

# ROY BLUNT

UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR MISSOURI



## Senator Blunt's Opening Remarks At Agriculture Appropriations Markup

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA & Related Agencies, delivered the following opening remarks today during the full-committee markup of the FY2013 agriculture allocations bill.

**\*\* As Prepared for Delivery \*\***

### **Senator Blunt's Opening Statement On April 26, 2012 Full Committee Markup FY2013 Agriculture Appropriations Bill**

"Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran, I am pleased to join Senator Kohl in reporting the fiscal year 2013 appropriations bill for agriculture, rural development, FDA, and related agencies.

"I thank Senator Kohl for the bipartisan working relationship we have on the agriculture subcommittee. He and his staff, Jessica Frederick, Dianne Nellor, and Bob Ross, have given my staff and me every opportunity to provide input into the bill.

"This is Senator Kohl's last mark up as agriculture subcommittee chairman. I have enjoyed serving on this subcommittee with the Senator. Senator Kohl has led our subcommittee well which is evidenced by the agriculture bill being enacted in regular order in 2 of the past 3 years. This is no small feat, and I am hopeful that we will be able to bring our bill to the floor again this year.

"As the Chairman has noted, the fiscal year 2013 agriculture bill is consistent with our subcommittee's allocation. The agriculture bill is higher than the amount provided last year. However, it is still 10% below the fiscal year 2010 funding level. In addition, the agriculture subcommittee has reduced administrative funding at USDA by 12% over the past two years.

"The subcommittee's increase over last year can be attributed primarily to scorekeeping changes as a result of the expiration of the farm bill and food inflation in the WIC program.

"Agriculture is the number one industry in Missouri and a leading economic driver nationwide. Last year, American farmers supported record agricultural exports and earned their highest income since the 1970s. U.S. farm exports alone helped support more than 1 million U.S. jobs in 2011, including 37,000 in Missouri.

"I am pleased that this bill places significant emphasis on maintaining research programs at our land grant universities and funding competitive research programs such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

"Sound agricultural research is the cornerstone to success in all aspects of the agriculture industry, whether it's developing more efficient production methods, eradicating pests and disease, developing biofuels, maintaining a safe food supply, or enhancing the nutritional quality of our diets.

"Agricultural research develops the tools to help rural communities succeed and makes it possible for one farmer to feed 155 people today. Continued investment in research will make it possible for us to meet global food demand which is expected to double by 2050.

"There is one provision not included in the bill that I would like to continue to work on with the Chairman. The provision would provide farmers that plant a USDA approved biotech crop the assurance that they may harvest that crop and sell their product in the marketplace. Lawsuits challenging things like the "environmental review" undertaken by USDA have resulted in challenges to already planted and approved crops, such as alfalfa and sugar beets. As the economy continues to struggle, we must make sure that farmers have certainty that their planting decisions will not be upended by judicial intervention. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue."