

**MORMON CRICKET INFESTA-  
TION IN THE GREAT BASIN OF  
THE UNITED STATES**

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**OVERSIGHT HEARING**

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION,  
AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON MORMON CRICKET  
INFESTATION IN THE GREAT BASIN OF THE  
UNITED STATES**

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**Thursday, July 19, 2001  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands  
Committee on Resources  
Washington, DC**

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The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 1334, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Joel Hefley, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. HEFLEY. The Committee will come to order.

As you just heard, we have a vote on now. I would like to forego the opening statement at this point and let Mr. Hansen go because he has some other commitments, and I am not sure he will be able to get back to this.

Mr. Hansen, if you would like to do that, we will try to get—I hesitate to use the expression “get you out of the way.”

[Laughter.]

Mr. HEFLEY. But we will get you out of the way, and then we will suspend and go vote and come back.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES V. HANSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE  
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate this opportunity because I have some other commitments, and this is a very important piece of legislation. I don't think the people in the East recognize the problems we have out in the West at this particular time. You know, years ago when the pioneers first came to the valley, they proposed the same, wipe them out, these crickets that we have in front of us. Fortunately, the people then were very conservative, and worked a lot harder and knew what they were supposed to do. But my friend Mr. Johnson here tells me they are finally resurrecting their calling, and they are doing a little better out in his area in Skull Valley. I think that is very important because, you see, the Mormon cricket is kind of an ugly thing.

Mr. Chairman, I know there are going to be a lot of facts and statistics brought out today regarding what they are doing, but let me make the point that probably has been made, and that is the analogy between this and payment in lieu of taxes.

The Federal Government owns a big share of Utah. They have the Forest Service. They have the BLM. They have reclamation. They have Indian tribes. They have military reservations. And years ago, they said, look, if we are going to live out there, we have got to pay our share, and our share for living there is so much money. So they came up with payment in lieu of taxes. Folks sitting here from Nevada and Colorado and Utah agree, if you are going to live there, you have got to pay your share. People come out and they use that ground and they recreate on it, they start fires, they litter, and if they break a leg, our people have to pick them up. But here in our counties, here they are sitting there with a minor, minor tax base. But the Federal Government hasn't been paying their share. Instead of paying that 25 cents an acre that they are supposed to pay, they just kind of ignored it. We have authorized it, and somehow we can't get the money appropriated.

Well, I have an analogy here where we have got our people in the State, Director of Agriculture Cary Peterson is with us and Mr. Wallentine from the Farm Bureau with us, we have ranchers with us and other people, mayors with us who are going to testify. But I am talking more about Federal people here. Your share on this one is these crickets come up right next to our State and our private property, and leave the Federal area and come over and ruin everything we have got, as well as what you have got. So it just seems to me that it is only fair that the Feds pay their share on this one, also. It is part of their problem. They helped create it. Someone has got to move in and take care of this. We could wipe out agriculture in some of our areas if we are not up to taking care of this particular issue.

Up in the northern end of the State, I was talking to a rancher up there, and he said they were even eating the stucco off of his house. It is like one of these movies that you see where these things come in and they just take over an entire area and you can't do much about it. So it is a problem of strain. It is a problem of predators, whatever you can use to take care of this thing.

I really appreciate, Mr. Chairman, you holding this meeting. I think it is something that many of our Eastern friends don't realize. The enormity of it, the problems that we have are things they don't consider, and I would hope that we can take care of some of these things to stop this invasion, which I guess is the worst we have had in a while, in 60, 70 years. It is a very serious problem, and it is going to require something to wipe this out in this part of the century.

Now, we sit in these hearings. We hear it from Florida. We hear it from the Midwest. We hear it from other areas. Everyone has got a problem and we react. It is about time we react to our friends out in the Western areas of the States that many of us sitting here are living in.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and I would ask unanimous consent that my written statement, whatever it says, be put in the record.

Mr. HEFLEY. Without objection, and, Mr. Hansen, one thing you left out. I understand they taste like chicken.

Is that true?

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. If you would like to eat one, there is a live one back here, and you can report to the full Committee.  
[The prepared statement of Mr. Hansen follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable James V. Hansen, Chairman, Committee on Resources**

I am very pleased that Mr. Hefley has agreed to hold this oversight hearing on behalf of the farmers and ranchers in Utah and throughout the Great Basin states that are dealing with the devastating outbreaks of Mormon Crickets and Grasshoppers. This outbreak, now under Declaration of Emergency by the Governor of Utah, is considered to be the worst in over 60 years, spreading to over 1.5 million acres in Utah alone. These insects, who breed undisturbed and untreated on the vast tracts of BLM and Forest Service land and then spread to neighboring state and private land, are devouring the crops and rangeland to the tune of what is expected to be at least \$25 million dollars worth of damage. I believe where the federal government owns land it has an obligation to take care of it and to ensure that it does not have a negative impact upon its neighbor's land. I understand that we will hear today from our State Agriculture Commissioner Cary Peterson, Mayor Anderson of Oak City, and Darrell Johnson, a fifth generation rancher from Rush Valley regarding the very real impact of these infestations. I am pleased to have them here and look forward to hearing their testimony. I know timely and adequate funding has been a continual issue of concern for us as we have tried to fight these crickets over the last couple of years and I remain committed to working with the appropriate committees and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to secure funding.

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Mr. HEFLEY. The Committee will stand in recess while we go vote, and we will come right back.

[Recess.]

Mr. HEFLEY. The Committee will come back to order.

I have just been reminded that this is the first in a series of seven hearings on biblical pestilence. We are starting with crickets. We are going to do frogs for my friend down here, and we are going to work through the seven.

We want to welcome everybody to the oversight hearing. We do have a number of witnesses today, so I will try to keep my opening remarks brief.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOEL HEFLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO**

Mr. HEFLEY. We are going to focus on an incredible and disastrous infestation of Mormon crickets and other destructive grasshoppers that have literally taken over many parts of the West this year. Mormon crickets have long been part of the Great Basin area and have been a nuisance to agriculture-related activities for much of that time. As the crickets' natural population cycle has fluctuated, so has their impact. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has historically been responsible for conducting a number of activities like insect population surveys, implementing cooperative programs, preparing cost-share agreements, and obtaining sufficient pesticides and pesticide delivery equipment to control insect outbreaks on public lands.

Until 1994, treatment of Mormon crickets was a line item in the agriculture appropriations bill through which APHIS received funding. However, because the grasshopper infestations were less severe during the early 1990's, appropriations were reduced and the program was no longer funded. Someone must have told the grasshoppers that the appropriations were stopped because they have

reached epidemic proportions in the last few years as the money to control them has been eliminated.

We are meeting today to learn more about this problem and to learn what steps need to be taken to assure that this type of infestation is not allowed to occur next year and in years to come.

I want to thank Chairman Hansen for bringing this issue to the Committee's attention and for pushing for this hearing today.

I also would like to thank all the witnesses for coming today, especially those who had long distances to travel, and I look forward to their testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hefley follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chairman, Subcommittee on  
National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands**

Good morning everyone and welcome to the oversight hearing. We have many witnesses testifying today so my opening remarks will be brief.

The hearing today will focus on the incredible and disastrous infestation of Mormon crickets and other destructive grasshoppers that have literally taken over many parts of the west this year.

Mormon crickets have long been a part of the Great Basin area and have been a nuisance to agriculturally related activities for much of that time. As the crickets' natural population cycle has fluctuated, so has their impact. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has historically been responsible for conducting a number of activities like insect population surveys, implementing cooperative programs, preparing cost-share agreements, and obtaining sufficient pesticides and pesticide delivery equipment to control insect outbreaks on Public Lands.

Until 1994, treatment of Mormon crickets was a line item in the Agriculture Appropriations bill through which APHIS received funding. However, because the grasshopper infestations were less severe during the early 1990's, appropriations were reduced and the program was no longer funded. Someone must have told the grasshoppers that the appropriations were stopped because they have reached epidemic proportions the last few years as the money to control them has been eliminated.

We are meeting today to learn more about this problem and to learn what steps need to be taken to ensure that this type of infestation is not allowed to occur next year or in years to come.

I want to thank Chairman Hansen for bringing this issue to the Committee's attention and for being here with us today. I would also like to thank all of our witnesses for coming today as well, especially those who had long distances to travel and I look forward to their testimony.

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Mr. HEFLEY. At this time, I would like to ask unanimous consent that Senator Bennett be permitted to sit on the dais following his statement if he would like to. Without objection, so ordered.

Now I yield to our ranking member, Mrs. Christensen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DONNA M. CHRISTIAN-CHRISTENSEN, A  
DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to be brief today so that we can hear the testimony regarding the serious problem that is plaguing many of our Western States.

For those who live in urban areas or whose livelihood is not dependent on agriculture or ranching, it is easy to underestimate the threat posed by pests like the Mormon cricket. However, for Western farmers and ranchers, this and other species of grasshoppers can be a devastating problem. Mormon crickets feed on more than 400 species of plants and can destroy millions of acres of crops during a serious infestation. Such destruction can bankrupt farmers and destroy rangeland used for cattle grazing. Clearly, given the

amount of federally owned land in the West, any strategy to combat these pests must involve cooperation between the public and the private land managers. In addition, Federal funding allocated to address this problem must be adequate.

I want to also welcome those who have come to testify today, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Gibbons, did you have a statement?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JIM GIBBONS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA**

Mr. GIBBONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Representing the 2nd Congressional District of Nevada, which is 99.8 percent of the State, an area of about 110,000 square miles directly adjacent to the State of Utah, this infestation of Mormon crickets affects Nevada as well. And we have it all across the northern part of Nevada, from north of Reno and the Red Rock area in Washoe County all the way through Elko and Elko County, which abuts up to Utah.

The State of Nevada, of course, relies heavily on the Federal Government inasmuch as that 90 percent of the State of Nevada is federally managed. In addition to that, the State director of the Bureau of Land Management indicated to me in a conversation that the amount of money that he has to address this problem is about \$66,000. Now, \$66,000, Mr. Chairman, is woefully inadequate to cover 110,000 square miles of area.

Many times we have heard over the course of our discussions in this Committee the sensitivity that this Committee has to species of animals that roam freely in the West, including the wild horse, in addition to cattle grazing and crop farming that we have also become acutely aware of the impact.

But when you look at the ecosystem for a lot of wild species of animals that we pride ourselves in and treasure, this insect is going to have a devastating impact on those animals.

What frightens me on the far end of the spectrum, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that we don't want to go to the extreme of making this insect an endangered insect species. But we do need to get it under control. As you will be able to tell from some of these photographs here, it not only is a nuisance but it is a danger—a danger to the ecosystem for a lot of our wildlife, a lot of our farm production and ranch production in the State of Nevada. We depend, as I said earlier, that the Federal Government have—on the resources. The State of Nevada depends on the Federal Government as well for programs and assistance to address this, and we certainly hope that this Committee and the members of this Committee will see to it that we handle this in the same fashion as we would a crisis of the magnitude that affects other areas of this country, whether it is a hurricane in the Southeast affecting farmers in the Southeast or fires that we have out West, or in the South this year due to drought systems.

This insect is creating a serious problem, and I would hope that this Committee and the people who are going to address this issue understand the fact that we are seriously interested in finding a

solution, and maybe we can direct our Federal Government to providing the necessary resources to help out.

I thank the Chairman.

Mr. HEFLEY. Any other Committee member who has a statement they would like to make?

**STATEMENT OF HON. WAYNE T. GILCHREST, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND**

Mr. GILCHREST. I recognize the seriousness of the problem, and I appreciate the statement of the gentleman from Nevada, Mr. Gibbons.

Before I came here, Mr. Chairman, I was a school teacher, and I always teach a unit on American Indians. And American Indians, when their food source ran low, would eat grasshoppers. I don't know if they were Mormon crickets, but I guess maybe if they were out in that region—and we found out that crickets and grasshoppers ounce for ounce have 10 times the amount of protein as beef. While not recommending a new change in agriculture for a food source—and they don't taste very good, either, so that probably wouldn't catch on. But I hope we can find out from this hearing that there are things that we can do in a reasonable way to protect the livelihood of people in the West and manage this ecosystem with some appropriateness and scientific understanding of how it all works.

I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. HEFLEY. Senator Bennett will be our first panel. Senator, we had a discussion with Congressman Hansen before you arrived as to whether or not they taste like chicken. Maybe you can help clear that up for us in light of what Mr. Gilchrest has just suggested that you do out there, that you raise them as a crop rather than try to get rid of them.

Senator Bennett?

