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20 MR. CARLIN: Dr. Keck?

21 MR. KECK: I want to thank the
22 commission for allowing me to speak today and
23 offer my comments and I'm going to start out
24 giving you a little bit of background about myself.
25 I think it is important that you understand maybe

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1 some of my background so you'll have this --
2 understand that vantage point that I speak from.
3 Could I have the next slide, please?

4 I grew up on a farm in Arkansas and I
5 raise chickens for a living. I've got a doctrine in
6 veterinary medicine from Louisiana State
7 University. I did some post doc work in pathology.
8 I've been a lab director, a technical services
9 director for an integrator and a consultant. And I
10 was at a meeting one time and somebody
11 introduced me to a group and they said he needs
12 no introduction. I've always said I need the most
13 introduction I can get because when you work as a
14 consultant there's no guarantee there, so
15 somebody may always hear something and need a
16 consultant.

17 But I've worked with a lot of different
18 groups, integrators, private farmers, organic and
19 natural producers, and I've done quite a bit of
20 work overseas with education and development.
21 And I'm going to talk about animal welfare today
22 related to poultry, but I'll probably broaden this
23 topic just a little bit because in this global
24 economy I think there are a lot of other issues that
25 also extend outside U.S. boundaries.

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1 What I've been doing recently -- I'm going
2 to inject the disclaimer in here. These comments
3 are my comments as 20 years as a poultry --
4 working in the industry as a poultry producer and
5 as a consultant, so I'm working in Congressman
6 Vic Snyder's office as a congressional fellow.
7 There's a national -- selected from this national
8 search to spend some time on Capitol Hill learning
9 how to interface science and public policy, and so
10 that's currently what I'm doing, but the comments
11 are mine and certainly not Congressman Snyder's.

12 Just a couple pictures in here I'll come
13 back to. These are actual photographs that I took
14 with some of my work, but I'll come back to try to
15 relate while I inject them into this presentation.
16 I've raised my hand a few times and taken an oath

17 and one of those was when I graduated from
18 veterinary school and I said I would do these
19 things to benefit society and relieve animal
20 suffering, conserve resources, promote public
21 knowledge and advance medical knowledge. And I
22 think those are very honorable things and I was
23 happy to do that.

24 And I think veterinarians -- next slide,
25 please. I think veterinarians are uniquely

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1 qualified to talk about and to evaluate welfare.
2 They have training in anatomy and physiology and
3 also recognizing signs of pain management and
4 how to deal with that, so I think comments from
5 the veterinary profession and the group is very
6 relevant to that discussion.

7 Now, I have paraphrased this somewhat,
8 but this information has been referred to as the
9 freedoms, but I think what we're saying, because I
10 try to select words carefully when I do one of these
11 presentations because I think the feeling or the
12 image or the information that it conveys can be
13 very important. And sometimes we think about
14 that as being more of a constitutional or a legal
15 term.

16 I think when we read through that we're
17 saying that animals should be without certain
18 things or they should have certain things. And
19 I've listed them there and you can read those for
20 yourself, but they're without -- that pole is right
21 in the middle of that, so I hope the audience can
22 see it better than I can, but that they should not
23 have unreasonable discomfort, that nutritional
24 needs should be met, not painful, to paraphrase,
25 and certain that normal behaviors can be exhibited

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1 and so on.

2 The next one, please. And another way,
3 and several people have written on this topic, and
4 I'm paraphrasing, but I think we can say the right
5 breeding, the right nutrition, the right
6 environment, and when you say right, I think what
7 we're saying is that we need these things to be
8 suitable or that these conditions be met in a
9 suitable fashion.

10 Now, what I've seen in my career is that
11 there has been this transition from this paradigm
12 or model, if you will, that if we are having
13 favorable production, however we measure that,
14 whether it's egg production or whether it's meat

15 production in broilers, or we could even extend
16 that to other species or health production, that
17 basically we're doing a pretty good job. And I
18 think there's -- I think that there is credible
19 evidence that says that is the case, but we are
20 starting and I think the industry and producers
21 have started to look further in saying that we can
22 do a better job of assessing this on a more
23 individual basis.

24 What I've seen -- could you stay on that a
25 minute? I have seen accepted by producers and

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1 management in that and seen a lot of information
2 and been a part of some of these developing
3 informational materials training and operating
4 manuals. And now you see that, we've heard
5 reference to the contract producers, but we see
6 that those -- that information is there and it's
7 used in materials that are produced by the
8 integrators in the case of contract growers. And
9 then we see a lot of information about
10 investigating new methods and research and that
11 needs to continue and research into
12 unconsciousness and how to produce that.

