

**Statement of FCA Board Member Jill Long Thompson
at the Farm Credit Administration Board Meeting
April 12, 2012**

It will come as no surprise to anyone that I am especially proud of the Farm Credit Administration today. I thank my fellow Board members, Chairman Strom and Board Member Spearman, for supporting this regulation, and I thank the staff for their hard work that has brought us to this point. Gary Van Meter, Barry Mardock, Jacqui Melvin, Ira Marshall, Jennifer Cohn, and Thais Mootz have put a great deal of time, energy, and thought into this rulemaking process. I thank Bill Hoffman for his counsel and leadership from the very beginning when I raised the issue of diversity in the System shortly after joining the Board. The Farm Credit System also deserves recognition for their overwhelming response to the proposed rule during the public comment period.

I wasn't very old when I first began to understand the significant economic role the Farm Credit System plays in agriculture and rural America. The Production Credit Association and Federal Land Bank were front and center in my home county, and I am completely convinced the System made it possible for farm families to become an integral part of the middle class that has long been a defining aspect of making America the strong world leader we are. As times have changed, so have the roles of men and women. Today we see an increasing number of women in top management positions in production agriculture and agribusiness. And the face of our nation has changed dramatically. We know African American and other minority farmers have faced real discrimination. For rural America to be a full participant in global economic opportunities, we have to make sure that we are aggressive in reaching out to all who have the potential to add value to our economy. Our gross domestic product cannot realize its full potential if we don't do all we can to reach out to those who have something to add to it.

This regulation will ensure that every institution in the Farm Credit System, through its strategic plan, includes outreach to the entire population of potential borrowers in its territory. I believe that over the next several years, this kind of strategic planning and implementation will do more than create new opportunities for the national economy. This regulation is the right thing to do for economic reasons. Even more, it is the right approach for a system built as a Government-sponsored enterprise. Our nation has always stood for equality of opportunity. While I also believe the System has long been committed to outreach to all, this regulation will ensure the strategic commitment to make it happen.