

**Remarks by  
The Honorable Kenneth A. Spearman  
Board Member, Farm Credit Administration  
FCA Symposium on System Consolidation  
January 16, 2014**

Welcome to FCA. I want to thank Chair Long Thompson for having this Symposium on the consolidation in the Farm Credit System and for bringing together a distinguished group of panelists. I am confident it will be a day of thoughtful discussion on relevant and timely topics.

It is truly an honor to have two prominent, former Members of Congress, who also served on the House Committee on Agriculture, before us today to discuss congressional intent in the writing of, and thinking behind, the laws we are entrusted to promulgate rules on and enforce relative to the Farm Credit System.

In the 1987 Act, Congress encouraged System mergers and business combinations as a way for the System to strike a balance between its social and economic missions.

Likewise, we have seen consolidation and increased concentration in America's production agriculture since the agriculture crisis of the 1980s and they are likely to continue.

The Farm Credit System's consolidation has paralleled that of the agricultural industry that they serve.

Since I joined the FCA Board in 2009, the Farm Credit System has seen the merger of two funding banks, leaving four, in addition to the merger of several associations. There are now 78 associations with possibly more mergers on the horizon.

The insight and views we hear today will be very helpful as the FCA Board continues to ensure the System serves its mission and remains a source of competitive credit to America's farmers and ranchers and their cooperatives in both good and bad economic times.

I am eager to hear from the panelists and look forward to our discussion.