

STATEMENT OF VERNON C. STRUCK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES, MADISON, WIS.

Mr. STRUCK. In the interest of saving time I will attempt to summarize in part, but I serve as the executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Agricultural Cooperatives. The council is a federation of some 60 farmer business cooperatives that are actively engaged in processing, marketing, purchases, or service operations. They serve approximately 60,000 farmers by these cooperatives.

I would like to add my thanks to the committee for reviewing what we feel is a very important subject to not only agriculture, but to consumers, and we trust that the findings and recommendation of this committee will lead the way to a thorough reappraisal of our entire agricultural policy.

Now, of course, we are well aware of the fact that there is considerable controversy surrounding this complex topic and there is also a considerable difference of opinion as to the threat posed, real or imagined, by corporate farming.

Of course I contend that this very wide difference in opinion is in part what makes it more difficult to filter out the facts for meaningful appraisal. I think we have had a little bit of evidence of that this morning in some of the testimony. I would think that the very existence of the extremes in thinking on this basic problem would give rise to more penetrating research, and I think this was in evidence this morning also.

I would like to illustrate what I have in mind here about the range of position with respect to statements by various agricultural organizations and some conclusions drawn by recent scholarly studies and reports.

For one example let's take the Land O'Lakes Creamery, largest dairy farmer market in this country, and they adopted the following resolution at their last annual meeting. The Land O'Lakes, incidentally, is a member of the Wisconsin council.

Without reading the entire resolution I will quote in part. "We oppose the entry of nonfarm interest into farming enterprise. We also oppose the use of farms for tax writeoff purposes by absentee farm-owners." This was prefaced, of course, by some background statements.

It gives you the position of a large farmer dairy marketing organization.

Then let's go a little broader, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers held their annual conference in Tunisia this year in May, and they also are concerned and placed stress on the large diversified nonfarm corporations that are moving into fully developed agricultural regions. This conference also reported in depth on this particular area of concern, and I will quote in part from their conference conclusions.

"It appears that such enterprises can find it to their advantage to absorb current heavy losses in their farm operations, writing them off in other business activities." And they go on to spell out many of the things that we have already heard this morning, so I won't belabor that point.