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT BENNETT, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

Senator BENNETT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I cannot from personal experience give you any testimony with respect to the taste or nutrients of—

Mr. HEFLEY. Well, what good are you then?

[Laughter.]

Senator BENNETT. I can share with you a story that came from one of my colleagues, and I hope this will demonstrate that I am of some value.

We were debating an issue and I shall not disclose which issue it was, but one of my colleagues, Senator Lauch Faircloth, from North Carolina, who is very well known for his somewhat salty vocabulary, described this particular bill. He says, "It is just like a June bug." He says, "When you are driving down the street on a motorcycle and your mouth is open and the June bug flies in your mouth, you just swallow it and keep on going. But if you take that sucker home and put it in a Mason jar and look at it for a couple of weeks, there is no way in the world you can get it down."

Now, he was talking about a particular bill, which he said that the more we looked at it, the uglier it became. But I think that par-

ticular metaphor would apply to someone who would be attempting to make a meal out of Mormon crickets. They are about the size of my thumb. They are not small insects. And they climb up stocks of wheat—yes, you have one there, good. They climb up stocks of wheat, bite off the head, which causes the wheat to fall, and thus makes it a little more efficient in the way they can devastate crops than just staying there and eating them themselves. They can go through in a true carpet of devastation and wipe out crops with incredible and frightening efficiency.

I appreciate your holding the hearing this morning to talk about this because it is a crisis that the people of Utah are facing, and it has significant implications for large portions of the State.

I would like to thank right up front Mayor Anderson of Oak City and Darrell Johnson of Rush Valley and Utah's Commissioner of Agriculture, Cary Peterson, who will be appearing on subsequent panels. I want to thank them for coming all the way to Washington to share their experiences. Maybe one of them could tell you what a cricket would taste like, but I wouldn't put a lot of money on that.

Right now, the numbers, which you may already have seen but that I will repeat for emphasis, 1.5 million acres of land in 18 of Utah's 29 counties are being impacted by this year's infestation of crickets, and most of the impact is a severe one. It is estimated this is the worst infestation since the 1940's, and damage to crops and property will reach \$25 million.

Thousands upon thousands of acres of crops in the past year have been decimated by these insects. They are capable of consuming 38 pounds of vegetation each over their life span. So as you look at that little plastic-encased bug, you can understand how efficient they are in terms of destroying things.

Not only are they physically destructive to crops, they have a psychological impact on the people of Utah. Children are afraid to go out and play in areas where there are crickets. People are concerned about health and safety, and the Utah Department of Transportation has been requested to determine if the crickets and grasshoppers are creating traffic problems on the roads.

Now, we have reached the stage in this year in the life cycle of these insects where they have begun to lay eggs, and at this point, it seems all we can do is hope for a very long cold winter that kills most of the eggs in the ground. We can also hope for that because it would be a good thing for the Olympics. But we like to get two benefits from one effect.

Now, there is something that Federal land management agencies can do to prepare for next year besides pray for snow. In the past, a lack of funding has been blamed, and rightly so, for limiting the control efforts of APHIS, BLM, and the U.S. Forest Service. This last Tuesday, I was able to convince my fellow Senators to appropriate \$4 million for APHIS to combat this problem next year in Utah and other affected areas, so we hope the funding problem will go away.

I would like the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM, for whom I have great respect and with whom my office has a wonderful working relationship, to understand my expectations for next year going along with the money that has been appropriated to fulfill those ex-

pectations. I believe that some of the land management agencies were caught flat-footed and not prepared for what was coming. So I would hope that we would look not only to solve the problem this year but be prepared to deal with what looks as if it will come next year.

I am disappointed that there are threats of lawsuits by some groups headquartered outside of the State of Utah who have no real understanding of the impact of this, and I would hope that those lawsuits would, in fact, not materialize.

So, in summary, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the BLM and the Forest Service should begin as soon as possible to lay down any necessary environmental documentation, have the required public participation necessary to establish control measures against the crickets and the grasshoppers. We cannot have a repeat of 2001. I consider that simply unacceptable, which is why I pushed for the appropriation that has now been established.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Committee for holding the hearings and for your interest in this issue, which, while admittedly is parochial, is nonetheless very severe.

[The prepared statement of Senator Bennett follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Robert F. Bennett, a U.S. Senator from the State of Utah**

Good Morning. I thank the Chairman for holding this critically important hearing today on the current crisis the people of Utah are facing from the infestation of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers throughout significant portions of the state. I appreciate the committee giving me the opportunity to speak on this issue. I also would like to thank Mayor Anderson of Oak City and his wife, Darrell Johnson of Rush Valley, and Utah's Commissioner of Food and Agriculture Cary Peterson for traveling to Washington to share their experiences and insights with the Congress on this grave situation.

Approximately 1.5 million acres of land in 18 counties are being impacted by this year's infestation of crickets and grasshoppers, most of them severely. It is estimated that this will be the worst infestation since the 1940's and damage to crops and property will reach \$25 million. Thousands upon thousands of acres of crops and pasture have been decimated by these two inch long insects which are capable of consuming 38 pounds of vegetation over their limited life span. Not only are the crickets physically destructive they are also having a psychological impact on the residents of Utah. Children are afraid to go out and play and people are concerned about public health and safety. The Utah Department of Transportation has even been requested to determine if the crickets and grasshoppers are creating a problem on the roads.

Unfortunately, we are reaching the stage in the life cycle of these insects when they have begun to lay their eggs. At this point, it seems all we can do is to pray for a very long cold winter that will hopefully kill most of the eggs in the ground. There is, however, something the federal land management agencies can do to prepare for next year. In past years, a lack of funding has been blamed, and rightly so, for limiting the control efforts of APHIS, BLM, and the USFS. This past Tuesday, I secured \$4 million for APHIS to combat this problem next year in Utah and other affected states. I fully expect that this money will be released to APHIS in a timely manner so that it will be able to prepare for spring and summer 2002 during autumn and winter 2001. Additionally, I would like the USFS and the BLM, whom I have great respect for and a very solid working relationship with, to understand my expectations for next year. I believe Utah's land management agencies were caught flat-footed this year. I am greatly disappointed with their response to threatened lawsuits by some of Utah's out-of-touch environmental groups. I believe the BLM and USFS should begin as soon as practicable any environmental documentation and the required public participation necessary to take appropriate control measures against crickets and grasshoppers. We cannot have a repeat of 2001, it is simply unacceptable.

Again, I thank the chairman and Committee on Resources for holding today's hearings.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you, Senator.

Senator, on the issue in Colorado, where I live, we don't have the Mormon crickets. We do on a cyclical basis have plagues of grasshoppers, and they sometimes come—it almost looks like a thunderstorm cloud moving across the land. And when they have eaten everything green that they can find, you will find them eating fenceposts, which sounds outrageous. It is hard to imagine. But we find that.

How would you compare this infestation to what I have just described?

Senator BENNETT. The Mormon crickets have historically had the capacity to do that, but they don't fly. They come down over the land like a black carpet, devastating everything in its way in the manner that you described.

Now, I have not heard of any eating fenceposts, but they are voracious eaters, and anything that is in their way is problematical. And, of course, the reason they are named Mormon crickets is because this particular pest threatened the survival of the first Mormon pioneers when they came into the valley, and they were immune at that time to any kind of available human intervention. The Mormon pioneers beat them with shovels, dug trenches and filled the trenches with water, and pushed them into the water to drown them. When they felt the field was gone and nothing could be saved, they set fire to the field in an effort to eradicate the crickets.

None of these things worked. The only reason they were saved is because the California gull, which is the Utah State bird, interestingly, so named as the Utah State bird because of this experience, the California gulls showed up in massive numbers, harking to the comment you made about almost darkening the sky, and settled on the fields. The pioneers thought, okay, we are done for for good because whatever grain the crickets don't eat, the gulls will. And then they discovered that the gulls were not eating grain, they were eating crickets. And the gulls would gorge themselves on crickets, fly to the shores of the Great Salt Lake, regurgitate everything they had eaten, fly back, and feast on the crickets again. It took about 2 weeks of this kind of massive non-human intervention to rid the Salt Lake Valley of crickets and literally save the lives of those early pioneers.

So that is why they are called Mormon crickets because it was the Mormons who had the first real experience with them. What we need obviously now are more sea gulls, but in the absence of that, we will take the money.

Mr. HEFLEY. Do they still have the sea gulls coming in to do this?

Senator BENNETT. The sea gull is a protected bird in Utah. As I say, it is the State bird. And it is illegal for you to shoot a sea gull in Utah. But, no, we do not have the herds of sea gulls. There are still sea gulls around Great Salt Lake, around other water bodies, but given the rise of cities and other population centers, the flocks of sea gulls are not as huge as they once were.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mrs. Christensen?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any questions of the Senator. I just want to welcome you. It is always

great to have one of our colleagues from the other side of the Capitol here.

And as I said in my opening statement, given the amount of federally owned land in Utah, we agree that the Federal Government should make sure that the funding is adequate to assist in this problem that has been so devastating to the ranchers and farmers.

Senator BENNETT. Thank you very much. I appreciate your concern, and thank you for your welcome.

Mr. HEFLEY. Does the Committee have any additional questions? Mr. Gilchrest?

Mr. GILCHREST. Senator, you just relayed to us a fascinating story, especially about the gulls showing up. I would assume that this Mormon cricket is indigenous to that area of the West, has been around for eons of time. But I also assume that the gull that showed up in that historical story you relayed to us is also indigenous to that region of the West. I ask the question because I live on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. If you go back less than 20 years, we didn't have any osprey, and we basically didn't have any bald eagles. We also lost the Baltimore oriole—it just never showed up anymore because it lost its habitat—and a number of other near-tropical birds.

Certainly what we have done in the last decade or two was to re-establish their habitat. Now we have not swarms of osprey, but wherever you go, you can see osprey. The bald eagle population has just mushroomed in the area, and the Baltimore orioles are coming back and so on.

Now, I recognize that it is important for us to establish appropriations to deal with this issue as fast as we can. Is there any understanding or perspective or movement to bring back that natural gull population? And if you did, could it come back in any numbers to be effective to this cricket?

Senator BENNETT. I am going beyond my area of expertise, but what understanding I have of it, the gulls are around the Great Salt Lake, which is a body of salt water. And the original infestation of crickets that I have described that the gulls intervened on and saved the lives of the early Mormon pioneers took place in the Salt Lake Valley, which is relatively close to the Great Salt Lake and the gull's natural habitat. The infestation of crickets that we are talking about now is in other places, so that we can't really enlist the gulls.

Yes, the population of sea gulls in Utah is still quite large. Many a motorist complains a little about finding a reminder of the presence of sea gulls overhead on his car in the morning. But we do what we can to see to it that that habitat is preserved.

As I say, the experience is part of our State lore, and the California gull is the Utah State bird and is honored and protected. So we don't take lightly the question of hanging onto the habitat for the gull.

Mr. GILCHREST. Thank you, Senator.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HEFLEY. Further questions? Yes?

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, Senator, this is more of a comment than a question. I have eaten grasshoppers, but they were

chocolate-covered. So if you do try a Mormon cricket, I suggest really premium chocolate.

Senator BENNETT. It would take quite a quantity to tempt me.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. But Minnesota, where I come from, even though I am from the Twin Cities area, we are not a very large State. We are very, very interdependent on mining, our Twin Cities industries, and our farming industry. And I served on the Resources Agricultural Finance Committee for a while, and we dealt with many infestations for our wheat farmers in the North Dakota-Minnesota Red River Valley. And I hope that we can come up with a multifaceted solution, one to take care of your short-term needs now, but also one that will address long-term environmental sustainability needs in the future.

I learn something new every day being on this Committee, Mr. Chair, and I look forward to learning more how to help my fellow States, and that research will in turn help my State in the future.

Senator BENNETT. Thank you very much. We would invite you to come to Utah and get a flavor of the environmental efforts that are going on out there. Many times we don't get credit for it outside our own borders among people who don't understand the unique circumstance that we face.

Mr. HEFLEY. Senator Bennett, thank you for your testimony, and before you arrived, we did make it permissible for you to sit at the dais if you would like to. If you have time, we would be glad for you to participate in the hearing. If you don't have time, we thank you for coming over.

Senator BENNETT. Thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Chairman, and normally I would accept your invitation. I now have to go make a quorum in order to confirm some of President Bush's nominees. That is our principal role in the minority these days, to make a quorum.

Mr. HEFLEY. You better get over there and do that, then.

