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# EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CLAYTON YEUTTER AT HIS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY IN THE USDA PATIO FEBRUARY 16, 1989

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# Remarks

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News Division, Room 404-A, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CLAYTON YEUTTER  
AT HIS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY IN THE USDA PATIO  
FEBRUARY 16, 1989

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. It's a marvelous privilege, pleasure and opportunity for me to be here this morning. As I look out over this audience I see a multitude of long-time friends and I am so pleased and gratified that all of you were willing to take time out of your hectic and demanding schedules to be here and share this occasion with us. I am not going to make any profound policy pronouncements this morning. I'd like to basically concentrate in my very short time with you on some comments about people.

First of all on behalf of everyone here, Mr. President, we want to thank you for coming over to participate in this ceremony. We know it requires time out of your schedule to do so and it's a tremendous gesture on your part to participate. It's an honor not only for all of us in the Cabinet to experience this privilege, but it's an honor for the people in all the departments including USDA who have opportunity to see you up close as a part of this ceremony. Thank you for coming.

Although you have heard many great things about President Bush during the campaign and through the inaugural, however; I would like to embellish those if I may by confirming and ratifying, if I may without question, this is one of the best prepared Presidents we have had in the history of the United States, one of the most substantive Presidents we have ever had in the history of the United States, both of those attributes and characteristics are going to serve us all well in the coming years. But more importantly, George and Barbara Bush are two of the finest human beings on the face of this earth. That is why it's a distinct pleasure for all of us to be a part of this Administration.

I want to say a word about Justice O'Connor if she'll forgive me for telling this anecdote one more time. First of all it's a great privilege for me to have her swear me in again, for the second time. She did the honors 3-and-a-half years ago as I took over as the U.S. Trade Representative

and very graciously consented to come here this morning to administer the oath of office again. Dick Lyng was just saying in the waiting room that she also did the honors for him when he became Secretary, so I think you are an honorary member of this department by now Justice O'Connor. I want to share an anecdote with you which reflects the nature of this fine and distinguished lady. Back in 1972, I was involved in the Presidential campaign and was working on the agricultural campaign nationwide and I paid a visit to Phoenix, Arizona. The Arizona chairman of the presidential campaign was a leading businessman in that city, the co-chairman that year happened to be a lady named Sandra O'Connor and I met with those two folks during the day. As we were getting the campaign organized I said to the gentleman who was the campaign chairman, "where in the world did you get Sandra O'Connor she is just fantastic; and, he said, you're absolutely right, she is fantastic." This was 1972, remember. He said someday she is going to become the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court. That was a remarkably prescient comment because as you know a decade or so later she became deservedly the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Now I want to say a word about my wife Jeanne. She doesn't know that this is coming. I think everyone here of my generation would appreciate the fact that thirty years ago, when we were coming out of college ready to go to work it was still a man's world and in some respects it is still a man's world today, but that's changing very rapidly. I think it's important for all of us as we share in and enjoy all of these fine honors, being named Cabinet members and doing fascinating things around the world, a little humility is sometimes in store. I think it's important for some of us to recognize that we have spouses, but for that generation gap of thirty years ago, might be standing in front of this microphone accepting honors as appointments of members of the Cabinet just as easily and deservedly as we. And Jeanne fits that category.

A word about Kim, since she's up here too. You can tell by what she had to say in the invocation that she has her head screwed on right--at least we hope so. This is parental pride coming out. I mention this for a particular reason. Kim has just finished a double masters degree program. Getting a masters in business and a masters in international relations. And although she doesn't speak Japanese as well as Ambassador Matsunga does, she's working hard at it. We have to educate our children if we're going to be competitive, Mr. President, in the world in which we find ourselves going into the next century. We hope Kim is prepared.

Also, a word to Peter Myers who's also sharing the podium with us this morning, because Peter has so ably handled this ceremony, as well as so graciously handling the transition from one Administration to another.

Then moving very rapidly out to the distinguished guests, which I don't have time to introduce them all or comment on them all, but I want to say how appreciative I am of my fellow members of the Cabinet coming over to join in the ceremony this morning. A good number of ambassadors who are here and a substantial number of Members of Congress even though they probably ought to be out in their home districts right now. I'm honored to have them here joining the ceremony. I'm not going to introduce them all, but I want to pay special attention to just three who are here. Congressman Tom Foley, because as all of you know he is the distinguished Majority Leader of the House and former Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, a long time great friend and I know he postponed a trip back home for a day just to be here this

morning. So Congressman Foley, it's especially nice to have you here. I want to say the same for Senator Jesse Helms who's been a Senator for a long, long time, and likewise a former distinguished Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Our relationships go back many, many years. And Senator Helms it's great to have you here. I'd also like to mention Bob Dole. Senator Dole has been "Mr. Agriculture" in the midwest, a distinguished Senate career, a presidential candidate and a great friend for a long period of time.

Finally, I'd like to recognize the former secretaries of agriculture who are here. With us here this morning is Jack Knebel, Bob Bergland, Jack Block, Dick Lyng and Cliff Hardin. I want to make special note of Dick Lyng my predecessor, because I worked for Dick when I first came back to Washington, D.C. in 1970. And a special note to Cliff Hardin, because Cliff was my mentor -- Mr. President, way back in my days as a faculty member at the University of Nebraska, when he was Chancellor it was Cliff who brought me here to D.C. in 1970 when he was Secretary of Agriculture.

Just one final closing comment, Mr. President. I first came to USDA almost 20 years ago to work in the South Bldg. In my first position as administrator of what was then the Consumer and Marketing Service. I had some of those same misgivings about the federal bureaucracy then that most people have when they come to Washington. And you've heard all those stories also, Mr. President. They come up when we discuss things like increases in salaries here in Washington, D.C., because a lot of folks think those are undeserved. I happen to think they are deserved and I have learned that by experience. I was a bit wary and skeptical about whether, Mr. President, you can move the bureaucracy in Washington. When I came to take over an agency that had about 16,000 employees and I think there were about two of us in that 16,000 who were political appointees at the professional

level. I thought, "oh my" how are a couple of people going to change a 16,000 persons bureaucracy. And I wasn't sure it could be done. But as Cliff Hardin and Dick Lyng will remember it could be done. Because we made some major changes in those years in a very successful way. What I discovered, Mr. President, was that folks here at USDA will listen, if you have something worthwhile to say. They listened to me back in 1970 and they've been listening to many who've given them leadership since then. I also discovered that they not only listen, Mr. President, but they'll respond. They are responsive to leadership. We have to remember that that's the way to achieve progress in this country.

So in closing, Mr. President, my committment to you, my committment to the employees from USDA who are here this morning, my committment to the people out in farm country who are watching this program is a very simple one. I promise you we will put together a team at the top echelon at USDA that will be strong, competent, and energetic. And I promise you we will provide leadership. You may not always agree with the leadership that we provide. But we're going to lead. And I hope that you will be with us as we accomplish our goals and work with you, Mr. President, over the next few years.

Thank you for coming and God's speed.

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