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Agriculture: A Review of Federal and Indiana State Information Resources

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Agriculture has played a profound role in shaping U.S. national economic development and cultural identity and this has also been true with Indiana's economic development and cultural identity. U.S. farmland and U.S. farmers are among the world's leading agricultural producers capable of meeting domestic food consumption needs, producing nearly all agricultural commodities, and exporting U.S. agricultural products to countries around the world with these total exports approaching nearly \$82 billion during Fiscal Year 2007 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2008(a), XV-4).

U.S. farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers are involved in cultivating and managing soil using environmentally advantageous practices, managing animal production and slaughter, producing a variety of fruits, vegetables, and meat products, seeking to influence governmental agricultural policies in ways advantageous to their interests, promoting exports of U.S. agricultural products, seeking to promote the use of biofuels as ways of lessening U.S. dependence on unreliable energy sources, sculpting some aspects of the U.S. food safety system, and engaging in cutting edge technological research to promote environmental sustainability and determine ways of addressing how agriculture can mitigate human-caused climate change (Yacobucci and Schnepf, 2007; Newton, 2007; U.S. Climate Change Science Program, 2008).

The early years of U.S. History saw limited direct federal government involvement in U.S. agricultural production and supply aside from including agricultural statistics in the decennial census of 1840 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, (2008). This involvement would increase throughout the 19th century with creation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land Grant acts creating land-grant universities, the 1887 Hatch Act creating agricultural experiment stations, and the 1915 Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service. This federal involvement would accelerate further with the Depression, New Deal, and subsequent post

World War II developments which would see the federal government become intimately involved in setting agricultural production levels and commodity prices, providing direct financial support for individual farms and farmers, developing soil conservation practices, providing crop insurance, and extend federal influence in numerous other areas. Such increasing federal support and regulation continues despite the number of U.S. farmers and individual farms continuing to decline due to the high financial costs of operating a farm and to ongoing technological enhancements in agricultural productivity. A variety of historical literature examines and assesses the multiple factors prompting the origins, evolution, and results of this increasing federal agricultural policymaking activity (Opie, 1987; Gardner, 1996; Paarlberg, 2000; Hurt, 2002; and Conklin, 2008).

U.S. Department of Agriculture-A prodigious amount of information on U.S. Government agricultural policy is produced by U.S. Government agencies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) www.usda.gov/ is the principal U.S. agricultural policymaking entity. Established in 1862, USDA seeks to improve and maintain farm income, develop and expand foreign markets for U.S. agricultural products, reduce and cure poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, enhance the environment and maintain production capacity by helping landowners protect the soil, water, forests, and other natural resources, ensuring food safety through inspection and grading services, and conducting research to assist in these activities (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 105).

USDA's website provides access to information resources produced by departmental offices which will be described shortly. This website also contains information resources produced by agency headquarters offices such as its Office of Inspector General, Office of the Chief Economist, Office of Congressional Relations, and information on the 2008 Farm Bill authorizing U.S. agricultural programs for the next five years.

Agricultural Marketing Service-The Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) www.ams.usda.gov/ was

established in 1972. Its responsibilities include administering standardization, grading, certification, market news, marketing orders, research and promotion, and regulatory programs for USDA. Such information is used to assist agricultural producers, processors, and distributors in orderly marketing and distributing of farm commodities in areas such as commodity classification and grading, marketing agreements and orders, promoting efficient rural transportation, developing national organic standards through the National Organic Standards Board, and managing the Pesticide Recordkeeping program in coordination with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. Agricultural Marketing Service, 2000; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 109-111).

Information resources on AMS' website include material on Country of Origin Labeling, details on how to get products certified as being organic, the text of relevant agency regulatory actions, and publications covering topics as varied as meat grading, dairy market news and statistics, seed publications, and wholesale and farmers markets including information about individual farmers markets nationwide.

Agricultural Research Service-The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) www.ars.usda.gov/ is USDA's primary research and development entity. It's responsibilities include creating, applying, and transferring knowledge and technology to provide affordable food and fiber, ensure food safety and nutrition, and supporting rural development and natural resource needs by conducting integrated research and statistical programs. This research is conducted at numerous domestic and international facilities in cooperation with state university partners and with the assistance of the National Agricultural Library (U.S. Government Manual, 2008, 119; Kelley, 1993).

Accessible ARS information resources include summaries of ongoing research activity including summaries from the searchable *Tektran* research database, articles from *Agricultural Research* magazine

(1995-present), newsletters such as *Food and Nutrition Research Briefs* (1995-present), and research reports including *Diagnosis of Honey Bee Diseases* (2000), *Insects and Other Arthropods That Feed on Aquatic and Wetland Plants* (2002), and *Federal Entomology: Beginnings and Organizational Entities in the United States Department of Agriculture, 1854-2006, With Selected Research Highlights* (2008).