Senator BENNETT. Thank you.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. HEFLEY. The second panel will be composed of Nina Rose Hatfield, who is Acting Director of the Bureau of Land Management for the Department of Interior; Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for the USDA; Mr. Cary Peterson, Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, the State of Utah; the Honorable Michael Anderson, who is the mayor of Oak City, Utah; and Darrell Johnson, who is a rancher, Tooele County, State of Utah.

And, Commissioner, I understand you would like to show us a video to start with. Is that correct?

Mr. PETERSON. Yes.

[Videotape played.]

Mr. PETERSON. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, these are news clips from national news networks who came to look at the crickets in our State this year. Not only U.S. news companies but the BBC and a German news company were very interested in the cricket population, as was the New York Times.

Mr. JOHNSON. I would like to say we live about 60 miles from Salt Lake, and we had a news crew come out, do a video filming,

and they were sending the tape to Germany because of the interest that was created on some of our national networks.

Mr. HEFLEY. Boy, that truly is a plague.

Ms. Hatfield, would you like to begin?

**STATEMENT OF NINA ROSE HATFIELD, ACTING DIRECTOR,  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE  
INTERIOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ms. HATFIELD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on the subject of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers and their effects on the public land. The Bureau of Land Management certainly looks forward to working with the Committee on this important issue.

BLM recognizes that the widespread outbreak of rangeland grasshoppers can affect millions of acres. This year in Nevada, we estimate that about 62,000 acres have been infested, while Utah estimates that last year over 1.5 million acres of land were infested.

In addition to denuding the land of grasses, forage, and shrubs, the crickets and grasshoppers can graze rangelands or fire rehabilitation projects all the way to the ground. This precludes the use of the land by other animals, endangers the success of our new rehabilitation projects, and paves the way for additional invasive species.

I have a couple of pictures here that will demonstrate the size of some of the infestation. This particular picture was taken in Idaho, and then here is an example of how the grasshoppers and crickets can actually eat the vegetation all the way to the ground.

Now, while we are certainly concerned about the impact of the Mormon crickets and grasshoppers on the public lands themselves, we are equally troubled by the fact that the crickets and the grasshoppers do traverse the public lands and impact privately owned croplands and lawns. We have the mayor of Oak City here, but these are some photographs taken in Oak City where you can see the heavy infestation of the crickets right on the shrubs and around the homes in Oak City.

Now, over the last 15 years, BLM has worked with our partners, including the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, to control both Mormon crickets and grasshoppers. And our partnership with APHIS is certainly critical to the Federal approach to try to control the cricket and grasshopper infestation.

Our recent emphasis has been on treating public lands that are adjacent to private croplands or rangelands so that we might be a better neighbor. Last year, Congress appropriated a supplemental \$1.5 million to BLM to address this project. And over the last 2 years, we have spent about \$685,000 in planning and surveying and trying to respond to emergency outbreaks. But certainly, as has been noted earlier, to be effective these control treatments require timeliness. Treating too late in the life cycle is certainly not biologically effective. And so we on the Federal side have to be proactive in completing early egg counts, preparing the environmental assessments that are necessary before we do the treatments, and doing the treatments themselves.

In BLM, we are continuing to look at new products and new ways of using the products to assure a timely and affordable way of controlling the Mormon cricket and grasshopper. We certainly look forward to working with both our public and private partners and this Committee to try to bring this infestation into a level that can be considered to be controlled.

Mr. Chairman, that would conclude my opening remarks, and we would be glad to answer any questions. And I believe you have my prepared remarks for the record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hatfield follows:]

**Statement of Nina Rose Hatfield, Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior**

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I appreciate having the opportunity to appear before you on the subject of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers and their effects on public lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) welcomes Congressional interest on this issue and we look forward to working with the Committee's members on this important subject.

Mormon crickets and grasshoppers are members of the Class Insecta, Order Orthoptera, which contains several hundred species, although only about 35 species are perennial pests. As we have seen this year, Mormon crickets and grasshoppers have the potential for sudden and explosive population increases, which can be so extreme that all vegetation is consumed. The economic effects of extreme infestations affect us all, whether we live on a farm or ranch, in the suburbs, or in the city. Severe infestations threaten the productivity of rangelands, wildlife habitat, and adjacent agricultural land. When outbreaks occur they can also pose health hazards to both humans and grazing animals.

Consider the following effects of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers on various regions of the country:

- The Nevada Department of Agriculture is preparing to make an "Emergency Declaration" as a result of the Mormon cricket infestation. The state will be using Carbaryl bait as needed to keep these insects away from private residences and off of public roads and highways, as a matter of private property protection and public safety. It estimates that 62,000 acres are infested, including over 17,000 acres of BLM-managed lands.
- The Utah Department of Agriculture estimated that in the year 2000, there were over 1.5 million acres of public and private lands infested with Mormon crickets and grasshoppers. During 2001, in Oak City, children have been afraid to go outside because infestations of Mormon crickets have numbered as high as 400-500 in some locations, such as on garage walls and crawling up the sides of homes and across lawns. Some Mormon crickets have died in the city's water supply, thereby making it a health and safety concern to local residents, because of pathogens that these insects can carry. As a result of the severity and impacts of these pests, Governor Leavitt has recently declared the Mormon cricket infestation to be an Agricultural Emergency-the third in the past three years.
- Thus far during 2001, the Utah Department of Agriculture estimates that grasshoppers in Utah have infested an estimated 600,000 acres across 24 counties. Grasshoppers have also grazed several of BLM's fire rehabilitation project sites to the point where they are unusable by ranchers. BLM is considering replanting these fire rehabilitation projects. The cost of doing so is estimated at \$50.00 per acre.

A few examples that illustrate the harmful impacts of Mormon cricket and grasshopper infestations on public lands include:

- Economic effects: Mormon crickets and grasshoppers can diminish yields by 25 to 40 percent on range and croplands. The Utah Department of Agriculture also estimates that as of June, 2001, the agricultural losses from Mormon crickets and grasshoppers in Utah have been estimated at over \$25 million.
- Native plant communities: Mormon crickets, grasshoppers, and drought often cause additional stress to native plant communities. Noxious weeds may increase in numbers because of the competitive advantage they are given due to the preferential grazing of native plants by these pests.
- Wildlife habitat: Even while functioning as a prey base for some species such as sea gulls, large infestations of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers can have a dramatic impact on the plants that grazing animals eat. These pests can dev-

astate the habitat of wildlife species including rabbits, deer, elk, and wild horses.

- Ecosystem function: Where the local impacts of the Mormon cricket and grasshopper infestations are large, the stage is set for invasive plants such as cheatgrass or knapweeds to increase their hold on the ecosystem.

To be fully successful in the fight against Mormon crickets and grasshoppers, any effort must bring together a complex group of stakeholders that includes government agencies, private landowners, and industry. BLM has a very good working relationship with State Departments of Agriculture and our sister federal agencies such as the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

To cite several examples of such cooperation:

- In the BLM Carson City and Winnemucca Field Offices, personnel are processing Pesticide Use Proposals that would allow treatment by private citizens of Mormon cricket bands on public lands adjacent to private lands at risk.
- The BLM's Spokane, Washington District has cooperated with APHIS, on successfully detecting and controlling Mormon cricket egg beds, resulting in a significant reduction in the cricket population.

In an effort to combat the spread of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers on BLM and adjacent private lands, the BLM spent over \$685,000 during 1999 and 2000 for planning, surveying and responding to emergency outbreaks.

Available resources for this effort in 2001 have been directed toward the following two areas:

- Early Detection - In Nevada and Idaho, BLM has joined with State Departments of Agriculture and APHIS in pre-season inventories.
- Control Treatments - BLM has supplied the products necessary for treatment, where and when environmental constraints have been met in Idaho, Nevada and Utah.

The BLM is working with other federal, state, local, and tribal governments and with private landowners to help treat and, when possible, manage serious infestations of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers. Future generations of Americans deserve to inherit ecologically healthy and productive public lands, not vast landscapes denuded and infested with Mormon crickets and grasshoppers that make the public and private lands unfit for people, livestock, and wildlife. We must be committed to developing partnerships to address the infestation of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers so that the spread of these pests can be prevented or controlled. For that reason, we welcome the increasing awareness and understanding of this problem by legislators at the national level.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.  
Dr. Dunkle?

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD DUNKLE, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR PLANT PROTECTION AND QUARANTINE, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C., ACCOMPANIED BY CHRISTOPHER PYRON, DEPUTY REGIONAL FORESTER, INTERMOUNTAIN REGION, U.S. FOREST SERVICE**

Mr. DUNKLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Dr. Richard Dunkle, and I am the Deputy Administrator for Plant Protection and Quarantine of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service with the United States Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, focusing on the history of the activities that USDA has conducted for Mormon crickets and other grasshoppers in the Great Basin, and also our efforts to combat current and future grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks in this area. Accompanying me today is Mr. Christopher Pyron, Deputy Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service as well.

Grasshoppers and Mormon crickets have caused widespread devastation throughout the Great Basin. Although several other statements have included these figures, let me do so again. In Utah alone, Mormon crickets and grasshoppers have infested more than 1.5 million acres and an estimated \$25 million in crop damage may occur. In fact, Mormon crickets can feed on more than 400 species of plants, and a single Mormon cricket can consume an amount of rangeland forage equal to 38 pounds of dry weight per acre.

Throughout the Western United States, there is excellent cooperation between the USDA, other Federal agencies, State agencies, local governments, and private landowners in combating Mormon cricket and grasshopper outbreaks. This year, stressed financial resources have been used to their fullest extent. The ominous fact is that each female Mormon cricket can lay about 86 eggs in the round and, if natural conditions favor hatching next spring when treatment would be most effective, the Mormon cricket outbreaks in 2002 could be even more widespread, severe, and destructive.

During the mid-1980's, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which we call APHIS, took a lead role in monitoring and suppressing grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. In 1986, Congress, in response to destructive grasshopper outbreaks, appropriated \$18 million to APHIS for a grasshopper suppression program. In addition, Congress created no-year funding for continued grasshopper suppression programs by stipulating that \$16 million remain available until expended. This funding mechanism provided APHIS with immediate access to resources for suppressing economically significant grasshopper populations. From 1987 through 1992, Congress appropriated \$5 million annually for the no-year grasshopper reserve fund.

As the lead Federal agency, APHIS conducted population surveys, implemented cooperative programs with States and other cooperating organizations, prepared cost-share agreements and escrow accounts, recruited and trained seasonal staff, and obtained sufficient equipment and materials, such as vehicles, pesticides, and pesticide storage facilities. In addition, APHIS provided the essential environmental assessment documentation for the suppression program.

In 1990, APHIS received an emergency supplemental appropriation of \$6.8 million to cooperate with States and individuals to suppress grasshoppers on CRP—Conservation Reserve Program—and other lands. The grasshopper populations during this time were kept under control, so the no-year grasshopper reserve exceeded \$16 million in 1993.

Since 1994, no new appropriations have been provided for the grasshopper and Mormon cricket program. Since then, all grasshopper-related activities, including survey and suppression, have been funded from the accumulated no-year reserve, which was exhausted in fiscal year 1999, and additional funds from the appropriated reserve for contingencies.

In an attempt to conserve the use of funds, APHIS has conducted only crop protection activities since 1995. The goal of crop protection programs is to protect high-value crops by treating strips of Federal rangelands where these lands border the crop. Such pro-

grams provide short-term, immediate suppression of grasshopper populations migrating from Federal lands onto cropland. Crop protection programs do not include any long-term rangeland management. However, since 1999, only the APHIS contingency fund, which must also cover other emergencies in APHIS, has been available to cover grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression.

For example, in fiscal year 2000, the agency, using APHIS' contingency funds, prepared to conduct traditional surveys and earmarked funds for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression. However, the populations were not as high as projected, and most of the suppression dollars were returned to the contingency fund.

In fiscal year 2001, APHIS has taken \$300,000 from this fund to carry out grasshopper and Mormon cricket surveys and other program planning activities. However, due to other high-priority needs, no additional APHIS money will be available for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression. Accordingly, funding for suppression on public lands to protect rangeland will require resources from the responsible Federal land management agencies, such as BLM, Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The new Plant Protection Act requires the Secretary of Agriculture to pay 100 percent of the cost of grasshopper or Mormon cricket control on Federal lands to protect rangeland out of funds specifically appropriated for grasshopper control or transferred from the Department of the Interior under section 417 of the act. Our current policy is that all program costs, including surveys, site-specific environment assessments, and treatments, will be paid by the Federal land management agency. As a result, Federal land management agencies will be required to do the site-specific project level work, including environmental assessments that would tier to the programmatic EIS currently being prepared by APHIS. I should note that current Forest Service policy requires that the Forest Service personnel participate in the development of all pesticide-use plans and direct those activities on National Forest System lands.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I will be happy to take any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dunkle follows:]

**Statement of Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator for Plant Protection and Quarantine, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the history of the activities that USDA has conducted for Mormon crickets and other grasshoppers in the Great Basin, and our efforts to combat current and future grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks in this area. Accompanying me today is Christopher Pyron, Deputy Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service.

