

Harkin Commends Iowan Randy Frescoln for Work to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan

Written by Sen. Tom Harkin
Monday, 07 February 2011 09:38

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today commended Norwalk native Randy Frescoln as he begins a one-year assignment in Afghanistan to help rebuild the agricultural sector there. Frescoln is one of 56 USDA employees serving in Afghanistan, where the growth of the agricultural sector is considered a key piece of the U.S. government’s strategy to stabilize the country.

“Our mission in Afghanistan is about much more than our military operations, but also requires that we stabilize the country in hopes that it can chart a different path for the future. Critical to this effort is rebuilding the nation’s agriculture sector. I commend Randy Frescoln and all the individuals who are taking time to help in this mission,” **said Harkin**. “Randy is a great example of a selfless Iowan serving his country. He has been an indispensable member of Iowa’s Rural Development team and I wish him all the best in his new role. We look forward to his safe return home upon completion of this important work.”

Frescoln has most recently served as Business and Cooperative Program Director with USDA Rural Development in Des Moines. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in farm operations as well as a Master of Science degree in professional agriculture, both from Iowa State University in Ames. Formerly, Frescoln served as a USDA agricultural expert in Afghanistan from 2004-2005, as well as in Iraq from 2006-2007. In Iraq, Frescoln led a variety of programs in collaboration with the U.S. military, the Department of State and Iraqi agricultural officials and universities.

According to USDA, since 2003, employees deployed to Afghanistan have served as agricultural experts within civilian-military units. USDA agricultural experts work side by side with Afghans and U.S. government and international partners in 24 of Afghanistan’s 34 rural provinces. At the provincial and district levels, USDA agricultural experts train local government representatives and Afghan extension workers in plant and animal health, natural resources management, and improved cultivation and production methods.