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) www.aphis.usda.gov/ current institutional charter dates from March 14, 1977. APHIS' mission is conducting regulatory and control programs to protect and improve animal and plant health to benefit people and the environment. APHIS cooperates with state governments to administer federal laws and regulations on animal and plant health and quarantine, humane animal treatment, and controlling and eradicating pests and diseases. It enforces regulations seeking to prevent the spread of certain animal or plant pests or diseases and conducts research and operational activities to reduce crop and livestock damage cause by birds, rodents, and predators (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 111; U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 2008).

Information resources on APHIS' website include information on how to report agricultural smuggling, animal or pest diseases to APHIS authorities, the text of laws and regulations APHIS enforces such as the Horse Protection Act, the Fruit and Vegetable Import Requirements Database (FAVIR), the text of news releases from February 2001-present, descriptions of agency issued permits covering topics like biotechnology, plant health, and veterinary biologics, and publications including *Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Accomplishments 2007* (2008), *2007 United States Animal Health Annual Report* (2007), and *Goat 2009: An In-Depth Look at the U.S. Goat Industry* (2009).

Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion-The Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion (CNPP) www.cnpp.usda.gov/ is responsible for coordinating USDA nutrition policy and providing nutrition education leadership for the public by coordinating with the Department of Health and Human Services

in reviewing, revising, and disseminating *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 116; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).

Noteworthy information resources accessible through CNPP's website include www.mypyramid.gov/ featuring information about personal nutrition requirements and the nutritional assets provided by various food groups, the healthy eating index, the interactive *Cost of Raising a Child Calculator* database, and publications such as *The Low Cost, Moderate Cost, and Liberal Food Plans 2007* (2008), *Diet Quality of Americans in 1994-96 and 2001-02 as Measured by the Healthy Eating Index-2005* (2008), and *Expenditures on Children By Families, 2007* (2008).

Cooperative State Research, Education, & Extension Service-The Cooperative State Research, Education, & Extension Service (CSREES) www.csrees.usda.gov/ was initially established in 1923 as part of the 1924 Agricultural Appropriations Act (*Guide to U.S. Government Publications*, 2000, 28; Rasmussen, 1989). An important earlier development was the 1914 Smith-Lever Act establishing the Cooperative Extension Service within the nation's land-grant universities to disseminate agricultural experiment station findings to farmers and the general public (Chapman, 1999, 387-388). CSREES current institutional incarnation dates from 1994 when legislation was passed uniting the Cooperative State Research Service and Extension Service into a single agency (U.S. Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service, 2009).

CSREES programs seek to leverage USDA educational resources and activities with national land-grant institutions to increase scientific and public knowledge or agricultural and environmental sciences to benefit individuals, communities, and the nation. This is done through a variety of programs including the 4-H program so common in Indiana and other agrarian oriented states (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 120).

Information resources on CSREES website include descriptions of its research in areas such as

agricultural and food biosecurity, animals, biotechnology and genomics, climate change, food and nutrition, natural resources, and pest management. Agency budget information is also provided as are links to state extension resources such as those provided by Purdue University.

Economic Research Service-Established in 1961, the Economic Research Service (ERS)

www.ers.usda.gov/ is responsible for informing and enhancing public and private decisionmaking on agricultural, food, environmental, and rural development issues and publishes a wide variety of information resources to further its mission (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 120; *Guide to U.S. Government Publications*, 2000, 79),

Examples of accessible ERS information resources include datasets such as the *Agricultural Baseline Database*, *Agricultural Exchange Rate Data Set*, *Farm Income Data*, *Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States*, *Livestock and Meat Trade Data*, and *Wheat Data*. Agricultural economic fact sheets are provided for individual states, webcasts of ERS subject experts speaking are also accessible along with contact information and subject specialties for these individuals, and the text of many ERS analytical reports including *Adoption of Bioengineered Crops* (2002), *Commodity Payments, Farm Business Survival, and Farm Size Growth* (2007), *The National School Lunch Program: Background, Trends, and Issues* (2008), *Factors Shaping Expanding U.S. Red Meat Trade* (2009), and *Consequences of Higher Input Costs and Wheat Prices for U.S. Wheat Producers* (2009).

