

**Opening Remarks of Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture  
Steven K. Reviczky  
Conservation and Development Subcommittee  
Joint Committee on Appropriations  
2/24/11**

**Good morning Subcommittee Chairman Duff, Subcommittee Chairman Hurlburt, Ranking Members Markley and Miner, members of the Subcommittee and fiscal staff.**

**My name is Steve Reviczky and I have the distinct pleasure to serve as Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the Department's budget. I know the time constraints that pressure your Committee in a busy session so I would like to begin with a short general statement about the Department of Agriculture. The senior staff and I will be glad to answer any questions the Committee may have.**

**If I may start with one firm thought for you to consider as we discuss the agency's budget it would be that the Connecticut Department of Agriculture serves as one of Connecticut's premier agencies concerned with the health and safety of our human and animal populations. Governor Malloy's proposed budget supports the mission of the Department of Agriculture.**

**The Department is a lean operation and has a very limited management structure. There is no excess when it comes to staff. Members of the Department are cross trained and perform a wide variety of functions. Planning is done by front line**

managers constantly striving to move the agency forward addressing the changing face of Connecticut Agriculture. There are only two appointed positions in the Department, the Commissioner and the Commissioner's executive secretary.

The Department has four operating units: the Bureau of Regulation and Inspection, the Bureau of Aquaculture, the Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Preservation and the Commissioner's Office. Currently our Department operates out of four locations: the State Office Building, the Regional Market managed by our Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Preservation also here in Hartford, the Bureau of Aquaculture located in Milford and the Last Chance Large Animal Rescue Facility at the Gates Correctional Facility in East Lyme operated by the Bureau of Regulation and Inspection.

The Bureau of Regulation and Inspection is made up of the Office of the State Veterinarian, State Animal Control, dairy/livestock units, Animal Population Control and Agricultural Commodities and licensing. The primary mission is protection of public health, public safety, animal health and animal welfare. This is accomplished by a whole host of inspection protocols including, monitoring and enforcement of FDA and State regulations pertaining to the production, processing and distribution of milk and milk products. The Bureau protects public health and Connecticut's animal agriculture industry by inspecting and conducting animal disease surveillance much of it funded by the USDA providing critical funding to the Connecticut Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at UCONN. There is a long list of

diseases that can be transferred from animals to humans that the Department monitors and it is extensive. Our Animal Control Division has the responsibility for protecting public health and safety, control of animal diseases, most notably rabies (an insidious, deadly, viral disease), enforcement of animal cruelty laws, investigation of injury, property damage and nuisance caused by dogs as well as other responsibilities too numerous to mention in this tight time frame.

Our Bureau of Aquaculture manages programs that assure opportunities for the production of an abundant, safe and wholesome supply of farm raised aquatic plant and animal species. The bureau performs coastal sanitation surveys along Connecticut's 250 mile coastline testing seawater and shellfish meat samples in order to determine levels of bacteria, toxins and the presence of harmful algal blooms. As part of this program, the bureau is responsible for the sanitary inspection and certification of shellfish dealers involved in harvesting and processing fresh and frozen oysters, clams and mussels as well as managing over 57,000 acres of state owned beds in Long Island Sound for shellfish farming.

The Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Preservation manages the Regional Market which is operated as a self sustaining, non profit venture that is fully funded by fees generated from the operation of the market. The Market covers 32 acres and contains 230,386 square feet of warehouse space, an active railroad spur and 144 stalls in the farmers' market. It is the largest perishable food distribution facility between Boston and New York. Time does not permit me to dwell on the myriad of other programs in the Department at this time. Perhaps in the future we might be

able to delve into the Farm Viability Matching Grant Program, the Connecticut Farmlink Program, the Connecticut Grown Program, the Connecticut Farm to School Program, the Community Farms Program, the Women, Infants and Children Farmers' Market Nutritional Program, the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutritional Program and of course a program that helped blaze the trail for the rest of the country, the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program.

The Department carries out its role in protecting the health and safety of the public in a diligent, no nonsense manner and will continue to work to keep Connecticut's food supply safe, and to grow local farms and local jobs. I'm proud to serve as its Commissioner. Thank you for your valuable time and my managers and I are prepared to answer any questions at this time.