WASHINGTON -- The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry today held what is likely its final hearing before developing the 2012 Farm Bill. Mississippi rice producer Travis Satterfield represented the rice industry during the hearing, which focused on commodities and risk management policies needed in the next farm bill to help farmers manage their risks.

In opening comments Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Ranking Member Pat Roberts (R-KS) said the farm bill functions as a "jobs" bill and is important in addressing the challenge for agriculture to feed a growing global population over the coming decades. Roberts also noted that in addition to strengthening crop insurance, the legislation should include policies that can work for all producers, while not creating distortions.

In his testimony, Satterfield called for producer choice to allow individuals to decide what policy will work best for their farm. He told lawmakers that policy options are needed not only for different crops, but for the same crop grown in different regions, such as rice.

Satterfield called for a choice of a price-loss policy and a revenue-loss policy and noted the significant shortcomings of current crop insurance policies for managing the major risks that rice producers face.

Sens. John Boozman (R-AR), Thad Cochran (R-MS), and Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) talked about the need for policy options in the farm bill, including a price-loss option, since a one-size-fits-all-approach does not work for all crops.

The Committee is working toward a potential farm bill mark-up in April or May.

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