

AMSPECBLOG

## Finally: A Principled Farm State Legislator

By Doug Bandow on 6.16.11 @ 7:40AM

Everyone in Washington wants to cut spending. For everyone else. At least, that always seems to be the way it is.

Thankfully, Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-KS) is breaking the mold. Reports the *Washington Post*.

A freshman Republican congressman, himself a fifth-generation corn farmer and his family a longtime beneficiary of government agricultural subsidies, drove through the endless fields of far-flung western Kansas to deliver a difficult message.

"Everybody needs to share," Rep. Tim Huelskamp told a few dozen townspeople sitting patiently on the hard wooden benches of the Graham County Courthouse. "If you're a farmer like me, you're going to expect less. Something's going to go away. The direct payments are going to go away."

Huelskamp appears to be right. Dramatically cutting or eliminating direct crop subsidies, which totaled about \$5 billion last year, has emerged as one of the few areas of agreement in the budget talks underway between the White House and congressional leaders of both parties.

This approach is the only way fiscal responsibility can be restored. All those supping at the federal trough have to cut back. A lot.

That means slashing, not freezing, domestic discretionary spending. We should start with the most abusive outlays, like corporate welfare and specialized federal doles like agricultural subsidies. For decades the government has paid farmers to produce and not produce, to add cows for milk and to kill cows for less milk, and more. We can't afford such foolishness any more.

Cutting spending also means reducing traditional welfare. It means cutting foreign welfare-- especially misnamed "defense" spending that actually benefits our rich allies. It means transforming Social Security and Medicare.

It's a long agenda. But cutting farm subsidies would be a good start.

**Doug Bandow** is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and the Senior Fellow in International Religious Persecution at the Institute on Religion and Public Policy. A former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan,

*he is author of Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics (Crossway).*