Grasshoppers and Mormon crickets have caused widespread devastation throughout the Great Basin. In Utah alone, Mormon crickets and grasshoppers have infested more than 1.5 million acres and an estimated \$25 million in crop damage may occur. In fact, Mormon crickets can feed on more than 400 species of plants, and a single Mormon cricket can consume an amount of rangeland forage equal to 38 pounds dry weight per acre.

Throughout the western United States, there is excellent cooperation between USDA, other Federal agencies, State agencies, local governments, and private landowners in combating Mormon cricket and grasshopper outbreaks. This year, stressed financial resources have been used to their fullest extent. The ominous fact

is that each female Mormon cricket can lay about 86 eggs in the ground, and, if natural conditions favor hatching next spring when treatment would be most effective, the Mormon cricket outbreaks in 2002 could be even more widespread, severe, and destructive.

During the mid-1980's, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) took a lead role in monitoring and suppressing grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. In 1986, Congress, in response to destructive grasshopper outbreaks, appropriated \$18 million to APHIS for a grasshopper suppression program. In addition, Congress created no-year funding for continued grasshopper suppression programs by stipulating that \$16 million remain available until expended. This funding mechanism provided APHIS with immediate access to resources for suppressing economically significant grasshopper populations. From 1987-1992, Congress appropriated \$5 million annually for the no-year grasshopper reserve fund.

As the lead Federal agency, APHIS conducted population surveys, implemented cooperative programs with States and other cooperating organizations, prepared cost-share agreements and escrow accounts, recruited and trained seasonal staff, and obtained sufficient equipment and materials, such as vehicles, pesticides, and pesticide storage facilities. In addition, APHIS provided the essential environmental assessment documentation for the suppression program.

In 1990, APHIS received an emergency supplemental appropriation of \$6.8 million to cooperate with States and individuals to suppress grasshoppers on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and other lands. The grasshopper populations during this time were kept under control, so the no-year grasshopper reserve exceeded \$16.5 million in 1993.

Since 1994, no new appropriations have been provided for the grasshopper and Mormon cricket program. Since then, all grasshopper related activities, including survey and suppression, have been funded from the accumulated no-year reserve, which was exhausted in fiscal year 1999, and additional funds from the appropriated reserve for contingencies.

In an attempt to conserve the use of funds, APHIS has conducted only crop protection activities since 1995. The goal of crop protection programs is to protect high-value crops by treating strips of Federal range lands where these lands border the crop. Such programs provide short-term, immediate suppression of grasshopper populations migrating from Federal lands onto cropland. Crop protection programs do not include any long-term rangeland management. However, since 1999, only the APHIS contingency fund, which must also cover other emergencies in APHIS, has been available to cover grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression.

For example, in fiscal year 2000, the Agency, using APHIS' contingency funds, prepared to conduct traditional surveys and earmarked funds for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression programs. However, the populations were not as high as projected and most of the suppression dollars were returned to APHIS' contingency fund at the end of the fiscal year.

In fiscal year 2001, APHIS has taken \$300,000 from the contingency fund to carry out grasshopper and Mormon cricket surveys and other program planning activities. However, due to other high priority needs, no additional APHIS money will be available for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression. Accordingly, funding for suppression on public lands to protect rangeland will require resources from the responsible Federal land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Plant Protection Act requires the Secretary of Agriculture to pay 100 percent of the cost of grasshopper or Mormon cricket control on Federal lands to protect rangeland out of funds specifically appropriated for grasshopper control or transferred from the Department of the Interior under section 417 of the Act. Current APHIS policy is that all program costs, including surveys, site specific environmental assessments, and treatments, will be paid by the Federal land management agency. As a result, Federal land management agencies, such as the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and USDA's Forest Service, would be required to do site specific project level work, including environmental assessments that would tier to the programmatic EIS currently being prepared by APHIS. I should note that current Forest Service policy requires that Forest Service personnel participate in the development of all pesticide-use plans and direct those activities on National Forest System lands.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to take any questions that you may have.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much. Let me just ask a real quick question. Does a grasshopper plague and a cricket plague tend to go together?

Mr. DUNKLE. From what I understand, normally when we have Mormon cricket outbreaks, oftentimes there are also grasshopper outbreaks. And the weather conditions seem to favor both.

Mr. HEFLEY. I see.

Mr. Peterson?

**STATEMENT OF CARY G. PETERSON, COMMISSIONER, UTAH  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD, STATE OF  
UTAH, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to discuss this issue with you. I am Cary Peterson, Utah's Commissioner of Agriculture and Food. My family and I have been in the livestock and farming business all of our lives, into the fourth generation.

I am here on behalf of the people of Utah to request that Congress appropriately fund USDA APHIS and their insect control program. That program exhausted its funds in 1999, and as a result, there is very little or ineffective program in effect today to take care of the millions of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers from migrating from their hatching grounds, primarily on Federal grounds, onto private croplands and populated areas.

Public health and safety is now threatened, as subsequent speakers will talk about. Governor Mike Leavitt formed a subcabinet task force made up of our department, Health, Environment, and Transparency to investigate the human health and safety risks of this infestation.

The infestation triggered an emergency declaration June 4th of 2001 by our Governor. Following that action, with the authority of Utah law, I activated a Decision and Action Committee comprised of Federal, State, local, and private interests to address the infestation.

I draw your attention today, members of the Committee, to U.S. Code, Title 7, Section 148f paragraph (d). It established a framework for the transfer of funds to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for Mormon cricket and grasshopper control. According to the provisions of the act, requested by the affected State, I quote, "...the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately treat Federal, State or private lands that are infested by grasshoppers or Mormon crickets at levels of economic infestation..." And that is a level of eight or more per square yard. I have included the text of the entire section of that code for your information.

Currently, there are more than 1.5 million acres infested with crickets and grasshoppers in the State of Utah. That represents 2,400 square miles, and that is more than the size of the State of Delaware. Estimated crop damage this year will exceed \$25 million.

Without a consistent and systematic approach to the problem, we cannot control this. I draw your attention to the large photographs that we have here and that are in the Committee room. In many areas, there are acres upon acres, mile upon mile, where the density is more than 40 or 50 crickets per square yard.

The State Department of Transportation of the State of Utah acknowledges that this is a safety health hazard on our highways.

The insects also destroy valuable forage which is available for wildlife and our livestock operations in the State of Utah.

The State Legislature of Utah has allocated additional funds to control State and private land infestations. However, three out of every four acres in Utah are federally owned and managed. Most of the infestation is on Federal lands or the hatching occurs. As the lands dry up after the spring, the migration is to the croplands, to the private lands, and to our communities.

Our State's Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee heard powerful testimony just 2 weeks ago regarding the human health and safety issues of the types of infestations we are seeing, as well as the economic losses. The Committee asked our attorney general to look at recouping some of the costs in actions against the U.S. Government. That is not our preferred choice.

Mr. Chairman, I recommend the following to Congress: that funds for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's APHIS and their insect control program be appropriated at the level of \$8.7 million for 2002. Action was taken in the Senate this week that would give that agency \$4 million. I think that is a one-time contingency fund. Of that \$8.7 million, \$3.7 million would be an ongoing base for infrastructure and operating expenses, and \$5 million would go into a no-year fund for emergencies in Western States for APHIS to do immediate insect assessment and control and for the completion of the environmental assessments. The age-old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth not a pound but a ton of cure. If we take care of these infestations at the hatching beds, we prevent that \$25 million of devastating economic impact.

I thank you very much for this opportunity and would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

**Statement of Cary G. Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food**

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee Mr. Chairman.

I am Cary Peterson, the State of Utah's Commissioner of Agriculture and Food.

My family and I have been in the cattle business all our lives, and I am a former Utah legislator.

I am here on behalf of the people of Utah to request that Congress appropriately fund USDA APHIS's insect control program.

That program exhausted its funds in 1999, and as a result there is no program in place to prevent the millions of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers from migrating from their hatching grounds on federal land onto valuable croplands and into populated areas.

Public health and safety are now threatened, as the previous witnesses have explained. Utah Governor Michael Leavitt formed a subcabinet-level Task Force of State Health, Environment and Transportation Departments to investigate the health and human safety risks of this infestation.

The need for your help is great.

The infestation triggered a declaration of Agricultural Emergency on June 4th, 2001, by Governor Leavitt. Following that action—and with the authority of Utah law—(4-35-3 UCA) I activated a Decision and Action Committee comprised of federal, state, local, and private interests to address the infestation.

I draw your attention to U.S. Code, Title 7, Section 148f paragraph (d). It establishes a framework for the transfer of funds to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for Mormon cricket and grasshopper control.

According to a provision of that act; after receiving a request by an affected state,

“...the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately treat Federal, State or private lands that are infested by grasshoppers or Mormon crickets at levels of economic infestation...”

I have included the text of that entire section in the packet I gave you.

We’ve had crickets and grasshopper infestations in the past, but not to this extreme.

Currently there are more than 1.5 million acres infested with crickets and grasshoppers. That represents nearly 2,400 square miles. That’s larger than the state of Delaware. We estimate that crop damage this year will approach \$25 million in Utah alone.

Without consistent and systematic treatment, the problem cannot be controlled.

I draw your attention to these large photographs we have here. At times our highways are thick with crickets, posing a traction problem for vehicles. In many areas there are acre-upon-acre—mile-upon-mile—where there are 40 to 50 crickets or grasshoppers per square yard.

Our State Department of Transportation acknowledges the potential safety hazard associated with the high number of crickets and grasshoppers on our roads.

The insects also destroy valuable forage used by wildlife as well as livestock.

The Utah Legislature has allocated additional funding to our department for insect control on State and private lands. But 3 out of every 4 acres in Utah are federally owned. And most of the insects hatch on federal land.

Our State’s Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee heard powerful testimony recently regarding the health and human safety aspects of the infestations, as well as the economic losses.

The committee instructed our Attorney General’s office to investigate any legal action against the USDA to recoup losses caused by the insects.

Mr. Chairman, I recommend the following: That congress fund the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s insect control program (APHIS) at \$8.7 million for fiscal year 2002. Of that figure, \$3.7 million would be an on-going base for infrastructure and annual operating expenses. And \$5 million would go into a “no-year” fund for emergencies for Western states.

I also seek \$100,000 from fiscal year 2001 funds for each of the Utah offices of the BLM, USFS and USDA–AHPHIS. These funds would be used immediately for insect assessment and control as well as for the completion of environmental assessments. The old adage, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” fits well here.

For every dollar we spend in prevention, we save American tax payers many times that amount in federal disaster payments to farmers and ranchers.

I would like to conclude by playing a video-tape of the crickets in our state. This video was taken by news crews for the NBC Today Show and for ABC’s World News Tonight programs.

Since our outbreak several weeks ago, we have received world-wide attention. Including; The BBC in London, England; GMTV in London, England; The German News Service; German Television; as well as the New York Times.

Public awareness of this issue is very high in Utah, and we look to you for leadership in finding a solution.