Farm Service Agency-The Farm Service Agency (FSA) www.fsa.usda.gov/ is responsible for administering farm commodity, disaster and conservation programs for farmers and ranchers, and makes and guarantees farm emergency ownership, and operating loans through various state and county offices. Examples of FSA managed programs cover commodity and livestock disasters, loans to family farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural production, providing catastrophic crop loss protection for crops such as Christmas trees and aquaculture not covered by federal crop insurance

programs, and the Commodity Credit Corporation www.fsa.usda.gov/cc/ which stabilizes, supports, and protects farm income and prices while also striving to maintain balanced and sufficient agricultural commodity supplies and facilitating their orderly distribution (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 116-117).

FSA information resources include the full text and programmatic breakdowns of the 2008 Farm Bill, information about FSA-administered laws and regulations, detailed descriptions of program areas such as disaster assistance, environmental and cultural resource compliance, farm loans, commodity operations, and price supports. Detailed statistics are provided of participants in crop replacement programs down to the county level and analytical research products include the annual *Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land* (2004-present), *Evaluating the Relative Cost Effectiveness of Farm Service Agency's Farm Loan Programs* (2006), and *Fish and Wildlife Response to Farm Bill Conservation Practices* (2007).

Food & Nutrition Service-The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) www.fns.usda.gov/ administers U.S. food assistance programs. These include the Food Stamp Program providing food benefits through state and local welfare agencies to help needy individuals enhance their food purchasing powers, the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) which seeks to improve the health of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five by providing them with nutritious food supplements, nutrition education, and health care referrals and other programs including the National School Lunch Program (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 115; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry, 1999).

FNS information resources include descriptions of the programs it administers, information on service programs to combat obesity, nutrition education programs including State Nutrition Action Plans, and

the text of various research reports including *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security* (2000), *WIC Participation and Program Characteristics 2006* (2007), and *Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program: State Implementation Progress* (2008).

Food Safety & Inspection Service-The Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) www.fsis.usda.gov/ was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 17, 1981. FSIS responsibilities include ensuring national commercial supplies of meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. It also inspects all raw meat and poultry sold in interstate and foreign commerce, including imported products. Two Hoosiers, Purdue University chemistry professor Harvey Washington Wiley (1844-1930) and Senator Albert Beveridge (R)(1862-1927) played major roles in passing the 1906 pure food and drug and meat inspection laws which are the foundation of the modern U.S. Government food safety and inspection system (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 114; Young, J.H. 1989; Young, J.H. 1992).

Accessible FSIS information resources include product recall listings, descriptions of agency scientific research and testing practices, risks assessments of various animal diseases in food products such as avian influenza, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and ecoli, the locations of FSIS laboratories and accredited commercial food inspection laboratories, and consumer oriented food safety factsheets. FSIS produced publications include *Quarterly Progress Report on Salmonella Testing of Selected Raw Meat and Poultry Products* (2006-present), *Quarterly Enforcement Reports* (1998-present), the text of laws and regulations FSIS enforces, and *2006 National Residue Program Data* (2007).

Foreign Agricultural Service-The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) www.fas.usda.gov/ was established in 1953 and is responsible for improving foreign market access for U.S. agricultural products, building new markets and improving the U.S. agricultural sector's international competitiveness, and providing

food aid and technical assistance to foreign countries. Its activities encompass trade agreements and negotiations and collecting and analyzing international agricultural statistics and market information (*Guide to U.S. Government Publications*, 2000, 42; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 118; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Foreign Agriculture and Hunger, 1994).

FAS information resources include guidance on selling agricultural products overseas, descriptions of U.S. agricultural trade policy, information on foreign agricultural agreements, announcements of upcoming trade shows, and statistics about agricultural trade for commodities such as biofuels, cotton, dairy, fish and seafood, grains, planting seeds, wine, and wood products. A particularly valuable feature of FAS' website are the agricultural attaché reports on foreign agricultural market conditions compiled by U.S. diplomatic personnel globally. Examples of these reports covering from 1995-present include *Brazil: Biofuels Annual Ethanol* (2008), *Russian Federation Biofuels: Current Update* (2008), *New Zealand: Kiwifruit Industry Annual Report* (2008), *Thailand: Agricultural Situation* (2009), *EU Action Requires Germany to Revise Changes to Biofuel Law* (2009), and *China, People's Republic Of, Guangdong Furniture Industry Faces Strong Head Winds* (2009). Additionally, the online magazine *FAS Worldwide* provides articles and news on agricultural trade developments from 1996-present.

