

TESTIMONY OF**JACLYN DIXON FORD****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 Jaclyn Dixon Ford. It is spelled J-A-C-L-Y-N D-I-X-O-N F-O-R-D. I live in Alapaha, Georgia. I am a co-owner of Dixon Farms, LLC, Dixon Gin Co, Dixon Farm Supply, JCQ Farms, and Jake Ford Farms. We are a diversified family farming operation consisting of corn, cotton, pecans, and peanuts. One of the primary sources of our income is a pecan farm in Alapaha. We have over 200 acres of irrigated pecans currently in production. Last year we produced over 224,000 pounds of pecans. Over the last 10 years, we have interplanted over 1000 new trees and are also currently in the process of planting/irrigating over 50 acres of new pecan trees that will not be in production for 7 years. On our farm we grow primarily Stuart and Desirable pecans, but are diversifying with newer varieties in the new plantings. Attached is my resume.

Our farm has less than \$750,000 in annual gross revenue from pecans and, therefore, under the Small Business Administration guidelines we are classified as a small business.

I have also 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. Overall, I am aware of the costs that the proposed federal marketing order may impose on my farm and I do not believe those costs are unduly burdensome. Further, I believe that the benefits of the federal marketing order to my farm will greatly outweigh any costs associated with it.

Through managing our cotton gin, I have been very involved in the check off program for cotton over the past 15 years and have certainly witnessed the success in that program. We hope the proposed federal marketing order for pecans will be as successful.

In recent years, I have seen wide variation in the prices I have received from my pecan crop. We have sold Desirable Pecans of the same quality for under \$1.60 per pound and over \$3 in the last five years. Such wide variation in pricing makes it extremely difficult to plan for the future operation of my farm. While prices for pecans go up and down dramatically from year to year, my cost of production have steadily increased. Cost of fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation, and equipment have all increased in recent years regardless of the price I receive for my crop.

The lack of accurate market information on the anticipated size of the pecan crop in any given year also makes it difficult for me to negotiate a fair price for my crop and to make reasonable business decisions about investments in my farm. Increased price stability and more accurate market information would greatly benefit my small family operation.

I think my farm 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 shelf space and 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 testifying in my individual capacity in support of the federal marketing order for pecans. My husband and I are actively involved in both the Georgia Pecan Growers Association as well as the Southeastern Pecan Growers Association. The American Pecan Board has kept our organization informed about its efforts to propose a federal marketing order. Representatives of the American

Pecan Board attended a meeting of Georgia Pecan Growers in March and provided us with information and solicited our input.

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.

Jaclyn D. Ford

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Education:

University of Georgia, 2000--Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Major in Agricultural Communications

Berrien High School, 1996

Work Experience:

Sept. 2001 to **Vice-President and Co-Owner, *Dixon Gin Co. Inc.***
Present **and Agricultural Producer**

- manage day to day operations of family ginning business
- market cotton on behalf of our grower customers as well as our own farms
- work closely with local and surrounding FSA offices, maintaining current information on farm subsidy payments
- manage 800 acre farm in Berrien county, consisting of rotations of cotton, peanuts, corn and pecans

Activities/Memberships:

Cotton Grower Magazine's 2010 "Cotton Marketer of the Year" Award, Farm Service Agency – Georgia State Committee Member, National Cotton Council – producer delegate, Southern Southeastern Ginner's Association Board of Directors, USDA Standards Advisory Committee for Cotton, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College – Board of Trustees