Thank you for your time.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Attachments:

- USDA–APHIS Grasshopper Infestation Acreage
- USDA–APHIS Mormon Cricket Infestation Acreage
- State of Utah Synopsis of insect infestation year 1997–2000
- U.S. Code Title 7 Sec. 148f

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[Attachments to Mr. Peterson’s statement follow:]

**APHIS:USDA**APHIS:USDA  
1860 W. Alexander St.  
Suite B  
W. Valley, UT 84159Phone: (801) 975-3310  
FAX: (801) 975-3313  
email: G.C.Abbott@usda.gov

## UTAH FOUR YEAR GRASSHOPPER MORMON CRICKET SURVEY

COUNTY	GRASSHOPPER INFESTED ACERAGE			
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Beaver	500	50,000	50,000	11,000
Box Elder		100,000	100,000	55,000
Cache				19,000
Carbon		5,000	1,000	12,300
Daggett		1,000		600
Davis		10,000	10,000	
Duchesne		5,000	5,000	1,300
Emery			2,500	3,500
Garfield	3,000			6,800
Iron	11,000	10,000	10,000	7,000
Juab		15,000	20,000	33,000
Kane		15,000	15,000	10,300
Millard	800	40,000	50,000	52,500
Morgan		2,000	2,000	19,000
Piute				21,000
Sanpete	800	25,000	150,000	157,000
San Juan				23,000
Sevier		5,000	5,000	58,000
Summit				10,000
Tooele	4,500	30,000	55,000	5,700
Utah	1,500	3,000	5,000	29,000
Uintah		5,000	5,000	36,000
Wasatch				3,000
Wayne				2,000
Weber				17,000
Washington		1,000	5,000	
Total	22,100	322,000	490,500	593,000

**APHIS-USDA**

APHIS-USDA  
 1860 W. Alexander St.  
 Suite B  
 W. Valley, UT 84199

Phone: (801) 975-3310  
 FAX: (801) 975-3313  
 email: G.C.Abbott@usda.gov

## MORMON CRICKET

COUNTY	INFESTED ACERAGE			
	1997	1998	1999	2000
Beaver				6,000
Juab		5,000	268,000	116,000
Millard	300	3,000	50,000	190,000
Sanpete			3,000	
San Juan	400	1,000	1,000	
Sevier	180	800	1,000	
Tooele		490,000	430,000	346,000
Utah		10,000	5,000	500
Uintah	300			
Total	1,180	509,800	758,000	658,500



# State of Utah

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FOOD

**Michael O. Leavitt**  
Governor  
**Cary G. Peterson**  
Commissioner  
**Van Burgeess**  
Deputy Commissioner

350 North Redwood Road  
P.O. Box 146500  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-6500  
(801) 538-7100  
(801) 538-7126 FAX

### SYNOPSIS OF RANGELAND GRASSHOPPER AND MORMON CRICKET POPULATIONS FOR YEARS 1997-2000

#### GRASSHOPPER

##### 1997

Surveys in 1997 estimated grasshopper infested acreage at 22,100 for the State of Utah. Farms and rangeland in Iron County were hardest hit with infestations. 11,000 acres were estimated with 8+ grasshoppers per square yard. Tooele County ranked second in the state for acres infested with 4,500 which would be comparatively small in relation to what would happen in the next two years. The south west corner of the state (Iron County), was the geographic center for 1997 grasshopper infestations. All infestations in 1997 occurred in the western half of the state.

##### 1998

Statewide grasshopper infestations exploded from 22,100 acres in 1997, to 322,000 acres in 1998. The population increased statewide with four large area infestations in the western half of the state. Boxelder County, which had no infestation in 1997, was the hardest hit with 100,000 acres infested in 1998. The infested acreage for Beaver County in 1998 was 50,000. This was a dramatic increase from the previous year that was estimated at 500 acres. Tooele County had 30,000 acres infested in 1998 an increase of 25,500 acres from the previous year. Millard County had a significant increase from 800 acres in 1997 to 40,000 acres in 1998. Overall 1998 marked the beginning of a trend in which statewide grasshopper infestations would continue to increase, subsequently causing economic damage to ranchers and growers in the State of Utah.

##### 1999

Grasshopper infestations in 1999 had a statewide increase of 168,500 acres. Total infested acres for Utah in 1999 were 490,500. Sanpete County had the largest increase in infested acres from 25,000 in 1998 to 150,000 acres in 1999. Tooele County residents had to deal with an increase of 25,000 acres infested in 1999 that particularly affected new residential developments on historic farmland. Cattle operations were also greatly affected in the Skull Valley area. The large area infestations generally occurred in the western half of the state, With the epicenter occurring in the Sanpete County area.

With increased grasshopper populations, Utah residents began to request assistance from Federal, State, and County Governments. Commissioner Cary Peterson formed the Utah Grasshopper Mormon Cricket Decision and Action Committee under the State of Utah Emergency Insect Act, to find ways to deal with the increasing impact of the grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations.

##### 2000

In 2000, statewide grasshopper infestations were at a four year high with 593,000 acres infested. The geographic epicenter occurring in a four county area comprised of Juab, Millard, Sanpete, and Sevier Counties. Infestation totals for this area were 301,000 acres. For the second year in a row Sanpete County residents were the hardest hit with approximately 150,000 acres infested in FY2000. This was an increase of approximately 100,000 grasshopper infested acres statewide from the previous year. Utah growers and ranchers suffered significant crop damage, due to the loss of forage grasses on rangeland.

Renee Matsuura  
Adm. Services

Michael R. Marshall  
Animal Industry

David H. Clark  
Chemistry Labs

Randy Parker  
Marketing/Conservation

G. Richard Wilson  
Plant Industry

Kyle Stephens  
Regulatory Services

## TITLE 7--AGRICULTURE

## CHAPTER 7--INSECT PESTS GENERALLY

## Sec. 148f. Control of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets on Federal lands

(a) Authority of Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a program to control grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets on all Federal lands.

(b) Funds for lands subject to jurisdiction of Federal Government or Federal lands subject to jurisdiction of Secretary of the Interior; prompt requests for transferred funds and for replenishing appropriations

(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary of Agriculture shall expend or transfer, and upon request, the Secretary of the Interior shall transfer to the Secretary of Agriculture, from any no-year appropriations, funds for the prevention, suppression, and control of actual or potential grasshopper and Mormon Cricket outbreaks on lands under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

(2) (A) Appropriated funds made available to the Secretary of the Interior shall be available for the payment of obligations incurred on Federal lands subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

(B) Funds transferred pursuant to this paragraph shall be requested as promptly as possible by the Secretary of Agriculture.

(C) Funds transferred pursuant to this section shall be replenished by supplemental or regular appropriations which shall be requested as promptly as possible.

(c) Exhaustion of contingency grasshopper emergency funds before availability of transferred funds for control of outbreaks on Federal lands subject to jurisdiction of Secretary of the Interior

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), from any funds made available to the Department of the Interior until expended, moneys shall be made available for the transfer by the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture for the prevention, suppression, and control of grasshoppers and Mormon Cricket outbreaks on Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) No funds shall be made available under this authority, until contingency funds specifically available to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for grasshopper emergencies have been exhausted.

(d) Time for treatment of lands dependent on determination of economic damage

On request of the administering agency or the Department of Agriculture of an affected State, the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately treat Federal, State, or private lands that are infested by grasshoppers or Mormon Crickets at levels of economic infestation, unless the Secretary determines that delaying treatment will optimize biological control and not cause greater economic damage to adjacent landowners.

(e) Amount of payments for costs of control on Federal, State, and private lands; interrelated participation efforts

The Secretary of Agriculture shall--

(1) pay out of appropriated funds made available to the Secretary or transferred to the Secretary by the Secretary of the Interior--100 percent of the cost of grasshopper or Mormon Cricket control on Federal lands;

(2) pay out of appropriated funds made available to the Secretary--

(A) 50 percent of the cost of such control on State lands;  
and

(B) 33.3 percent of the cost of such control on private rangelands; and

(3) participate in prevention, control, or suppression programs for grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets in conjunction with other Federal, State and private prevention, control or suppression efforts.

(f) Funding of personnel training program

From appropriated funds made available or transferred by the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture for such purposes, the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide adequate funding for a program to train personnel to effectively accomplish the objective of this section.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XVII, Sec. 1773, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1658.)

of 2

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you, Commissioner.  
Mayor Anderson?

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. ANDERSON, MAYOR,  
OAK CITY, UTAH**

Mr. ANDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Michael J. Anderson. I am the mayor of the town of Oak City. Our population is roughly 750 people. We are located in western Millard County. I am employed at the Intermountain Power Plant, and I am also a dairyman by virtue of our family business. I appreciate you holding this meeting on our behalf.

Cricket and grasshopper damage in our area is hitting us economically and physically. To quote one of our citizens from town, she says, "Mormon crickets in Millard County have not only gotten into our town, but also into our houses and into our lives." They are severely impacting our everyday living and our quality of life. In our town, our children won't even dare go outside or sleep in their rooms for fear of the big, black creatures that are outside in the flowerbeds and the gardens and sidewalks, on the eaves of their house.

The situation also illustrated by the pictures before you, one of those pictures that BLM has showed you, those trees that they are climbing on comes from the houses on the outskirts of our town. You can see it looks like a beehive.

Our children and others have been so mentally traumatized by these creatures that they dominate almost everything we try to do. Nearby forest campgrounds are no place of refuge. They are all over the trees, the campgrounds, the roads. They are totally devastated. You have the spit, the feces from it, and everything else that comes with those creatures are all over the tables.

We recently had a religious girls camp up there, about 400 individuals, and it turned into a real nightmare for them. The leaders of the campground ended up crying, going into the trailers and crying, so they could go back out and be leaders over the girls. But they did stick it out, and we have to commend them for that.

For the first time, crickets and grasshoppers have become a public health threat. Just like us, many Western States border or are adjacent to Federal lands. We have had crickets in Forest Service lands in our area for years, but this is the first time that they have ever come into the town, and they come into town in waves, as you heard the testimony today. They just cover and eat everything ahead of them. They force people on the south and east ends of town to even go as far as burning their shade and fruit trees. Those trees that are in the pictures were burned in an effort for these people to try and keep these things from crossing into their property.

We have also got a creek down the south side of town, which you would think would slow them down. But they just climb up the willows until their sheer weight bends the willows down, and they crawl over each other and cross this water and continue into town.

Our town recently finished a drinking water system upgrade with sealed collection boxes on nearby Forest Service land. After the upgrade, our water superintendent and I inspected the water collection boxes at the spring head. To our amazement, we found handfuls of dead and rotting crickets inside the collection boxes. Our townspeople were very concerned when they heard this, as you can imagine, without knowing what diseases these creatures carry

or, who knows, what we are exposed to. It kind of leaves us hanging out there. This newly discovered public health threat has prompted our Governor to appoint a task force to find out and help develop a remedy for this. You can imagine how our citizens feel about the Federal Government not doing anything at all on this land to prevent these things from infesting our town.

Our water storage tanks have also been vented, and we are using the smallest screens possible. There is also a chlorination house, and all have been penetrated by the creatures. They climb up on the tanks in the afternoons to catch the last rays of sun, and if you look at our water tanks, it looks just like those trees in those pictures that you have before you.

Unless they are controlled in the adjacent Forest Service land where their egg-laying and hatching beds are, we have found nothing that can keep these creatures out of our facilities. As I said, our watershed is on Forest Service land, and under current Forest Service policy, there can be no insect control within 500 feet of the springs. Without control on the Forest Service land above that point—which was not done this year—how can we assure the safety and reliability of our water system when crickets and grasshoppers infest the hillsides and valleys of our watershed? We really have no alternative water source.

Officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture APHIS report that several Western States are experiencing heavy cricket and grasshopper damage this year, with the heaviest Utah infestation in over 60 years. Also, according to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, with the heavy egg-lay now underway, the prospect looms for an even heavier devastation next year, with these repulsive crickets and grasshoppers laying eggs right in our town. Only a severe winter would reduce the numbers by killing some of the eggs.

The State of Utah is doing all it can by cost-sharing with private agriculture landowners on bait and aerial spray where it can be legally used, but no assistance has been available within the borders of our town. As we contemplated next year's invasion, with eggs laid right at our doorsteps, we feel like the little Dutch boy. We are holding our finger in the dike while the dike is overflowing all around our head. It seems kind of pointless.

We are here to appeal to this Committee to urge the Congress to provide the means for public land agencies to be better neighbors and use the proven, effective methods to control crickets and grasshoppers on Forest Service and BLM land.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Anderson follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Michael J. Anderson, Mayor, Oak City,  
Millard County, Utah**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Michael J. Anderson. I am the Mayor of Oak City, a town of approximately 850 residents in western Millard County, Utah. I am employed at the Intermountain Power Plant and I am also a Dairyman.

Thank you for holding this hearing. Cricket and grasshopper damage in our area is hitting us hard economically and physically. To quote a statement from one of our citizens, "Mormon crickets in Millard County have not only gotten into our town, but into our houses and into our lives". They are severely impacting our everyday living and our quality of life. In our town our children don't even dare to

go outside or sleep in their own rooms for fear of the big, black creatures they see all over their lawns, sidewalks, flowerbeds and gardens. The situation illustrated by the pictures before you and attached to my written statement, brings to mind biblical plagues. Our children and others have been so mentally traumatized by these creatures that they dominate almost everything we try to do. Nearby Forest service campgrounds are no place of refuge either. Campground tables and restrooms are covered with crickets, cricket feces and saliva from the crickets. A recent church girls camp became a miserable experience for 400 local girls due to the crickets. (Show crickets)

For the first time, crickets and grasshoppers have become a public health threat. Just like us, many western towns are surrounded by or are adjacent to federal lands. We have had crickets in Forest Service lands in our area for years, but this is the first year they have descended on our town in unbelievable waves, taking every almost living thing in their path, forcing people on the south and east sides of town to burn their shade and fruit trees in an unsuccessful effort to keep the creatures out of their homes and yards. A creek near town should have stopped them, but they just go up the willows until their weight bends them down and they cross over each other and move on into town.

Our town recently finished a drinking water system upgrade with sealed collection boxes in a nearby canyon on Forest Service land. After the upgrade, our Water Superintendent and I inspected the water collection boxes at the spring head. To our amazement we found handfuls of dead and rotting crickets in the water inside the collection boxes. Our townspeople are very concerned. What diseases do these creatures carry? What are our citizens exposed to? This newly discovered public health threat has prompted our Governor to appoint a task force to find out, and to help develop a remedy. Imagine how our citizens feel about the federal government's failure to control crickets on adjacent public lands!

Our water storage tanks have to be vented and we are using the smallest screens possible. There is also a chlorination house. All have been penetrated by the creatures. Unless they can be controlled on the adjacent Forest Service land where their egg-laying and hatching beds are, we have found nothing that can keep these creatures out of these facilities. As I said, our watershed is on Forest Service land. And under current Forest Service policy, there can be no insect control within 500 feet of the springs. Without control on the Forest Service land above that point (which was not done this year) how can we assure the safety and reliability of our water supply when crickets and grasshoppers infest the hillsides and valleys of our watershed? We really have no alternative to these water sources.

Officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture APHIS report that several western states are experiencing heavy cricket and grasshopper damage this year, with the heaviest Utah infestation of crickets in at least 60 years. According to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, with the heavy egg-lay now underway, the prospect looms of an even heavier devastation next year, with these repulsive crickets and grasshoppers laying eggs right in our town. Only a very severe winter would reduce the numbers by killing some of the eggs.

The State of Utah is doing all it can by cost-sharing with private agriculture land-owners on bait and aerial spray where it can be legally used but no such assistance has been available within the borders of our town. As we contemplate next year's invasion, with eggs laid right on our doorsteps, we feel like the little Dutch boy holding his finger in the dike while the dike is overflowing. Without control on adjacent public land, it is a losing battle. We are here to appeal to this committee to urge the congress to provide the means for public land agencies to be better neighbors and use the proven, effective methods to control crickets and grasshopper on Forest Service and BLM land.

Thank you for your consideration of our request

Attachments:

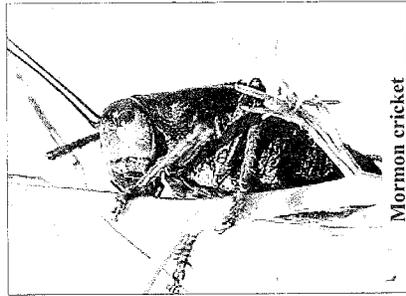
1. Photographs of typical cricket infestation in Oak City, Utah
2. Written statement by Mrs. Janet Lindquist, Oak City, Utah resident
3. Written statement by Bruce Lovell, former Oak City Mayor and Millard County Commissioner

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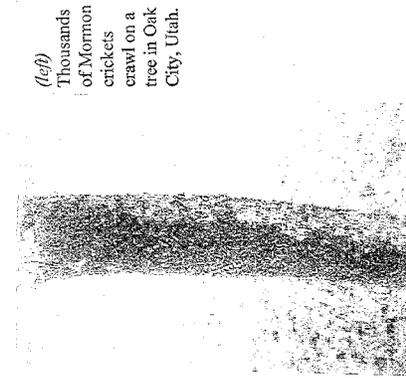
The attachments to Mr. Anderson's statement follow:



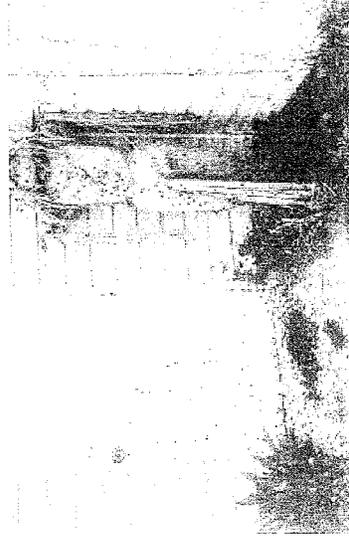
(right)  
Cricket  
feces on the  
patio of a  
home in  
Oak City,  
Utah.



**Mormon cricket**  
*Anabrus simplex*

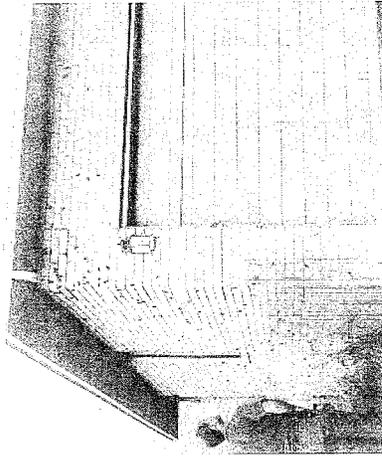


(left)  
Thousands  
of Mormon  
crickets  
crawl on a  
tree in Oak  
City, Utah.



"They're in  
our towns,  
in our  
houses  
and in our  
lives."

Testimony  
before Utah's  
Natural  
Resources  
and  
Agriculture  
Legislative  
Committee,  
June 26,  
2001.



**Written Statement by Mrs. Janet Lindquist, resident, Oak City, Utah  
Presented to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on  
National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands  
July 19, 2001**

---

Mormon Crickets in Millard County have not only gotten into our towns, but into our houses and into our lives. They are traveling in groups of a quarter mile long and one hundred and fifty yards deep, where you can't even throw a dime between them. They are coming out of the forests, coming into our towns and crawling up under our houses, on our roofs, on our eaves, when you go in the house, they drop on you and come in with you. If you walk out in the yard, of course you are going to step on them, you don't want to bring that into your home. Your kids can't play outside, you don't want to barbeque or picnic. The juices that they spit at this particular point in their lives are dripping down the side of the brick on my house. I went out yesterday, and I thought I could scrub it off, I couldn't even scrub it off with a bleach solution. So I'm stuck with that stain on there until I figure out what to do with it. Their fecal material is all over the place. It is worse than any I have seen

And there is another picture in here that shows that kind of matter all over my porch, that was 2 weeks ago when they were really bad. I can hose it off everyday, but it is really bad, all over the place. They crawl up in the trees and drop down onto you. The cost of bait at the beginning of the season is forty dollars, and I went to the two places in the county that sell bait, Steve Regan and IFA, and now it is between 60 and 72 dollars a bag. Now you are starting to penalize the people that are already victims that have the problems. When we start putting the bait out, because we are trying to take care of our property, we have a new problem, and I have chickens. And I am killing crickets, but I don't want to eat those eggs, because my chickens were eating those crickets. So not only are we not eating the eggs, but we're not sure if it is going to be safe to eat the chickens. So now what are we going to do with them.

The cow and horse troughs are getting so full of crickets that they have to scoop the crickets out, or else just leave the water running constantly so there is just an overflow to get rid of them. The crickets down there have been in the forest area now for many years, but why have they gotten so out of control? I think it is the lack of really cold winters. They come out of the mountains, and are laying eggs in our towns, so now they are going to start at our property next year. They go up to a mile a day, up to 50 miles in a season, and that is a very long way to travel. In our National Forest, I had talked to Mr. Robert Gardner, and he told me that he didn't realize that this was such a problem. But our county just had 400 girls and their leaders go up on Oak City Canyon, this last weekend, and you can't talk to one of them that didn't tell you what a horrible story it was. They paid 1200 dollars to rent those campgrounds, and they had to duct tape the ankles of their pants so that they could walk around in there. The crickets went up their pant legs and they fell out of the trees onto their clothing. They were so thick on the lavatory restroom walls that when the girls went to use the lavatory, they go clumps of crickets on them. Now you have people afraid to use the restrooms in the National Forest. The stuff they spit was all over the tables, the grills, and they were dropping out of the trees onto the food they were preparing. It was a pretty bad thing.

They said that they filled up three large lawn trash bags in an hour with the dead crickets they were killing. That is a lot of crickets. They were in their tents, you had women going in there bawling. They were up there for four days, and didn't come back because they were responsible for the group, girls that couldn't leave thought that this was the most horrible thing, you know, just crying their eyes out everyday. And the Forest Service should have warned us that that was going on up there. They knew there were crickets, everyone in our county knows there are crickets. They don't realize how bad it is up Oak Creek Canyon. I went up Oak Creek Canyon last night with my family, and we put on gloves and as soon as I saw the river of these things crawling, we stopped the car and got out with this jar in the middle of us, and we picked them up one by one and stuck them in this jar, and we filled it up in a couple of minutes, no time at all. But our gloves were dripping with the juices that they spit. It is amazing how much they can spit at this time in their lives. You know, they travel fast, and they travel far, and I shutter to think what will happen when they get to these warmer climates, where they don't get winters cold enough to kill them.

Rep. Hansen

Dear Jim

I am writing you concerning the cricket situation. People here in Oak City. I have lived here all my life - 74 years. And this is the first year that I have seen crickets in town and I live on the south edge of the city. Our lawn was literally jumping with the black cutters - solid mass.

I want to tell you of an experience I had with one - I keep a couple mouse traps set just in case a mouse gets in the house. One night my wife said - "you better check your traps I smell a dead mouse." In checking I found a cricket caught in one of the traps - I couldn't believe my eyes - a cricket big enough to set off a mouse trap - I had to take it outside to get it out. Stink - it was worse than any mouse I had ever smelled.

The problem we have is that the forest service will do nothing to kill them or stop their migration - we should see them - US Government for doing nothing while we suffer crop loss - endure health hazards & loss of property - we have a white brick home and you should see the stains on the walls from them hanging on at night & doing their thing.

I have been able to get the poison bait at the cut rate price of 17.50 - 50# bag. I have spent \$140.00 but my neighbors not being farmers must pay the 50.00 bag - with the eggs being laid in town the infestation will be much greater next year. The forest service & BLM must be prepared to act and the help is needed to assist the home owners.

I used to work for Frank Wellman & have attended your fund raisers in SLC & Ogden. We appreciate your help with the incoming laws. Now we need your help with the crickets. Don't let us down -  
Bruce Howell former mayor of Oak City  
& Millard Co Commissioner

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.  
Darrell Johnson, the rancher.

**STATEMENT OF DARRELL JOHNSON, RANCHER,  
RUSH VALLEY, TOOELE COUNTY, STATE OF UTAH**

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Darrell Johnson. Along with my wife Carol, I own and operate the Johnson Ranch in Rush Valley, Tooele County, Utah. My sons, Ed and Brian, and their wives and my parents, who were the former owners, also have a significant interest in our nearly 7,000 acres of all private, deeded, and leased ranch land. We are cow-calf operators, running about 250 head of cows year-round. Ours is a ranch with a pioneer family heritage running back to 1856 when Luke S. Johnson was the first settler in our valley, after having arrived in Utah with the earliest Mormon pioneers. His dugout for a home on 40 acres of land has been developed by succeeding generations into a ranch that I am proud to say was recognized last year as the Region 6 National Stewardship Award winner from the National Cattlemens Association.

The private grazing land on our ranch is very productive after years of chaining and burning brush and seeding with carefully selected grasses that on some areas now produce over 1,400 pounds of forage per acre. We have abundant wildlife on our land, and we have a large spring that provides irrigation for about 1,500 acres in our community. We are continually working to improve our place for future generations.

I say all of this to help you understand how devastating the cricket and grasshopper infestation is to my operation and those of neighboring ranchers and farmers. For several years, we have had damage from crickets and grasshoppers in our area and in much of Utah, but our most severe damage began last year. In my area, private land owners are mostly surrounded on several sides by Forest Service and BLM land. Last year, crickets moved from Federal land in Skull Valley over Johnson Pass to about 2,000 acres of our deeded grazing land, which we use for summer feed. After the damage on that land, they laid eggs there and on other nearby Federal land where they hatched and brought us this year's terrible infestation, the worst I have ever seen.

I started trying to control the crickets on my land this April, locating the most dense concentrations and circling them with approved bait. It soon became futile. The crickets, now being followed by grasshoppers, ate our alfalfa to the ground and virtually every leaf off the crested wheat grass. There was no way I or my neighbors could stop them. The crickets do their damage and move on in literal waves to another area and again take almost everything in their path, followed now by grasshoppers from adjacent public land.

