



TESTIMONY OF

R. G. LAMAR

Pecan Federal Marketing Order Hearing

Docket No. AMS-FV-15-0023; FV15-986-1

Eastern Region – Tifton, Georgia - July 27, 28 and 29, 2015

My name is R. G. Lamar. It is spelled R-G L-A-M-A-R. I live in Hawkinsville, Georgia. My father, brother and I farm 2,300 acres of improved pecans in six (6) counties in middle Georgia. A copy of my resume is attached.

The Small Business Administration classifies our business as a large pecan grower since we have more than \$750,000 in gross pecan revenues each year.

In recent years, I have seen wide variation in the prices buyers pay for our pecan crop. Such wide variation in pricing makes it extremely difficult to plan for the future operation of our farms. While prices for pecans go up and down dramatically from year to year, our cost of production has steadily increased. Cost of fertilizer, pesticides and equipment have all increased in recent years regardless of the price we receive for our crop. Increased price stability would help our farm earn steady profits each year, and put an end to the complex planning that erratic income requires.

Further, current crop estimates are often inaccurate and we have little reliable information about consumption. Without an accurate market picture it is

difficult for me to formulate a marketing strategy or to make reasonable business decisions about investments in our farm. More accurate market information would be a great help to strategic decision making.

I think our farms and the industry would also benefit in the future from grade, size, quality, packaging, shipping protocols, and other handling requirements as we compete with other tree nuts for consumer attention.

I also understand that under the proposed order, only growers with more than thirty acres of pecans or more than 50,000 pounds of average production per year over the last four years will be allowed to vote on the proposed order. In my opinion, this threshold is reasonable because a grower that does not meet this threshold is not a commercial grower. Any grower that is smaller than the proposed threshold could not justify the cost inherent in such a small production. I am not aware of a single pecan farmer in my area who has a commercial farm that is smaller than thirty acres or produces less than 50,000 average pounds per year.

I have reviewed the economic analysis summary prepared by Dr. Marco Palma, specifically, the projected average price increase from promotion of 6.3¢ per in-shell pound versus the average 2.5¢ per in-shell pound cost. I agree that promotion will increase prices. I am aware of the costs that a federal marketing order may impose on my farm and I do not believe those costs are unduly

burdensome; rather, the benefits of the federal marketing order to my farm will greatly outweigh its costs.

I am on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Growers Association. In this capacity I speak with a number of growers from all regions of the state and I have not heard one grower oppose the proposed marketing order. Instead, there seems to be a consensus that we could all benefit from the authorities in the proposed federal marketing order for research, promotion, future handling regulation and the information we could gain from the proposed "Marketing Policy" data gathering.

The American Pecan Board has kept our organization informed about its efforts to propose a federal marketing order. Representatives of the American Pecan Board regularly attend our growers meetings to listen to us and to answer our questions. I also know personally several members of the Board of the American Pecan Board.

In conclusion, I fully support the proposed federal marketing order for pecans and encourage the Secretary to implement the order as proposed by the American Pecan Board.

I would be glad to answer any questions anyone may have.

Robert G. Lamar, Jr.

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CAREER

LAMAR PECAN COMPANY, HAWKINSVILLE, GA

2007-Present

President

- Conceived and developed new product initiative: managed R&D, wrote VAPG planning grant and received \$50,000 award, managed distributor selection process, and managed competitive and consumer research in China.
- Diversified profit centers to manage risk of on/off production cycle by expanding into cost-plus custom orchard establishment and brokerage of pecans and peanuts to South America.
- Manage all farm operations and personnel including up to 50 employees at peak season.
- Manage company finances, including management of bookkeeper and CPA.

Marketing Director

- Directed comprehensive expansion of sales channels to China: made buyer contacts, purchased/installed new packaging equipment, reformed quality control process, managed logistics, purchased .5-2 million pounds pecans per year, made sales to China of approximately 1.5-4 million pounds per year.
- Managed plant operations including 19 employees.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

2005-2007

Special Advisor to Assistant Secretary of INL Bureau

- Contributed to development of Afghan counternarcotics policy proposal for top department officials, which was adopted as policy and resulted in a decrease in opium production of nearly 1/3 from 2007 to 2009.
- Co-authored an op-ed published in USA Today¹ arguing that opium legalization is the wrong approach to counternarcotics in Afghanistan.

Special Assistant to PDAS and Assistant Secretary of INL Bureau

- Travelled with the Ambassador for Justice Reform in Afghanistan to over 20 countries; attended almost all meetings including with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Craddock, ISAF Commander General McNeill, Dyncorp CEO Herb Lanese, and Veritas Capital CEO Bob McKeon.

EDUCATION

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA, GA

2001-2005

BA—American Studies

- Collegiate golf and cross-country.

SKILLS/INVOLVEMENT

- Conversational Spanish
- Boards: Ga. Pecan Growers Assoc., Ga. Agricultural Commodity Commission for Pecans Advisory Board, Foster Flight Inc. 501(c)(3) treasurer.
- Houston Lake Presbyterian Church: member and missions committee.
- Free time includes adventure racing, mountain biking, baking artisanal bread and pizza, DIY projects, pilot training, gardening, reading, writing poetry, and learning about wine.

¹ Editorial can be found at http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/2007-05-20-oppose_N.htm