Forest Service-The United States Forest Service (FS) www.fs.fed.us/ was established in 1905 in legislation transferring federal forest reserve management from the Interior Department to USDA. FS' missions include achieving quality land management under a sustainable multiple use management concept to meet diverse public needs. Some of these missions involve advocating a conservation ethic to promote the beauty, conservation, diversity, and productivity of forests and associated lands, providing technical and financial assistance to state and private forest landowners to help them promote stewardship and quality land management, assisting states and communities in wise forest use

for economic development and a quality rural environment, and expanding scientific and technological knowledge about forests and grasslands (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration 2008, 121-122; Williams, G.W. 2007, Robbins, W.G. 1985).

A rich variety of information resources are provided on the FS website. These include how funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will be used by the Forest Service to promote agency objectives and stimulate local economies, links to individual national forest or grassland websites such as Hoosier National Forest or Kansas' Cimarron National Grassland, the text of FS-administered laws and regulations, and links to regional forest service research stations such as the Southern Research Station in Asheville, NC, national forest and grassland maps and brochures, and information on service fire fighting and management policies.

Numerous forestry and forest policy research reports are accessible here including agency annual reports from 1996-present, *Fire and Fuels Buildup* (n.d.), the annual *Land Areas of the National Forest System* (1994-present), *Riparian Protection and Restoration: Road Design Techniques* (2002), *Forests, Carbon, and Climate Change: A Synthesis of Science Findings* (2006), *Helimulching: Equipment and Techniques* (2007), and *Biofuels, Bioenergy, and Bioproducts From Sustainable Agricultural and Forest Crops* (2008).

Grain Inspection, Packers, & Stockyards Administration-The Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) www.gipsa.usda.gov/ was established in 1994 to facilitate livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products marketing and promoting fair and competitive trading practices to benefit consumers and American agriculture. GIPSA's mission is executed by the Federal Grain Inspection Service which provides federal quality standards for the U.S. grain market and a uniform system for applying them and the Packers & Stockyards Programs enforces the 1921 Packers and Stockyards Act to promote competitive marketing environments for the livestock, meat, and poultry

industries (U.S. Government Manual 2008, 113; Skaggs, 1986; Hill, 1990; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, 2000; Labbé and Lurie, 2005).

GIPSA-produced information resources include news releases from 1997-present, the text of agency-enforced laws and regulations such as the United States Grain Standards Act, data and statistics on U.S. grain and livestock markets, and various publications including *Costs and Benefits of Cleaning U.S. Corn: Overview and Implications* (1994), *GIPSA's Annual Report to Congress* (1996-present), *Instructions for Weighing Livestock: Scales and Weighing Memorandum No. 3* (1996), *Assessments of the Cattle and Hog Industries* (2000-present), and *United States Standards For Whole Dry Peas* (2008).

National Agricultural Library-The National Agricultural Library (NAL) www.nalusda.gov/ serves as the U.S.' primary resource for information about food, agricultural, and natural resources while also assisting agricultural policymakers, specialists, research scientists, and the general public. It is also responsible for preparing the AGRICOLA database of agricultural research (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 119).

Information resources on NAL's website include guides for conducting research on agricultural products such as crops, plants, and pests, the text of agricultural laws and regulations such as the Animal Welfare Act, information on U.S. agricultural history, and a wide variety of digital collections of important USDA publications and imagery including posters, nursery and seed trade catalogs, the *Agriculture Handbook series*, *Home and Garden Bulletin series*, *Technical Bulletin series*, and *Yearbook of Agriculture* (1894-1992).

National Agricultural Statistics Service-The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) www.nass.usda.gov/ is responsible for preparing estimates and reports on agricultural production, supply price, chemical use, and other items to ensure the U.S. agricultural economy operates orderly. NASS is also responsible for conducting the Census of Agriculture every five years to provide

comprehensive agricultural economic data to the level of individual counties (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration 2008, 121; Allen, 2007).

A rich variety of information resources are provided by NASS' website. These include the annual *Agricultural Statistics* reports (1994-present), the text of agricultural census reports dating back to 1840 with some gaps, regular reports on various agricultural commodities including *Agricultural Chemical Usage: Dairy Cattle and Dairy Facilities* (2002-present), *Cattle on Feed* (1949-present), *Grain Stocks* (1973-present), and *United States and Canadian Cattle* (1998-present). NASS' website also links to individual state agricultural statistical services websites, features a calendar of upcoming statistical releases, and also features agricultural weather related information.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service—The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) www.nrcs.usda.gov/ was established as the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 and became NRCS in 1994 (*Guide to U.S. Government Publications*, 2000, 34; *Code of Federal Regulations*, 2008, 397). NRCS' mission is helping U.S. farmowners, ranchers, and other private landowners develop and carry out voluntary efforts for conserving and protecting natural resources. This is done through conservation technical assistance to reduce soil erosion; enhancing water quality, improving and conserving wetland habitats; mitigating damage to water supplies from natural disasters; and various programs to enhance environmental quality and protect farmland and forestry assets (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 123; Helms, 1992).

