

Johnson Makes Farm Service Agency Recommendations to Secretary Vilsack

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<http://johnson.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=313321>

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) today announced his recommendations to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack for five State Farm Service Agency positions available in the state.

“These five individuals have strong agricultural backgrounds in South Dakota and are well qualified to serve in these important positions. I am making these recommendations to Secretary Vilsack knowing they are well suited to meet the challenges our agricultural communities face and will serve our state well,” Johnson said.

State Farm Service Agencies have a number of important responsibilities that impact the success of programs in agricultural communities. They are responsible for supervising agricultural programs and keeping impacted farmers and ranchers in the state informed. Members of the committee are also entrusted with managing appeals and complaints.

While it is customary for the Secretary of Agriculture to ask U.S. Senators for recommendations for appointments in their state, it is ultimately the Secretary’s responsibility to appoint a candidate.

Johnson has recommended:

Larry Birgen: Johnson has recommended LARRY BIRGEN. Birgen, who farms near Beresford, SD, has served as the Vice President of the South Dakota Farmers Union since 2006. He is a former Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service/Farm Service Agency field reporter and served as the Clay-Union Electric Director from 1993 to 2000. Birgen has been the Farmers Co-op Elevator director since 2001 and currently serves as board President. In addition, Birgen has served as Director of the Farmers Union Industries since 2002, and is the founding director of Midwest-Biodiesel located in Alexandria, SD. He and his wife Kathy have two children.

Jim Burg: Johnson has recommended JIM BURG of Wessington Springs. Burg served as the South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioner 1987 thru 2004. He served in the South Dakota House of Representatives from 1975 to 1984 and later in the South Dakota Senate 1984 to 1986. Burg, a former Mayor of Wessington Springs, is a member of the Board of Directors of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association and the South Dakota 4-H Foundation. A South Dakota State University graduate, he served in the South Dakota National Guard for 27 years before retiring in 1989 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Burg and his wife Bernice, have five children and seven grandchildren.

Gary Duffy: Johnson has recommended GARY DUFFY. Duffy farms near Oldham, SD, as part of Shamrock Farms, a family farm corporation raising corn, soybeans, wheat, cattle, and hogs. He is a current board member and Vice President of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association and serves as a board member and past President of the South Dakota Value Added Development Center. Duffy is a delegate to the U.S. Grains Council from South Dakota. The South Dakota State University graduate is a past member of the Oldham school board, Oldham city council, the South Dakota Crop Improvement Association state board, and the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council. He has four stepsons with his wife Judy.

Joyce Jobgen: Johnson has recommended JOYCE JOBGEN. Jobgen has served as the national Treasurer of the American Agriculture Movement for 21 years and is currently the Secretary and Treasurer. She has been active in various community organizations including serving eight years as clerk of her township and is a former member of the town election board. Jobgen also consulted farmers and ranchers for over 15 years and has testified before Congress and the South Dakota state legislature on agriculture issues. She and her husband Donald have four sons, eleven grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Craig Severtson: Johnson has recommended CRAIG SEVERTSON. Craig Severtson, raised in Flandreau, SD, has been an active rancher and farmer in the Flandreau area for nearly 30 years. Severtson, a University of South Dakota graduate, serves as a 4-H Club member and was a 4-H leader for several years. He is a member of the East Central Cattleman’s Association and served as Senator Tim Johnson’s agriculture Field Representative from 1987 through 1993 while in the House of Representatives. In addition, his agriculture organization involvement includes Dakota Rural Action and Farmers Union. Severtson and his wife Joan have two sons.

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