Our best estimate at this time is that these insects have destroyed at least 75 percent of our forage. So if we are to stay in business, our only choice is to buy hay to replace this feed. To be conservative, I am going to say that my total loss of private forage will be 60 percent of my normal yields. That converts to at least \$15,000 in hay that I will have to buy this year that I would not have purchased in any normal year.

Even worse, last year I put down seed on about 370 acres of deeded rangeland that would have been a high producer of feed this coming year. The crickets have eaten all those plants right into the dirt. If those seedlings don't recover, it will cost nearly \$13,000 to seed it again, not counting the fact that I will have to wait another 2 years for any meaningful production on that area. I have attached a partial list of cricket damage in an adjacent area prepared by the Grantee Spring Water Company.

Mr. Chairman, my story is repeated again and again on Utah farms and ranches. We in the West know we must contend with drought, variable markets, and a heavy layer of government regulations. But this insect infestation, coming in large measure from uncontrolled or inadequately controlled populations on adjacent public land, is an element that we alone cannot overcome. We appreciate the efforts of our Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to reduce cricket populations on State-owned land and some cost-share money for bait or spray on private land. But, again, an army of insects, hatched and grown to traveling size on public land, is more than we can deal with unless Federal land managers can control them before they move onto our land. So I add my voice of that to others who are appealing to Congress to give our neighboring public land managers the tools to be good neighbors.

I would just like to add that we have received some help from the sea gull population. They were a little late in coming, but for about 3 weeks we have had huge flocks of sea gulls in there. We are about 35 miles from the Great Salt Lake, and they are starting to do their share. We need a lot more of them.

I thank you for listening. We hope that you can help. Thank you.  
[The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson follows:]

**Statement of Darrell Johnson, Rush Valley, Utah**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Darrell Johnson. Along with my wife Carol, I own and operate the Johnson Ranch in Rush Valley, Tooele County, Utah. My sons Ed and Brian and their wives and my parents, who were the former owners, also have a significant interest in our nearly 7,000 acres of all-private, deeded and leased ranch land. We are cow-calf operators, running about 250 cows year-round. Ours is a ranch with a pioneer family heritage running back to 1856 when Luke S. Johnson was the first settler in our valley, after having arrived in Utah with the earliest Mormon pioneers. His dugout for a home on 40 acres of land has been developed by succeeding generations into a ranch that I'm proud to say was recognized last year as the Region 6 National Stewardship Award winner from the National Cattle-men's Beef Association.

The private grazing land on our ranch is very productive after years of chaining and burning brush and seeding with carefully selected grasses that on some areas now produce over 1,400 pounds of forage per acre. We have abundant wildlife on our land and we have a large spring that provides irrigation for about 1,500 acres in our community. We are continually working to improve our place for future generations.

I say all this to help you understand how devastating the cricket and grasshopper infestation is to my operation and those of my neighboring ranchers and farmers. For several years we have had damage from crickets and grasshoppers in our area and in much of Utah, but our most severe damage began last year. In my area private land owners are mostly surrounded on several sides by Forest Service and BLM land. Last year crickets moved from federal land in Skull Valley over Johnson Pass to about 2,000 acres of our deeded grazing land, which we use for summer feed. After the damage on that land, they laid eggs there and on other nearby federal land where they hatched and brought us this year's terrible infestation; the worst I've ever seen.

I started trying to control the crickets on my land this April, locating the most dense concentrations and circling them with approved bait. It soon became futile.

The crickets, now being followed by grasshoppers, ate our alfalfa to the ground and virtually every leaf off the crested wheat grass. There was no way I, or my neighbors, could stop them. The crickets do their damage and move on in literal waves to another area and again take almost everything in their path, followed now by grasshoppers from adjacent public land.

Our best estimate at this time is that these insects have destroyed at least 75 percent of our forage. So if we are to stay in business, our only choice is to buy hay to replace this feed. To be conservative, I am going to say that my total loss of private forage will be 60 percent of my normal yields. That converts to at least \$15,000 in hay that I will have to buy this year that I would not have purchased in any normal year.

Even worse, last year I put down new seed on about 370 acres of deeded range land that would have been a high producer of feed this coming year. The crickets have eaten all those plants into the dirt. If those seedlings don't recover, it will cost nearly \$13,000 to seed it again, not counting the fact that I'll have about two years to wait for any meaningful production on that area. I have attached a partial list of cricket damage in an adjacent area prepared by the Grantee Spring Water Company.

Mr. Chairman, my story is repeated again and again on Utah's farms and ranches. We in the West know we must contend with drought, variable markets and a heavy layer of government regulations. But this insect infestation, coming in large measure from uncontrolled or inadequately-controlled populations on adjacent public land, is an element that we alone cannot overcome. We appreciate the efforts of our Utah Department of Agriculture & Food to reduce cricket populations on state-owned land and some cost-share money for bait or spray on private land. But again, an army of insects, hatched and grown to traveling size on public land is more than we can deal with unless federal land managers can control them before they move onto our land. So I add my voice to that of others who are appealing to congress to give our neighboring public land managers the tools to be good neighbors.

Thank you for listening. We hope you can help.

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[An attachment to Mr. Johnson's statement follows:]

06/23/2001

PARTIAL LIST OF CRICKET DAMAGE IN BIG HOLLOW AND SURROUNDING AREA

Family	Acres Cricket Presence	Total Impact	% Due to Crickets
[1] Hall	200 Constant infiltration from surrounding Fed Lands	1) Graze reduced by 30-50 percent 2) No Crop from alfalfa field for last two yrs. 3) Vegetable garden abandoned	substantial
[2] Richman	270 Constant infiltration from surrounding Fed Lands	1) Graze reduced by 30-50 percent	substantial
[3] Davis	133 Constant infiltration from surrounding Fed Lands	1) Graze reduced by 30-50 percent 2) Irrigated Hay reduced by 20 percent	most
[4] Baird	120 Moderate infiltration from surrounding fields	1) Graze reduced by 30-50 percent 2) No Crop from alfalfa field for last two yrs. 3) Vegetable garden abandoned	substantial

\*In addition to above, since the Big Hollow community is still in development there is additional impact in that a number of projects - such as clearing new fields, planting, etc. - have been put on hold until the Cricket problem is brought under control.

Jim Hall  
Board of Trustees  
Grantee Spring Water Company

Mr. HEFLEY. Boy, you are an outstanding group of witnesses, and you certainly paint the picture for us, and it is a very bleak and ugly and sad picture that you paint, particularly if you are trying to make a living on the land, as our last witness is.

Let me ask you, are there some crickets every year and some grasshoppers every year, but in a cyclical fashion you have these plagues every so many years, depending on the weather and so forth? Is that the way it works?

Mr. PETERSON. Yes, Mr. Chairman. There will always be crickets and grasshoppers in abundance for the wildlife and the other species that prey upon them—sage grouse, the gulls, and others. And following this kind of an infestation and that kind of feed for predators, we get an increase of fox, we get an increase of coyotes, we get an increase of moles and other rodents that will do well on these kind of insect populations.

And so we get another plague following this because of the abundance of feed that these predators have that prey upon the crickets and grasshoppers. But there are always pockets of those. We haven't seen this type of infestation and the excessive migration that we are seeing this year.

Mr. HEFLEY. You do have other predators, though, besides the sea gulls who do feed on them? They just can't keep up with it?

Mr. PETERSON. That is right.

Mr. HEFLEY. Yes, yes. Is there anything that can really control the problem? It is a little hard for me to tell from—there are a lot of things you are doing, but is there anything that can really control the problem? Mr. Dunkle?

Mr. DUNKLE. Yes, I think there is. Our environmental impact statement that we are preparing now will lay out all of the primary mitigations.

First of all, it is very important, as Mr. Peterson has stated, that we do the proper surveys, because we do egg mass surveys in the fall and then we do similar surveys in the spring. And the purpose is to locate these pockets and then to try to guesstimate the potential size of the population that we are going to deal with next year and where this population will begin to migrate, and to try to keep that within a manageable limit.

And then there are certain chemical alternatives, the newest one now being a compound called Demolin, which is an environmentally friendly compound. It does not eradicate these populations, but it does significantly lower them so that there is minimal effect on wildlife, on other predators, and so forth.

So we do have the control tactics, we do have the surveying methods, and then when we are looking at management on public lands, the other Federal agencies have additional management options that they will use on rangeland and so forth that will tier into this whole program.

Mr. HEFLEY. Do you have environmental extremist groups—I think Senator Bennett mentioned that there are threats of lawsuits, but do you have environmental extremist groups throwing their bodies in front of the sprayers or whatever they do, trying to keep you from doing anything? Or is most everybody in agreement something needs to be done?

Ms. HATFIELD. Mr. Chairman, at least in BLM's case, we have been challenged about the use of some of these substances in Idaho. And at least there we are not using the Demolin until APHIS can complete their EIS and we can tier off of their environmental impact statement. But certainly there has been some concern by some groups about the impact of the use of some of these insecticides on other animals in the system.

But, for the most part, we are using Demolin in other States, and we are also using some other insecticides that have proved to be useful and helpful in the control of the pests. But it is a balance, and we do have to do the environmental reviews before we can take care of the problem.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, may I add that one of the members of the environmental group made a comment to the local paper that farmers out there should know better than to be farming next to BLM land. My family was there before there was a BLM in 1856, and I am the fifth generation that has been there. It isn't, you know, by choice that we would choose not to farm there. It is because that is where the resources are to be able to farm and do what we do.

Mr. HEFLEY. You know, Mr. Johnson, that does show the complete lack of understanding that some of these groups and some of these people have. When they opened up the West, they opened it up for homesteading, and the BLM land was the land that was left over, land that no one wanted because it didn't have the resources to do a productive farming operation on. So what do you do? I mean, if you pick the productive land, that is what is left over. It just shows a complete lack of understanding.

Mr. Gibbons?

Mr. GIBBONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, as we have heard today, this is a dramatic and a desperate problem for many people, whether you are a rancher, farmer, or apparently a person inside a community, in a city, and a home and a family.

My question is either to the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Interior: How long is your EIS going to take before you can address this problem?

Mr. DUNKLE. We have been working on our EIS. We are going to be publishing it as a proposal in August, receive public comment through September. We are hoping to have our environmental impact statement completed by the 1st of January of 2002 at the latest.

Mr. GIBBONS. And then how long after that would you be able to address the problem? As I heard from your testimony, once the cricket lays eggs in the soil, you do these surveys in the fall and the spring and determine what the outbreak is going to be. What type of action can you take once the infestation of this magnitude covers such a large area—1.5 million acres in Utah, 65,000 in Nevada and growing? How many dollars is it going to take? How many man-hours? What is the magnitude of the problem you face at that point?

Mr. DUNKLE. First of all, I think our goal is to focus on timely survey to locate these populations and these pockets of critters and to predict where they will go and how big these migrations will be so that we can time our treatments to prevent the massive out-

breaks that you are seeing pictures of here today. And if we can get this back down to a manageable program, then the magnitudes that we have been working with in the past from some of the testimony I gave earlier in regard to the no-year fund and so forth, it is about a \$5 to \$8 million a year program. And this keeps it overall under pretty good—I am talking Federal funds now, but keeping this under a very good management protocol throughout the Western United States.

Mr. GIBBONS. So you are talking of annual funding of about \$8 million, which hasn't been funded since 1994.

Mr. DUNKLE. That is correct.

Mr. GIBBONS. Is it the obligation of the Federal Government to address this infestation on private property as well as public property?

Mr. DUNKLE. You know, as has come out, there is a relationship between private and public lands when it comes to managing this population holistically. What we try to do is focus on tactics that minimize the impact of these crickets and grasshoppers onto private lands. The migrations, the populations build up predominantly on public sector property, and then they boil out and they migrate into private properties and so forth. And so the tactics that we do on the Federal sector have a direct benefit to managing these populations on the private sector.

Mr. GIBBONS. Well, Dr. Dunkle, let me say that I have read Mr. Peterson's testimony, and he cites the U.S. Code in here, Title 7, Section 148f, paragraph (d), which establishes the framework for funding for fighting the Mormon cricket. And obviously it quotes, "...the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately treat Federal, State or private lands that are infested by grasshoppers or Mormon crickets at levels of economic infestation..." So obviously the law has been created to require you to address the problem on Mr. Johnson's ranch as well as the BLM. So it is not just simply—or public land, excuse me, Federal land. So it is not just the benefit flowing over to those private lands. It requires the U.S. Government to address the infestation on private lands.