NRCS-produced information resources include the text of public comments on 2008 federal farm bill provisions, news releases 2000-present, program factsheets covering topics such as aging watershed infrastructure, a photo gallery of service programs and research, guidance on engaging in environmentally friendly farming and ranching, and the text, photos, and maps from soil surveys for individual U.S. counties with examples from Indiana including *Elkhart County* (2002), *Floyd County*

(2007), *Parke County* (1967), and *Switzerland County* (1987).

Risk Management Agency-The Risk Management Agency (RMA) www.rma.usda.gov/ was established in 1996 and is responsible for managing the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. Crop insurance is offered to qualifying producers through 16 private sector crop insurance companies. Under the federal crop insurance program, RMA provides reinsurance, pays premium subsidies, reimburses insurers for administrative and operating costs, and oversees the financial integrity and operational performance of the system for delivering these reimbursements. Examples of crops covered by RMA include apples, barley, citrus products, clams, corn, grain sorghum, green peas, livestock, rangeland, rice, sugarcane, and many others. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 118; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Risk Management Agency, 2008, 1-2; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, 2006).

Information resources provided by RMA include the text of laws and regulations it enforces along with program eligibility rulings it makes, statistical profiles of crop insurance developments in each state, a log in database for calculating crop insurance premiums, actuarial documents broken down by states, crops, and counties, and program manuals such as *Manual 14: Guidelines and Expectations For Delivery of the Federal Crop Insurance Program* (1997), *Almonds Loss Adjustment Standards* (2008), and *Pasture, Rangeland, Forage Vegetation Index: Insurance Standards Handbook 2008 and Succeeding Crop Years* (2008?).

Rural Development Agency-The Rural Development Agency (RDA) www.rurdev.usda.gov/ seeks to enhance rural Americans economic opportunities and improve their life quality. It does this by fostering relationships among government, industries, and communities while also serving as a capital investment bank to provide financing for rural housing, economic development, telephone and high-speed Internet access, and electricity, water, and sewer infrastructure (U.S. National Archives and

Records Administration, 2008, 105, 107; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, 2007).

RDA information resources include details on its energy initiatives including the Rural Energy for America Program and Biobased Products and Bioenergy Program, details on rural development program expenditures by state from 2001-2008, rural development provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill, and publications such as *Rural Development Progress Report* (2005-present), *Rural Cooperatives* magazine (1998-present), *A Guide For Evaluating the Requirements of Ethanol Plants* (2006), and *USDA Rural Development: Bringing Broadband to Rural America* (2007).

Non-USDA Agencies-Additional U.S. Government agencies outside of USDA produce agricultural information and implement agricultural policy. These agencies include the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and Farm Credit Administration.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission-The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) www.cftc.gov/ was established in 1974 by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Act. CFTC responsibilities include regulating trading on U.S. futures markets offering commodity futures and options markets contracts. The commission regulates designated contract markets and registered derivatives transaction execution facilities. It also regulates various trading professionals such as brokerage houses, futures industry sales personnel, commodity trading advisers and pool operators. CFTC regulatory and enforcement efforts are intended to promote transparent and financially sound markets, encourage market competition, efficiency, and integrity, and protect market participants and the public from fraud, manipulation, and abusive practices (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 368, 370; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, 2003; Markham, 1987).

Information resources produced by CFTC include general press releases and press releases on enforcement actions from 1995-present, the text of laws and regulations it enforces, descriptions of its

consumer protection activities, how futures markets affect agricultural prices, and reports including recent editions of *This Month in Futures Markets*, *Cotton On-Call*, *Economic Purposes of Futures Markets* (2007), the CFTC *Annual Report* (1996-present) and *Commodities and Equities: A "Market of One"?* (2008).

Farm Credit Administration-The Farm Credit Administration (FCA) www.fca.gov/

is an independent agency established by Executive Order 6084 on March 27, 1933. FCA is responsible for ensuring the safe and sound operation of banks, associations, affiliated service organizations, and other entities which are part of the Farm Credit System. This system was created to provide adequate and dependable credit and related services to farmers, ranchers, and producers or harvesters of aquatic products; persons providing on-the-farm services; rural homeowners; and associations of these groups operating cooperatively and engaging in marketing, processing, supply, or business service function to benefit their memberships (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2008, 391, 393; Fitzgerald, 2003).