13 Can you go to that photograph, please?
14 This is a photograph that I took in Africa. I spent
15 some time with the Peace Corps in Africa. And,
16 you know, sometimes our viewpoint can be fairly
17 narrow. And we hear something, we say food and
18 security. It's almost a euphemism because when
19 you're hungry you don't -- certainly don't feel very
20 secure, but, in fact, I have traveled in a lot of
21 these places and I have seen that we can -- that
22 there are areas in places where there is not
23 enough protein in the diet. And simply having
24 that piece of meat or an egg in the diet a week for
25 a child can mean a difference in their health.

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1 And so one of the things I would caution
2 against -- go ahead, please, is that we -- and
3 you'll see this again at the end, but we do not
4 need to create a situation or an unintended
5 consequence trying to solve a problem with good
6 guidelines and research and science and certainly
7 creating another one or a worse situation.

8 What I think we need is that we do need
9 to improve and we can improve our training and
10 education and it needs to be audience appropriate
11 and it needs to be a language of multi-lingual in a
12 lot of cases. We need more research into pain and

13 stress and how we measure that. Now,
14 physiologically we can look at cortisol levels and
15 we have good ways to assess some of these things,
16 but we could certainly improve on what that
17 means, behavioral studies included.

18 And I do think these guidelines need to be
19 science based. Simply an emotional agenda -- I
20 see a lot of this. Being in DC, we see celebrity
21 agendas. Now, certainly they can have things to
22 say, but often times they're not experts, they're
23 not trained in science and they're not credible as
24 far as speaking to some of these issues at times.

25 So in summary here, I would say that

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1 animal agriculture does produce wholesome low
2 cost dietary protein. I think producers -- we have
3 to look at principle in these programs. We have
4 had some -- I have seen that situation where it
5 wasn't cost effective and didn't get considered,
6 maybe didn't get done, but I do believe that we are
7 seeing that knowledge shift, that we can look at
8 the principle of it. If it's the right thing to do, we
9 have to figure out how to do it and how to do it
10 correctly. And I do think we have to put a lot of
11 thought in that. We have to broaden our scope,
12 our perspective on it sometimes. And that goes
13 back to my comment about we don't want to cause
14 a bigger situation globally by trying to solve
15 something especially if it's not based on good
16 information. That's it. I'll be glad to take a
17 couple questions.

18 MR. CARLIN: Alan?

19 MR. GOLDBERG: Thank you. I'm not
20 going to tell you what I agree with on the things
21 that you've said. That would waste time, but I
22 would like to sort of focus on two of the issues.
23 One is on the pain and distress issue, about
24 controlling that. We have the technology now to
25 actually produce an animal that would feel no

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1 pain. We could do knockouts that would feel no
2 pain. Is that an acceptable approach to
3 decreasing pain and distress?

4 MR. KECK: Well, I don't think it's a
5 short term or a practical approach at the moment.

6 MR. GOLDBERG: We could do that. I
7 mean, genetically we could knock out the pain
8 system so that an animal does not feel pain. We
9 have that and humans are an example of that. In
10 India those people that never felt pain, so is that a

11 possible approach?

12 MR. KECK: I think it needs to be one of
13 those things that we look at and research. You
14 know, to say that we could do that tomorrow or
15 next year or the year after that, I don't consider it
16 a practical thing. We have spent generations with
17 livestock breeding and developing certain things
18 and they can't all be incorporated in one short
19 period of time.

20 If that could be done, you know, I think it
21 would be a very good thing, but to say that it's
22 practical and apply it, we're a long ways from
23 being able to do that in animal agriculture,
24 probably in human medicine and, you know, I've
25 stretched that further than I should. But, you

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1 know, it would be a good thing there, too. We
2 wouldn't need aesthetics for surgery.

3 MR. GOLDBERG: And the second
4 question is really a personal opinion. Do you look,
5 since you talked about poultry, at the chicken that
6 is in a house that is clean and neat and has food
7 and water and tends to meet most of the five
8 freedoms the same as you look at a companion dog,
9 as an animal?

10 MR. KECK: Generally so, I think.

11 MR. CARLIN: Bernard?

12 MR. ROLLIN: Would you agree that
13 questions about animal welfare as provided by
14 humans are in part ethical questions?

15 MR. KECK: I think they are on part
16 ethical questions.

17 MR. ROLLIN: So they can't just be
18 answered by science, right?

19 MR. KECK: Not entirely, but I think that
20 needs to be the cornerstone or the basis that we
21 rely on.

22 MR. ROLLIN: But we also need an
23 articulated ethic, right, for animal treatment?

24 MR. KECK: Quite possibly.

25 MR. ROLLIN: Okay. That's all.

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1 MR. CARLIN: Dan?

2 MR. JACKSON: You showed a slide of
3 chickens that had access to the outdoors. What
4 was this implying? Was this a preference over
5 housed chickens or what was the meaning of that?

6 MR. KECK: It was a photograph to show
7 you that I've had a pretty wide background and
8 looked at a lot of different farms. I took that

9 photograph myself. I think I was told that some, if
10 not all of you, went to contract farms yesterday. I
11 figured you'd seen that firsthand, you didn't need
12 another picture of that.

