - Witnesses and senators emphasized the need for a timely and bipartisan reauthorization to avoid market disruptions and uncertainty for farmers and exporters.
- Technology Modernization:
  - There was strong advocacy for investing in grain grading technologies to improve speed, accuracy, and consistency.
  - Witnesses proposed giving FGIS flexibility and authority to collaborate with private sector and research institutions.
- Emergency Waiver Authority:
  - Industry representatives requested enhanced flexibility for FGIS to issue waivers during service disruptions (e.g., natural disasters), while maintaining market integrity.
- Advisory Committee Functionality:
  - Recommendations were made to improve the continuity and effectiveness of the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee, including allowing members to stay on until replacements are appointed.
- Trade and Market Access:
  - The hearing highlighted how FGIS certificates are viewed as the “gold standard” by international buyers.
  - Discussions included how grain standards help mitigate non-tariff trade barriers and ensure fair pricing.