FCA website resources include descriptions of how it governs farm credit institutions, news releases from 1996-present, the text of laws and regulations it enforces, and various publications including *Annual Report on the Farm Credit System* (1996-present), financial reporting information provided by individual lending institutions, and *Mission-Related Investments Annual Report 2006* (2007).

Congressional Sources-Congressional information sources are also critical for effectively understanding federal agricultural policy. You can examine the text of congressional bills desirous of changing federal agricultural laws from 1993-present at www.gpoaccess.gov/bills/. GPO Access www.gpoaccess.gov/ provides access to congressional committee reports on legislation, the text of U.S. laws in the *United States Code*, and links to regulations used to enforce laws as found in the *Code of Federal Regulations* along with announcements of proposed federal regulations in the *Federal Register* and the ability to

comment on these proposed regulations in <http://regulations.gov/>.

Congressional committees are also excellent sources of agricultural policy information because these committees are responsible for approving and revising legislation, conducting oversight of federal agencies programs, and funding these programs. These committees have the legal authority to subpoena witnesses and transcripts of committee hearings include committee members questioning witnesses, which can become heated, and the text of reports inserted into the transcript by members and witnesses (Sullivan, 2007). An exceptionally important congressional function is providing funding every five years for farm programs and commodities such as rice, sugar, and wheat and setting farm production and price levels in a particularly controversial and expensive process involving billions of dollars (Johnson, 2008; Riedl, 2007).

House Agriculture Committee-The House Agriculture Committee is a major player in congressional agricultural policymaking. Its website includes a listing of committee members during the 111th Congress (2009-2010) with one of these being Representative Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), information about committee subcommittees including those covering conservation, credit, energy, and research, horticulture and organic agriculture, and livestock, dairy, and poultry, press releases from 1998-present, and a glossary of agricultural terms including carbon sequestration. Examples of recently published committee hearings include *Review the Market Structure of the Livestock Industry* (2008) and *Review of the Impact of Imported Contaminated Food and Feed Ingredients and of Recent Food Safety Emergencies on Food Safety and Animal Health Systems* (2008).

House Appropriations Committee-The House Appropriations <http://appropriations.house.gov/> also plays a significant role in federal agricultural policy through its agricultural and rural development subcommittee. Congressional appropriations committees are responsible for determining how much money can be allocated to annual federal agency budgets. *Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and*

Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations for 2008 (2007) is an example of a recent hearing by this committee containing exhaustive coverage of the annual budget requests submitted by these agencies and congressional responses to these requests.

Senate Agriculture Committee-Senate Committees are particularly important because they are responsible under U.S. Constitution for confirming presidential appointments like the Secretary of Agriculture and members of various commissions and treaties with foreign countries. The Senate Agriculture Committee website <http://agriculture.senate.gov/> lists committee members including Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) who has served as committee chair, listings of committee subcommittees including the Subcommittee on Nutrition and Food Assistance, Sustainable and Organic Agriculture, and General Legislation, and the Subcommittee on Production, Income Protection, and Price Support.

Additional committee resources include the text of bills considered by the committee from 1977-present, recent news releases, committee hearing webcasts, and witness opening statements. Examples of recent Senate Agriculture Committee hearings include *Northern Plains Priorities in the 2007 Farm Bill* (2007), *Next Generation Biofuels: Cellulosic Ethanol and the 2007 Farm Bill* (2007), and *Investing in Our Nation's Future Through Agricultural Research* (2007).

Senate Appropriations Committee-The Senate Appropriations Committee <http://appropriations.senate.gov/> handles agricultural funding through its agriculture and rural development subcommittee. Examples of its recent hearings include *Grazing Policy Changes Proposed by the U.S. Forest Service* (2006) and *International Food Assistance* (2007).

Congressional Support Organizations-Congress' extensive oversight responsibilities require it to rely on support organizations possessing substantive expertise beyond that held by members, congressional committees, and the professional support staff assisting members and committees. The three principal congressional support organizations providing analytical expertise to assist Congress in overseeing

agricultural issues are the **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)**, **Congressional Research Service (CRS)**, and **Government Accountability Office (GAO)**.

CBO www.cbo.gov/ analyzes the U.S. Government budget and the budgetary implications of individual federal programs. Examples of relevant agriculture studies on its website include *How Federal Policies Affect the Allocation of Water* (2006) and *The Effects of Liberalizing World Agricultural Trade: A Review of Modeling Studies* (2006).