13 You know, I'm not advocating that one or
14 the other is particularly better. I mean, I could
15 tell you that in the UK or some of these areas
16 where I've also dealt with avian influenza we had
17 to put those birds inside because it's more of a
18 threat for spreading an avian influenza which
19 could then turn into a pandemic problem, you
20 know, in some people's estimate. So that was
21 simply to tell you that I have put my feet on the
22 ground in a lot of places outside the U.S. in a lot
23 of different kinds of poultry operations.

24 MR. CARLIN: Fred?

25 MR. KIRSCHENMANN: It strikes me in

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1 looking at the principles that you've set forward
2 that they're basically principles of good animal
3 husbandry. Am I correct about that?

4 MR. KECK: I would agree with that, yes.

5 MR. KIRSCHENMANN: Yeah. So my
6 question is what specific recommendation would
7 you have for the commission to move those
8 principles forward, if indeed, those are part of the
9 solution to the problems?

10 MR. KECK: Well, one of the things I
11 mentioned in that presentation that I think there
12 is a need for is education, and I think there's a
13 need for education for all of us but particularly all
14 the way down to the farm level. And I feel like
15 that could be improved and certainly that
16 information can be incorporated as a part of that
17 training.

18 MR. CARLIN: Michael?

19 MR. BLACKWELL: Dr. Keck, I want to
20 first congratulate you on your selection as a
21 congressional fellow. That's a big deal for a
22 veterinarian. I'm happy for you.

23 My question has to do with embedded in
24 our oath, of course, is the promise to promote
25 public health and throughout these meetings we

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1 continue to hear questions or points made about
2 inadequate veterinary medical presence, the lack
3 of adequate veterinarians or the lack of authority
4 over use of animal cruelty or just a number of
5 factors that point to inadequate veterinary
6 presence. Could you just share your thoughts

7 about that?

8 MR. KECK: Well, I'm going to speak
9 mostly -- I'm going to speak entirely about the
10 poultry industry because that's really where I've
11 spent most of my career. I did practice and
12 certainly had colleagues and associates in some
13 other areas, but in the poultry industry I'm going
14 to say it's better than most. It may not be entirely
15 adequate in all situations, but I think it's very
16 good.

17 The oversights there -- you asked two or
18 three questions, I think, within that. The question
19 about perhaps substances or residues, I think that
20 is very low risk quite personally. There's a
21 tremendous amount of testing that goes into that.
22 There's -- you know, we have agencies, USDA, FDA,
23 that have put a great deal of effort over years of
24 time and research into harmful effects of that. I
25 personally think it's very minimal and not just an

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1 opinion, but there's risk assessments that would
2 indicate that, too.

3 I think to your question about veterinary
4 oversight with animal welfare within the poultry
5 industry, it's good. It could be improved, as I
6 said.

7 With the question to antibiotics, that's a
8 large topic. Is there good oversight and usage and
9 am I concerned about residues in poultry meat,
10 hardly ever.

11 The question about the resistance in
12 public health is a whole other topic and I have
13 some information, opinions, and I think some
14 knowledge about that, but that's a different topic
15 than what I tried to address here today.

16 MR. BLACKWELL: Let me just ask --

17 MR. KECK: And again, I will say this. I
18 think that's manageable. I'm sorry, go ahead.

19 MR. BLACKWELL: One of the questions
20 that we continue to face has to do with the
21 availability of antibiotics to lay people and also
22 the practice of using these antibiotics at
23 subtherapeutic or nontherapeutic levels and I was
24 just wondering if you had an opinion about that?

25 MR. KECK: Well, we've seen that usage

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1 decrease. Somebody said 30 percent. Did I hear
2 that by one of the earlier presenters that it has
3 gone from virtually 90 percent to 30 percent? I've
4 seen evidence that it has gone down, the

5 subtherapeutic use, if we want to say that, you
6 know, use for other purposes.

7 For treating a flock or a group of animals
8 or animals that are sick, I think that's done very
9 judiciously and very carefully. Have we made
10 mistakes in the past? Yes, we have. I think we
11 have possibly used those without good enough
12 information and oversight in cases. I think it's
13 dramatically improved. I'm sure we can go and
14 find examples where that may occur. I'm not going
15 to deny that and say everything is great, that I
16 think it's headed the right way. I think there may
17 be some more guidelines that need to come forward
18 on the actual usage of it to make sure they are
19 used correctly.

20 I'm pretty proud of my record, but then
21 somebody may find that there's been, you know, a
22 mishap yesterday, I don't know, but I try to be
23 very careful with that. I use nontherapeutic
24 antibiotics with one or two exceptions.

25 MR. CARLIN: Thank you very much.

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1 MR. KECK: Thank you.