**President Barker’s Opening Remarks**

Natural Resources Subcommittee / Senate Finance Committee

March 13, 2013

Chairman McGill,

Senator Grooms,

Senator Williams,

Senator Campbell,

And Mr. Leach

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Clemson University Public Service Activities.

**Agriculture and economic development are in our DNA.** Thomas Green Clemson founded our university to improve South Carolina’s economy by applying science to enhance agricultural productivity and profitability. The charge that Mr. Clemson gave our University at its founding is as important today as it was in 1889.

I would ask that you think of the major economic industries that have been instrumental to our state’s economy over the last decade (at least the ones that have grabbed the headlines) – automotive, aerospace, and transportation. At the same time, I would ask that you think about agriculture as an industry just as important to South Carolina as these industries (one that has been around for hundreds of years). While these emerging industries are vitally important, agriculture has been the building block of our state’s economy. And just as we have worked to make investments to ensure the success of these new industries, we must continue to make similar investments in agriculture. Clemson University believes that we have a role in each of these industries to ensure their success by educating the next generation of students and providing the next generation of research and development. For Clemson University, PSA is our investment to ensure that we continue to be competitive in the agriculture industry.

**Clemson PSA remains true to our founding principle** to improve the state’s economy. Clemson research, extension and regulatory programs develop and transfer critical knowledge to enhance agribusiness productivity and profitability across the state. We maximize our impact by collaborating with other state agencies, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and sister land-grant universities across the nation.

I very much **appreciate the General Assembly’s support of Clemson.** We have carefully chosen the programs that we are asking you to support based on the impact that we believe they will have on the agribusiness sector in South Carolina.

At this time I would like to call on Dr. John Kelly, Vice President for Economic Development, to highlight our budget requests.

**Dr. John Kelly’s Remarks**

Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee / Senate Finance Committee

March 13, 2013

Chairman McGill,

Senator Grooms,

Senator Williams,

Senator Campbell,

and Mr. (Clint) Leach

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Clemson Public Service Activities budget priorities.

Chairman McGill, you have requested information on Clemson PSA accomplishments over the past 12 months. Here are some of the results of your investment in Clemson PSA:

* Each year we conduct **in-field variety trials** to evaluate the most promising lines for growers. In 2012 we tested 81 varieties of soybean, 47 for cotton, 37 for peanuts, 31 for sorghum, 20 each for corn and oats, 12 for barley, 509 for wheat…and 314 for peaches. One of the peach varieties performed so well that it was named CaroTiger and released to growers for planting this spring.

You may not realize it, but soybeans, corn, cotton, and peanuts represent over 1 million acres of crop production in South Carolina.

* **Soybeans** cover 380,000 acres in South Carolina. Clemson is a nationally recognized leader in managing a new pest – the bean plataspid or “kudzu bug” – that feeds on both soybeans and kudzu. Clemson has become nationally recognized for managing this pest.
* **Cotton** **& peanuts** are planted on over 400,000 acres in South Carolina. They are two of the most important crops in the southern U.S. Clemson PSA scientists provide growers information they need on variety evaluations and production techniques to increase yields and profitability through precision agriculture.
* **Sorghum** – an old-time crop in South Carolina – is making a comeback. We are doing extensive work with sorghum because it is drought-tolerant and offers a cost-effective feed substitute for corn and it shows promise as a biofuel. The Murphy Brown company In North Carolina, a purchaser of over 135million bushels of corn, has asked Clemson to work with them and other universities to help bring sorghum into the mix of feed for their animal production. They are seeking upward of 400,000 new acres of grain sorghum production.

As you know, Clemson PSA has lost over 100 positions during the great recession. Because we received no budget cuts last year we have been able to refocus some salary funds on critical hires including agriculture agents out in the counties to help our growers.

We have conducted an in-depth strategic analysis of how Clemson PSA can deliver the most economic impact for South Carolina agribusiness and we have identified 4 program areas where we are confident that Clemson’s research-based information can significantly increase both productivity and profitability for farmers and support strong economic growth for South Carolina. (If you will look under tab two in the notebooks we’ve provided for you, you will find our budget priorities).

Our **budget requests reflect those programs and**, in priority order, are:

**Our first priority** **is for $2M** to develop an advanced plant technology program. As you recall, Senator McGill, you helped us get this program funded just prior to the recession. It remains our #1 priority. The program is housed at the Pee Dee REC because it lies in the heart of the agriculture community. The House Ways & Means Committee has provided $1M of funding. We are asking you to fully fund our request at $2M.

**Our second priority** **is for $1M** to strengthen precision agriculture technology program, which requires research specialists in agricultural engineering and GPS/GIS management systems, and Extension agents to educate growers in the effective use of these systems that increase yields and reduce inputs of water, fertilizer and pesticides. The House Ways & Means Committee funded $500K. We are asking you to fully fund our request for $1M.

**Our third priority is for $300K** is to provide funding for two technical positions that are needed as part of the accreditation process for Livestock-Poultry Health’s Veterinary Diagnostic Center; a unit that supports food animal producers as well as companion animal health. The governor and the House Ways & Means Committee funded this position fully at $300K. We are asking you to fund this request at $300,000, also.

**Our fourth priority is for $1M** for an emerging farmer initiative that requires extension specialists to provide business management advice to people entering agriculture for the first time and for existing farmers entering new areas of agribusiness. This program would complement a new agribusiness major that Clemson plans to offer undergraduate students in the fall. This request was not funded by the Governor or the House Ways & Means Committee.

We have two capital improvement requests, listed in priority order. Both are long-term capital improvements to replace facilities that are over 25 years old and equipment that is essential to conduct competitive and relevant research.

**Our first priority is for $3M** to complete the new laboratory facilities at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center to support the molecular genetics research portion of the advanced plant technology program. We requested $7M for this project last year and we thank you for your support for the $4M that we received. The House Ways & Means Committee funded $3M for this project this year and we ask your support for that funding.

**Our second priority is for $5M** to provide modern equipment for research farms on campus and at the research and education centers in Blackville, Charleston and Florence. This equipment is needed to support agricultural research to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of agricultural production. The House Ways & Means Committee did not provide funding for this request.

Last, we are also requesting $1.4 million in other fund revenue authorization and 40 other funded FTEs as well as approximately $600,000 increase in federal fund authorization and 1 federally funded FTE.

We realize that you have many requests for funding. As you develop the state’s investment plan for FY 2013-2014, we ask for your support of Clemson PSA research, extension and regulatory programs that are critical to South Carolina’s largest industry, agribusiness.

Thank you for your time. I’ll be happy to answer any questions.