CRS is a branch of the Library of Congress providing congressional members and their staff with expert and unbiased public policy issue analysis. They do not have their own publicly accessible website but access to CRS reports is provided by many academic institutions and nonprofit organizations with a gateway to some of these resources provided at www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/leg.html. Examples of recent CRS agriculture studies include *What is the "Farm Bill"?* (2008), *Agriculture and Forestry Provisions in Climate Change Bills in the 110th Congress* (2009), *Agricultural Biotechnology: Background and Recent Issues* (2009), and *Air Quality Issues and Animal Agriculture: A Primer* (2009).

GAO www.gao.gov/ is responsible for issuing reports on the management performance of government programs and their website includes the text of such reports and the testimony of GAO witnesses before Congress. Examples of recently produced GAO agriculture reports and testimony include *Federal Farm Programs: USDA Needs to Strengthen Controls to Prevent Payments to Individuals Who Exceed Income Limits* (2008), *U.S. Department of Agriculture: Improved Management Controls Can Enhance Effectiveness of Key Conservation Programs* (2009), and *Veterinarian Workforce: The Federal Government Lacks A Comprehensive Understanding of Its Capacity to Protect Animal and Public Health* (2009).

National Academies of Science-The National Academies of Science (NAS) www.nas.edu/ is an independent quasi-governmental organization often used by Congress and government agencies to

provide rigorous analysis of scientific and technologically oriented issues. NAS' Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources (BANR) www.dels.nas.edu/banr/ analyzes agricultural production and related natural resource issues. Recent examples of accessible BANR reports include *Emerging Technologies to Benefit Farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia* (2008), *Changes in the Sheep Industry in the United States* (2008), and *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World* (2009).

Indiana State Information Resources-Agriculture has always played a critical role in Indiana's economic and cultural development due to its significant quantity of arable land. As of early 2009, Indiana ranks 10th among U.S. states in the total value of agricultural products sold, 8th in crop value when nursery and greenhouse products are included, 5th in grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas sales, 5th in sales of milk and other cow dairy products, 5th in hog and pig inventories, 5th in corn for grain acreage, and 4th in soybeans for bean acreage (Indiana Agricultural Statistics Service, 2009, 2).

Indiana has been a major corn producer and this must be set into a larger Midwestern geographic context where corn plays a major role in U.S. agricultural cultivation and production (Hudson, 1994). Indiana's agricultural bounty has also been observed historically by international observers (Harrison, 1972). There has been a wide variety of agricultural production, research, and education in Indiana covering commodities as varied as tobacco, livestock, soybeans, wheat, and even aquaculture, swamp draining in Benton and Newton counties to transform them into significant agricultural producers, and the role played by Purdue University and Purdue professors such as William Carroll Latta (1850-1935) in developing Purdue's agricultural research and extension programs. Indiana agricultural history also includes the political advocacy roles played by farm interest groups such as the Indiana Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union, depression era problems and legislative responses including the growth of crop price support programs, the increasing use of fertilizers and other chemicals in agricultural production, a declining number of farmers and technological enhancements producing drastic agricultural productivity

increases, the increasing importance of agricultural exports in state and federal agricultural policy, and the emerging importance of biofuels such as ethanol, concerns over food safety, the growth of organic produce, and the desire to promote “environmentally friendly farming” and controversy over whether human-caused climate change may affect agricultural production are all matters being addressed by farmers, agricultural researchers, and governmental policymakers in the 21st century’s first decade (Baer, 2003; Madison, 1982, 153-181; Nation, 2005, Neth, 2007, 991-1073; Philips, 1968, 132-180; Thornbrough, 1992, 362-403; Whitford and Martin, 2005).

Indiana Agencies-Purdue University and its agricultural units served as a defacto state Indiana State Department of Agriculture for many years. The **Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)** www.in.gov/isda/ currently serves as Indiana’s principal state agricultural policymaking agency. ISDA is organized into several divisions whose responsibilities encompass agricultural economic development, bioenergy, the certified livestock producer program, agricultural diversification including organic and locally-grown produce, soil conservation, the Grain Buyers and Warehouse Licensing Agency which seeks to reduce risks to grain producers, hardwoods, Indiana farmers markets, the Indiana Land Resource Council focusing on agricultural zoning, and international trade.

Each of these ISDA entities produces a variety of information resources with sample publications including *Corn-Ranked by Acreage of No-Till Acres* (2004), *Milk Labeling Work Group 2008: Summary Report* (2008), the current *ISDA Annual Report, Guidelines for the Biofuels Grant Program* (n.d.), and *A Guide for Local Land Use Planning for Agricultural Operations* (2008).

