

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 6, 2026

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As we begin the second session of the 119th Congress and the second year of the Trump administration, we believe it is long past time for the Agriculture Committee to take up its oversight responsibilities regarding administration actions and other issues affecting American agriculture.

Since our organizational meeting in January of last year, the Committee has held 20 full and subcommittee hearings. The vast majority of these were legislative hearings held in contemplation of future Committee action (e.g., reconciliation, crypto regulation, Grain Standards Act and CFTC reauthorization, the farm bill). Meanwhile, administration actions and other events that have created challenges for American agriculture have been ignored entirely by the Committee. These range from President Trump’s trade war with the world to the Department of Agriculture’s reorganization plan to animal disease outbreaks both here and close to home.

Additionally, the legislative actions and inactions of the Republican majority in Congress have led to real world consequences for rural America that the majority appear unwilling to examine. Whether it’s cutting food assistance to hungry children, seniors and veterans, making health care either inaccessible or unaffordable or cutting off new markets for farmers by imposing hemp restrictions, the majority has turned a blind eye to the challenges facing rural Americans resulting from Republican legislative priorities.

Therefore, we request that you and the subcommittee chairmen bring oversight back to the Committee’s agenda by holding hearings on the following topics:

- Status of Access to Rural Health Care: Examine how the Medicaid cuts enacted earlier this year, and the expiration of Affordable Care Act tax credits, are affecting rural hospitals and the ability for rural Americans to access and afford health care.
- Impact of Administration Tariff Strategy on American Agriculture: Review the tariff-based trade strategy that has kept input costs high, reduced foreign market access, harmed America’s reputation as a reliable ag supplier and resulted in nebulous trade agreements with dubious results.
- Implementation of SNAP Cuts and Changes from H.R. 1: Evaluate the implementation of H.R. 1, including the extent of benefit cuts to Americans and how USDA’s unilateral implementation decisions and delayed guidance contributes to higher error levels in states and counties being required to implement massive changes to the program as they absorb a massive unfunded mandate to shoulder higher administrative costs and are forced to pay for SNAP benefits for the first time ever.

- Affordability Crisis in America's Food System: Review potential causes of higher grocery costs straining American household budgets, including tariffs, concentration across the food and agriculture sectors and labor shortages arising from mass deportations.
- Oversight of Proposed USDA Reorganization and Staff Reductions: Investigate how USDA core functions are being affected in the wake of DOGE, reductions-in-force, the Deferred Resignation Program, hiring freezes and a reorganization that moves thousands of staffers to different regions of the U.S.
- Impact of PFAS on Food Safety: Examine the proliferation of PFAS “forever chemicals” in the American farm and food systems, which are building up in people, wildlife and on farmland, even as the Trump administration and EPA are rolling back the rules and regulations that keep our food safe and healthy to eat.
- Oversight of Forest Service Effectiveness: Explore how the Trump administration's lowering of hazardous fuel treatments on federal forestland, reductions in U.S. Forest Service staff, rescissions of federal grants and impoundments of funds hinder wildfire preparedness and response.
- Impact of Ag Research Cuts and Freezes: Analyze how cuts to agricultural research in appropriations and staff losses across the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area puts American agriculture research infrastructure at risk and undermines American agricultural innovation and our advantage of our agriculture competitors.
- Promoting Domestic Markets for American Agriculture: Evaluate how the administration's lack of support for developing and expanding domestic markets for U.S.-grown agricultural products undermines American producers at a time when they need it most and their export markets are sabotaged by the administration's tariffs and trade wars.
- Pressing Issues re: Animal Health: Scrutinize the lack of information provided by USDA to Congress regarding the use of the significant funding increases in H.R. 1 to prevent foreign animal disease from imperiling the U.S. livestock industry, including New World screwworm and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.
- USMCA and Agriculture: Survey the American agriculture community's priorities regarding trade with our two largest trade partners and hear directly how the Trump administration's apparent lack of strategy and threats to dissolve the USMCA could affect trade relations and the competitiveness of U.S. agricultural products.
- Impact of Hemp Prohibition: Explore the consequences of changing the 2018 Farm Bill's definition of hemp for a growing industry and what additional legislative options are available to produce clarity and consistency for U.S. farmers, processors and retailers.
- Data Management at USDA: Examine how USDA's decision to delay data releases, cut staff that collect data and cease the publication of some reports altogether harm the private sector's perception of USDA as a reliable and credible partner and make it harder to accurately assess the state of agricultural markets.
- Barriers to Entry for New, Small and Diversified Farms into Safety Net Programs: Investigate ways to ensure that America is attracting new, small and diversified farms to maintain a robust and resilient agricultural industry, including by improving access to Title I farm safety net programs and the Federal Crop Insurance program to help mitigate risk.
- Safety Net Implementation: Review what changes might be necessary to address farmer concerns that, despite the billions of dollars invested in the farm safety net via H.R. 1, farm programs remain insufficient and farmers may require *ad hoc* economic assistance in addition to the farm aid package recently announced by the administration.

- Climate Change and Agriculture: Examine the ways that climate change is impacting the agriculture industry and the steps producers are taking to overcome these challenges while also being a part of the long-term solution. Investigate how changes to USDA programs, staffing and priorities are impacting producers' ability to take on these challenges and deploy durable, certain solutions.

We believe these topics are of great interest to the American agricultural community, which would welcome the Committee exercising its oversight responsibilities in these areas. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you and your staff on bringing these hearings to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angie Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shantell M. Damm". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Member of Congress
Vice Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture