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Chairman-Elect Conaway Announces Senior House Agriculture Committee Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11), who was selected yesterday to be the next Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, announced the appointment of key senior staff to lead the Committee in the 114th Congress:

“A team of seasoned professionals will be at the helm of the Agriculture Committee Staff next year. They are Capitol Hill veterans with significant experience in their respective areas. They share my vision for a Committee that will work aggressively and intelligently on the issues that are important to America’s farmers and ranchers and all of us who depend on them. Over the next month, I look forward to hiring the rest of what is going to be a top notch staff.”

Scott Graves will serve as the Committee Staff Director. Graves is a native of Bronte, Texas, a rural town in Conaway’s district and currently serves as Chief of Staff for Congressman Conaway’s personal office. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Texas Tech University and a master’s degree in Strategic Security Studies from National Defense University. Graves, who comes from a cattle ranching and farming family, began his 10-year stint on Capitol Hill as an intern for the House Agriculture Committee in 2005. Shortly thereafter he was hired by Conaway to handle agriculture issues and prior to his being named Chief of Staff worked his way up to Legislative Director and Chief of Staff in Conaway’s personal office. He worked closely with the Agriculture Committee on writing and advancing both the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills.

“Scott knows agriculture and understands how to get things done,” Chairman Elect Conaway said. “For nearly 10 years, and in a variety of capacities, he has been my right hand man. He is a leader and I respect his management skills, policy acumen, strategic planning abilities, and above all his dogged pursuit of what is best for agriculture and our country.”

Matt Schertz will serve as Policy Director, overseeing the Committee’s legislative team and operations. Schertz, a Robstown, Texas, native, most recently served as Senior Professional Staff to Chairman Frank Lucas (R-OK), and Staff Director to Chairman Conaway on the General Farm Commodities and Risk

Management Subcommittee. Schertz came to Washington and the House Committee on Agriculture in 2002 to work for then Chairman Larry Combest (R-TX). He holds a bachelor's degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Texas Tech University.

Jackie Barber will serve as the Committee's Chief Counsel, overseeing the Committee's legal office and oversight operations. Barber, an Onida, South Dakota, native, most recently served as Counsel to Chairman Conaway at the House Committee on Ethics. Prior to coming to the Ethics Committee, Barber served as Deputy General Counsel to the National Republican Congressional Committee. She holds bachelor's degree in Business Management and Chemistry and a law degree from the University of South Dakota.

Christine Heggem will serve as the Director of Coalitions and Outreach, overseeing the Committee's work with other committees and agricultural organizations. Heggem, a Winifred, Montana, native who has been working in D.C. since 2000, most recently served as a senior federal government relations professional at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Prior to that, she served as a Vice President at mCapitol Management, on the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and on the staff of former Montana Senator Conrad Burns. She holds a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business Administration and a master's degree in Applied Economics from Montana State University.

Bart Fischer will serve as Chief Economist, overseeing the economic analysis of policies coming before the Committee. Fischer, a Frederick, Oklahoma, native currently serves as Chief Economist of the House Committee on Agriculture under the leadership of Chairman Frank Lucas. Prior to joining the Committee in June 2011, Fischer worked with the Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC) at Texas A&M University as well as the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in Washington, DC. He holds bachelor's degrees in Agricultural Economics and Business Administration from Oklahoma State University, a master's degree in Environmental Policy from Cambridge University, and is currently finishing a PhD in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University.

Ted Monoson will serve as Communications Director, overseeing the Committee's communications team. Monoson currently serves as Congressman Conaway's Communications Director. Prior to joining Congressman Conaway in 2013, Monoson worked in federal government relations for the agriculture and energy industry and as a senior agricultural policy staff member for then Minority Leader John Boehner. Prior to his work with now Speaker Boehner, Monoson worked and as a reporter covering agriculture, energy, and natural resource issues. He holds a bachelor's degree in American Studies and Theater from Hamilton College, a master's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, and a master's degree in Agribusiness from Kansas State University.

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