Indiana’s Office of Inspector General www.in.gov/oig/ evaluates the performance of state agency programs and seeks to uncover waste in these programs.

Indiana General Assembly-The Indiana General Assembly www.ai.org/legislative/ is the place for finding the text of Indiana state agriculture laws, regulations, and proposed regulations through publications

such as the *Indiana Code*, *Indiana Administrative Code*, and *Indiana Register*. This last document provides information for those desirous of publicly commenting on proposed state regulations. The General Assembly website also provides access to the text of bills being considered by the General Assembly, the status of these bills, member listings for relevant agriculture policy committees such as the House Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Small Business, and the text of selected agency reports submitted to the General Assembly such as *Indiana Biobased Products Advisory Commission: Summary Report (2008)*.

Indiana Academic Research Institutions-Additional government agriculture information policy resources are produced by Indiana academic institutions such as Purdue University which serves as Indiana's land-grant university. The **Department of Agricultural Economics** www.agecon.purdue.edu/ seeks to acquire and transmit agricultural economic knowledge to Indiana residents, the nation, and world. Their website includes listings of departmental faculty and their areas of expertise, the text of some of their scholarly journal articles, a financial crisis website focusing on agricultural economic issues, and the text of reports from the Purdue Agricultural Economics Report archive with representative samples including *Key Factors for Opportunities Influencing Indiana Agriculture: The Long View (2008)*, *Assessing the Opportunities for U.S. Pork in China (2008)*, *Farmers and the Indiana Sales Tax (2008)*, *An Update on Farm Land Assessment for Indiana Property Taxes (2009)*, and *Weather Disasters in Indiana and Taxes (2009)*.

The **Department of Agronomy** www.agry.purdue.edu/ seeks to disseminate information to the public facilitating informed decision-making about agricultural and environmental issues. Its website includes faculty contact information and their areas of expertise, the text of some of their scholarly publications, and descriptions of ongoing research projects.

The **Cooperative Extension Service (CES)** www.ces.purdue.edu/ is responsible for communicating

agricultural research information throughout Indiana and working with agricultural constituency groups such as the youth organization 4-H. Information resources on their website include contact information for county extension offices, details on service research activities and specialists in areas such as agronomy, animal sciences, entomology, food science, forestry and natural resources, and horticultural and landscape architecture. A variety of publications and web-based resources are accessible from CES' website including *Methane Generation for Livestock Waste* (1980), *Weed Control for the Garden and Landscape* (2003), *Home Storage of Apples* (2006), *Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers* (2009), and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) www.ansc.purdue.edu/cafo/.

The **Indiana Agricultural Statistics Service** www.nass.usda.gov/in/ is the Indiana branch of NASS providing customized studies and quantitative figures of Indiana agricultural trends and developments. Resources accessible here include news releases, historical agricultural commodity prices, farm acreage, crop acreage and production statistics, and regularly issued reports including *Indiana Equine Summary*, *Annual Statistical Bulletin* (1925-present with significant gaps), *Indiana Agricultural Report* (2001-present), and county agricultural production estimates.

The **Purdue Agricultural Centers** website www.agriculture.purdue.edu/pac/ features information about agricultural research stations across the state including Knox County's Southwest Purdue Agricultural Center which feature information about ongoing research occurring at these facilities. Purdue also supports a number of other agricultural research facilities through its Discovery Park network and other centers including the Agricultural Genomics Center, Center for Enhancing Foods to Protect Health, Center for Rural Development, and Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center whose websites feature information about their research activities.

The Purdue Libraries research guide *Government Documents on Energy* www.lib.purdue.edu/govdocs/agriculture.html provides links to additional government information

resources on this topic.

The **Indiana Database of University Research Expertise (INDURE)** www.indure.org/ provides access to the names of experts in agriculture and related fields at Ball State University, Indiana University, Purdue University, and the University of Notre Dame along with links to these individuals professional websites which will feature contact information. This resource benefits the determined researcher desirous of learning about the individuals representing Indiana's intellectual capital in this subject at these institutions.

Conclusion-A tremendous variety of publicly accessible resources on U.S. federal and Indiana state agricultural policy are provided by these websites. These resources should stimulate further analysis, debate, discussion, and study of the multifaceted and ambiguous roles agricultural products and services play in our personal lives as well as in local, state, and national economic and political policymaking. Agriculture is a global phenomenon and the truly engaged researcher should also consult the abundant proliferation of agricultural information resources and policy documents produced by other U.S. state and local governments, foreign national governments, and international government organizations which are accessible on their websites to gain heightened understanding of agriculture's importance in early 21st century global politics.

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