

**Draft Remarks for
Michael Scuse
Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Innovation: Planting the Seeds for a Sustainable Future
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Buongiorno. I am happy to finally be here at the Milan Expo and to be part of this celebration of the best of U.S. food and agriculture – and of the innovation and technology that help make it possible.

In addressing the topic of agricultural innovation and sustainability, please know that I offer you not just the perspective of a U.S. government official, but also the perspective of an American farmer. Along with my brother, I produce corn, soybeans and wheat on our 600-hectare family farm in the state of Delaware.

When we talk sustainability, I think we can all agree that the challenges before us are daunting. A growing world population. A diminishing natural resource base. Changing climate. Mounting demand for energy.

And whether speaking as a policymaker or as a farmer, I have a clear and simple message for you: Embracing innovation and making decisions based on sound science is the **only** way we can confront these challenges.

Make no mistake: the status quo in agriculture is not sustainable. A transformation must take place – a “greener” green revolution, if you will. But for that to happen, all countries must be willing to provide an environment that facilitates sustainable development. This includes progressive, science-based policies that enable the creation and commercialization of innovative products and technologies.

There are no magic bullets. Biotechnology is not a magic bullet. Organic agriculture is not a magic bullet. Agro-ecology is not a magic bullet. What is important is that farmers have a full set of tools to confront the multiple challenges we face.

I know from history – and from my frequent meetings with producers from around the world – that farmers and ranchers are ready and willing to embrace technology and innovation. And with technology and innovation, they are capable of extraordinary accomplishments.

Just look at the United States. Over the last 100 years, we've moved from subsistence farming to an agricultural industry that makes us one of the world's largest food exporters. This evolution was not pre-ordained. American farmers adapted and changed and embraced new ideas and practices to become more productive.

And looking ahead, further increases in agricultural productivity will depend upon further investment in research – as well as an openness to new technology. A range of innovations will be needed to meet the growing needs of the global population and to make agriculture more efficient in its use of resources.

I am proud that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is funding and participating in research that is delivering results for people around the globe. We are improving agricultural productivity by creating crops that better tolerate drought, disease, pests and salinity. We are studying pre- and post-harvest technologies to reduce crop losses. And we are looking to understand factors that go into nutrition in order to provide a better, safer, healthier diet for future generations.

Improved understanding of genetics is not just changing what we plant, but is also essential if we are to meet the growing global demand for protein – a demand that is being driven by a growing middle class. Therefore, we must continue to encourage the development of new technologies to improve animal genetics, prevent and eliminate animal diseases, improve feed conversion efficiency, and

boost meat and milk production in livestock worldwide. Technology will continue to offer us tools for producing more with less.

As farmers and ranchers worldwide strive to produce more and better, we must also confront the uncertainty of global climate change and the constraints of limited water resources. But higher productivity need not come at the expense of our natural resources. U.S. farmers and ranchers have proven this. In the last 30 years alone, USDA has worked to help producers reduce soil erosion by more than 40 percent. And agriculture has gone from being the leading cause of wetlands loss to being the nation's leader in wetlands restoration efforts.

The solution to global food security need not – and should not – sacrifice efforts to conserve our natural resources and take care of our environment. That's why scientists are working on technologies and methods to use water more efficiently, to improve soil conservation, and increase productivity of the soil itself.

Whether it's plant biotechnology, or veterinary drugs, or new generation biofuels, or the use of pathogen reduction treatments to ensure a safer food supply, we simply cannot turn our backs on science.

Certainly, marketing and consumer preferences are important. And yes, we must ensure that we carefully assess the safety of new technologies. Nevertheless, we have a moral obligation to the millions who are hungry and malnourished worldwide to make our decisions within the context of competing risks: The risk of **not** adopting new technologies also needs to be taken into account.

The United States government is committed to collaborating with other countries to address 21st century challenges in agriculture and to make a better future for all. We recognize and respect that different countries will take different routes, but the policies of one country or countries should not take away the choices of another country or its citizens, especially in the developing world, where the impacts of climate and food insecurity are felt most.

The cultural preferences of some consumers in wealthy nations shouldn't impede access to safe and affordable foods by people in poorer nations or limit the ability of their trading partners to export agricultural products that the science says is safe.

That is why the United States supports innovation and science as the basis of international trading standards to meet the increasing food needs of people across the planet. And that's why we are holding true to those principles in the negotiation of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Consumers will always have the choice of what – or what not – to buy. But in negotiating trade agreements, and in setting international standards, questions about product safety and market access need to be based on scientific evidence, not the latest consumer trends.

We know we will need to double food production over the next 50 years to feed the world's population. Countries that embrace new technologies will benefit economically by producing more with lower input and resource costs. On the other hand, the failure to act from a basis of science will discourage development of new technologies in food production, seriously hurting developing countries' ability to meet the increase in demand for food, including affordable, high-quality sources of protein.

We've got a long way to go to face the challenge of producing sustainably for a world populated by more than 9 billion human beings. No one person and no one country can do it alone. It will take **all** of us, working together, and opening our minds and our borders to innovation and science. Our very future depends on it.

Thank you.