That, I would hope, is the direction that you also consider your responsibility to be in as well.

Mr. DUNKLE. I have to make a point in regard to that particular piece of testimony, because I think it now conflicts with the new Plant Protection Act. And I may need some of my staff to confirm this, but the way the Plant Protection Act now reads, when all of the authorities of the USDA APHIS were consolidated, I think the only authority that we have is to focus on public rangeland. And so what our tactic has been over the past years, in particular since 1994, has been to treat public rangeland in strips that adjoin private sector to keep these migrations from moving over into the private sector.

Mr. GIBBONS. Would you mind providing this Committee with a legal assessment with regard to the combination of your responsibilities with regard to Section 148f, Title 7 of the U.S. Code for this Committee?

Mr. DUNKLE. Yes, sir. I would be glad to.

Mr. GIBBONS. Let me also say, Mr. Chairman, it appears that we have a dual-fold funding responsibility here. One, of course, is the

economic damage that has taken place due to the current and existing infestations that we haven't been able to address, causing substantial economic harm to many of these individuals, much as would a flood, a fire, or any other natural disaster. So that is part of it.

But we also have this ongoing requirement and responsibility to adequately fund the effect of addressing this infestation funding in years at the \$8 million level. I certainly hope that we can convince our colleagues to join us in this effort. I look forward to working with the Committee.

I want to thank the members of this panel for taking time out of their busy lives. Many of you have had to travel a long way, and I know you seem to think that there are only three of us up here that you are talking to. But we hear you and the record will adequately reflect your comments and your concerns, and we will do our utmost to convince and work with our other colleagues on the seriousness of this issue.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Peterson?

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chairman, may I make a comment to the Congressman's point?

Mr. HEFLEY. Sure.

Mr. PETERSON. Weather would be the best help we could have to break this cycle for next year.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Peterson, we are very powerful here in Congress, but we are not that powerful.

[Laughter.]

Mr. PETERSON. If you would regulate or legislate the weather to break that pattern and then after that, when find and locate those very intense hatching beds, if we can do the control work while they are in the nymph stage in those heavy infested areas, we can control this extreme migration that we have seen. Absent that ability, both financially and with the environmental threats—you touch them and we will take you to court—we have lived with that kind of threat. Not so much the laying down in front of the spray truck, but the threat of going to court if you carry out the EA. And I think we have to be above and beyond that for the reasons that you have heard.

The Bureau of Land Management and APHIS have been tremendous partners in this effort this year. I recognize that and thank them for that.

Mr. GIBBONS. My question would be on these eggs, Mr. Peterson, that we talk about, where the eggs were laid. Not always are they on public land. They are oftentimes on private land and have come over from public land to infest private land. So the combination of trying to address this issue must also—and that is the point I was trying to make—must also include addressing the infestations that are in that nymph stage on private lands; otherwise, we are never going to get a hold of this issue.

Mr. PETERSON. Exactly.

Mr. HEFLEY. We will, however, tell Chairman Hansen that you would like us to do something about the weather, and he tells us he is all-powerful. So I think maybe we can get something done.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Cannon?

Mr. CANNON. You know, I was going to say that we only have three people up here, but we are the smartest three because we know we can't legislate and get the result that we would want.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be included in the record.

Mr. HEFLEY. Without objection.

Mr. CANNON. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cannon follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Chris Cannon, a Representative in Congress  
from the State of Utah**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing to examine solutions to the worst infestation of Mormon crickets experienced by Utah in 60 years. The devastation caused by the crickets has worried many of my constituents and has caused financial hardships to others. IN the 1980's, Congress was effective in addressing this problem. This year, however, the Federal Government has been slow to act.

This problem cannot be controlled by the people of Utah because the crickets hatch on federal lands and then they hop to farmland. Last year over 590,000 acres in Utah were infested with cricket population in excess of eight insects per square yard, and 24 of Utah's 29 counties were affected. In addition to destroying crops these insects contaminate local water supplies once they die.

The infestation of crickets is predictable based on regional climate. This February's edition of The Utah Farm Bureau News issued a warning of the upcoming infestation of crickets, predicting possible the worst in 60 years. Due to the string of mild winters in the past few years, the catastrophic infestation we are experiencing was predicted months in advance. The prediction parallels the reality facing farmers and residents of Utah as they deal with the nearly 2 million acres currently infested by the crickets. This predictability should allow us to solve the problem before it reaches crisis proportions.

These pests are most easily controlled during the early stages of their life cycle. This year, in an attempt to thwart the destruction of the crickets, officials at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food distributed a limited amount of bait used to control the infestation. However, this bait was in short supply compared to the large population of crickets.

Since the crickets come from federal land, the federal government must be a partner in controlling them. This hearing will help to begin the process of finding solutions to alleviate the problems associated with the Mormon crickets. I would especially like to thank Booth Wallentine for the work he has done to bring this issue before this body. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

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Mr. CANNON. And I would like to thank our great folks from Utah for coming out, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Anderson, and Commissioner Peterson, our Commissioner of Agriculture. He has done an incredible job over the last several years in the State of Utah. We appreciate your being here. And also Mr. Dunkle and my dear friend, Nina Rose Hatfield, who has been through the battles with me in the ancient past—not too ancient. You are much younger than—

Ms. HATFIELD. I was going to say, not too ancient, sir.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CANNON. I take it, Ms. Hatfield, that you support the APHIS request for \$8.7 million?

Ms. HATFIELD. Well, we certainly think that the memorandum of understanding that we have with APHIS makes a workable system and one that really makes sense for the Federal partners in that they have an environmental impact statement that we can tier off of so it is less expensive for us to do the environmental planning that we need to do. And at the same time, they have the expertise

to actually have the people doing the surveying and doing the treatment, and that allows, I think, a reasonable system in terms of delivering, in terms of trying to deal with this infestation. And certainly the cog in the wheel here needs to be that they have adequate funding to carry out their part of the overall system.

I think the BLM, you know, feels that we have money to support, but they actually are the leaders in terms of carrying out the program, and they need to be adequately funded.

Mr. CANNON. In the case of Mr. Johnson, he has spent \$15,000, \$20,000, something like that, \$15,000 just in incremental hay costs. Is there any Federal pocket out there that is responsible to compensate him for the damage that resulted from our failures at the Federal level?

Ms. HATFIELD. If there is, I am unaware of it, sir, but I will certainly be glad to look at it, unless it would be something like the Tort Claims Act, and I don't think this—I think this would be a difficulty under that act.

Mr. CANNON. I might just point out that the Federal Government has immunity from lawsuits, and so we actually have a Committee that deals with both immigration and claims—odd combination. That is, when American citizens are hurt and have a claim, there is a way legislatively to solve that problem. And that ought to be considered since this is such a widespread and painful problem there.

We talked earlier about litigation over these issues, and you mentioned, Mr. Dunkle, that there is some litigation in Idaho. Are you aware of the Utah Environmental Congress lawsuit to halt spraying on Forest Service lands in the Uintah Basin—the Uintah National Forest, that is?

Mr. DUNKLE. I am personally not aware of it.

Mr. PYRON. I am Chris Pyron, the Deputy Regional Forester from Utah, and my understanding of the situation is that we were told that if we tried to go forward with a categorical exclusion so we could take suppression actions on Forest Service lands, that we would be challenged in court. We checked with our office of general counsel, and they confirmed that we were on shaky ground on using the categorical exclusion. That is why we were not able to treat Forest Service grounds in the Uintah National Forest this year.

We have corrected that problem for next year. We have set aside money to make sure that we could do the appropriate environmental analysis, and we will have that in place to compare it to the APHIS EIS.

Mr. CANNON. And would you describe what a categorical exclusion means?

Mr. PYRON. A categorical exclusion provides for not having to go through certain documentation in support of the management decision that you would have to do if you did an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. In fact, it just cuts down the time that it takes to process the action by quite a bit. When we discovered that we would have to go through an EA, an environmental analysis, we simply did not have time to get that process completed before the window had expired for treating the Mormon cricket or grasshopper this year.

Mr. CANNON. Thank you very much for that.

Could I just ask, Dr. Dunkle, could you explain—Mr. Peterson mentioned the nymph stage. When are these beasts vulnerable, and what happens if you don't do it in a timely fashion?

Mr. DUNKLE. I think the most vulnerable period of their life cycle is when the eggs are hatching and when these insects are in their early stages of development, the nymphal stage, when they are probably about an inch or less.

Mr. CANNON. And above that, are they just less resistant—I am sorry, more resistant to the chemicals?

Mr. DUNKLE. Yes.

Mr. CANNON. So then you have to have chickens or sea gulls or something like that.

Mr. DUNKLE. Right, right. And so they are very vulnerable when they are very young and when there is not all that much forage out and so forth, so the treatments are much more effective.

Mr. CANNON. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.

What is the life cycle? I don't know if we have talked about that. Both the life cycle of the infestation when it comes like this, and the life cycle of the individual critter. Does it live for a month or a week or—

Mr. DUNKLE. As I understand it—and I have some of my staff here in case I drift into areas that I shouldn't be talking about. But my general understanding is that the eggs hatch in the early spring and the insect can pretty much stay alive through late summer, early fall. And so what they are doing is they are rapidly eating forage and growing and they are developing their capacity for egg laying and reproduction. Then as they consumer the forage, then they begin to really lay their eggs again and start the life cycle over. So it is sort of a one-generation-per-year thing. This is pretty much I think what happens.

Mr. HEFLEY. About a month or a month and a half or something would be an individual's life span probably, is that correct?

Mr. DUNKLE. Well, they are coming out in March and April.

Mr. HEFLEY. So a lot more than that.

Mr. DUNKLE. Those in that jar emerged in March and April, and so they are still—

Mr. HEFLEY. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSON. From my observation, we had crickets hatching in late March, the last 2 weeks in March. It was a rather warm spring, a warm winter, and they were hatching in March. And we still have the large adult crickets which are laying eggs now this last week in July. The first crickets that we saw last year came up from Skull Valley off of the Federal land in the first week of July. They were large and that is when they started laying their eggs. They were gone, basically starting to die, by the first week in August. And it seemed like the later in the life stage, they eat less. It was in April and May as they were sub-adults, that they were really devastating on our rangeland as new growth was coming on. That is when we saw the most damage from the crickets, was quite early on in their life cycle.

Mr. HEFLEY. Well, I think you have been a wonderful group of witnesses, and I think you have been very, very convincing to this Committee. And I think the weight of this Committee will be thrown behind doing whatever we can to get you some help to not only get this under control but to make sure that it doesn't happen again.

You notice that the three of us here are Westerners, and don't take it that the rest of the Committee doesn't have an interest or won't pay attention to it, because we will see that they certainly do. But we do have as Westerners oftentimes trouble getting the representatives from the East to understand some of our special problems that we have in the West that are very different from the East, and there is where you get 8 inches of rainfall a year compared to 100 inches in some places in the East. They don't understand some of these things, and it is hard to get us to do it. And I am wondering, Jim, if we should release a breeding population of these things here on the East Coast so that they would understand.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HEFLEY. Do you think at all that would help the situation? If you don't get the money, you would like to do it, I am sure. You don't have to answer that.

Jim, did you have a comment?

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Chairman, that was going to be my suggestion as a way of introducing and educating some of our members on the Committee who aren't familiar with Western heritage issues. Just take this bottle right here and, oh, maybe five or six in each one of their offices would give them a quick understanding of just the problems we are dealing with.

Mr. HEFLEY. Well, it is a very unique kind of special problem that we have in certain areas of the West, and, unfortunately, we have great populations of things like the Mormon crickets in the West. We don't have great populations of Representatives to Congress from the West. Most of them are up and down the East Coast and in California. So it is a little difficult to convince them. But you have presented a very graphic, fact-based picture of what the situation is. I think I have a much better understanding—I would guess all of us do—of the problem you are facing, and we will do what we can to be helpful.

Your trip I hope has not been in vain. At least it has not been with this Committee, and we will see what we can do to be helpful.

Yes, sir, Commissioner?

Mr. PETERSON. Could I answer, I think it was Congressman Cannon's question, about what kind of help is there for a devastated rancher. The Governor declared this a disaster in our State, and then with documentation of those losses through the Farm Service Agency Committees in our county, then claims could come forward for disaster relief through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And I think Secretary Veneman has some resources that could in small part compensate for that damage.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to sit with the Commissioner after this session and chat about what those possibilities are.

Mr. HEFLEY. Okay. Panel, do you have any other comments before we close?

[No response.]

Mr. HEFLEY. Well, then, thank you very, very much for being here. You have been very helpful.

The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:45 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

