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Good morning. My name is Matt Russell. I'm a fifth generation Iowa farmer. I've been involved in agriculture my entire life starting with my parents' farm in Southwest Iowa, buying my own farm in 2005 that I co-own and operate with my spouse who works full time on the farm, and building a career educating about and advocating for agriculture including earning a master's in Rural Sociology from Iowa State University. Currently, I'm on staff at the Drake University Agricultural Law Center in Des Moines where I work on food and agriculture policy.

Global climate change is the most important human problem of my lifetime. The consequences of a changing climate aren't that big of a problem for the planet. It's probably not even that big of a problem for life to continue to exist on the planet. But global climate change is a huge problem for human life.

In the next decade, we're going to move from debating whether to deal with global climate change to an all-out race against the clock to adapt to the consequences as well as to innovate to reverse the causes. As a farmer, I rely on science every day to help grow my crops and produce my livestock. I also depend on and trust the climate scientists who are sounding the alarm about what climate change is going to mean for my farm. The proposed EPA standard on carbon emissions is a positive step toward both reducing the impacts of climate change on agriculture and creating a dynamic where farmers use their land and know how to develop clean energy producing technologies and to develop practices that can pull increasing amounts of carbon out of the atmosphere.

As farmers, our business is to respond to very basic human needs, growing the feed, fiber, and fuel the world demands. We don't do this in offices or factories; we farm in nature. The weather on a daily basis is absolutely essential to our individual livelihoods. The climate is critical for farmers to be able to feed 7 billion people living on planet earth.

Extreme weather over the past decade, has changed the discussion among farmers. We've seen firsthand what the climate scientists have said is going to happen.

Just in the past year, American farmers have seen historic droughts, historic flooding, historic fires, and historic high winds. We're dealing with new pest infestations, super weeds, and crop diseases fueled by a changing climate.

In the last year and a half, our farm has had snow in May and broken rainfall records, high temperature records, low temperature records, and drought records. Last year we had 800,000 acres of Iowa farm land that went unplanted because of wet conditions followed by yield losses because of dry weather in subsequent months. We're back into that pattern. Record rainfall in June and now we're going into our third week without a drop of rain. My parents' farm hasn't had any rain since July 5.

Some farmers are still in the camp of denying that humans are causing climate change, but every farmer is scrambling to adjust to the increase in extreme weather. In just the last decade, there's been an intense increase in anxiety about going as hard as you can when you can because you just don't know when the weather is going to change and stop you dead in your tracks. A mistake in timing or missing a window is the difference between having and not having a crop. Last year those 800,000 unplanted acres in Iowa proved this point.

Climate change is real, it's happening, it's going to get worse, and it's already causing great harm to American farms. The future predicted by climate scientists looks like present day California with crop failures, increased food costs, lost jobs, and battles over resources.

American farmers are not just victims. We can be part of the solution. We can innovate, we can implement, and we can lead the world in solving the problems of climate change. US farmers may be lagging behind on addressing climate change politically, but we are starting to step up. Agriculture will play a huge role in reducing emissions and actually putting carbon back in the ground. We're developing cover crops, using no till, and buying higher efficiency equipment. We can also generate clean energy. For example, Pennsylvania joins Iowa as a leader in wind generation. Dairy farmers are developing methane digesters turning manure into electricity. Farmers have developed the biofuels industry. Reducing our dependence on the most polluting power plants increases the ability for American farmers to innovate on our land.

American farmers don't need to wait to have companies tell them what to do like General Mills who announced this week they are committed to reducing climate change-causing greenhouse gas along their entire supply chain, including farms. We are going to step up and be counted on to lead the world in battling climate change. I speak for a lot of American farmers when I say let's stop wasting our time debating the existence of climate change. Let's stop wringing our hands because this problem is going to take resources to solve. We need to use our time and money to find ways to protect the climate we depend on. Time and again, American agriculture has led the world in solving big problems. We are ready to put our shoulders to the wheel to help solve this one.

