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Landon Lecture

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Six past U.S. secretaries of agriculture to share the stage at Oct. 21 Landon Lecture

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MANHATTAN -- Kansas State University's next Landon Lecture will include six of the nation's chief leaders in the agriculture industry.

The event will be from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 21, at McCain Auditorium and will be presented in a Q&A format. The past U.S. secretaries of agriculture will be Mike Johanns, Ann Veneman, Dan Glickman, Mike Espy, Clayton Yeutter and John Block.

"The Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues has a long tradition of highlighting leaders in agriculture, but to have six of the nation's agriculture leaders on the same stage is nothing short of monumental," said Jackie Hartman, the university's chief of staff and director of community relations. "In addition, this forum is very fitting given the university's celebration of the sesquicentennial and our land-grant mission."

Johanns served as secretary from 2005 to 2008. Days after he took office, he began working with U.S. trading partners to reopen their markets to U.S. beef. Nearly 119 countries had closed their markets after a single finding of a cow infected with BSE, commonly called mad cow disease. Within his first year, Johanns convinced nearly half of them to reopen their markets.

Veneman served as secretary from 2001 to 2005. She was actively involved in the Uruguay Round of General Agreements of Tariffs and Trade negotiations, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

Glickman served as secretary from 1995 to 2001. For 18 years he served in the U.S. House of Representatives for Kansas' 4th Congressional District. He contributed to the farm bills of 1977, 1981, 1985 and 1990.

Espy served as secretary from 1993 to 1994. He was first elected to Congress in 1986 and served on the Agriculture and Budget committees. Within these committees, he served on several subcommittees, including the Natural Resources and Community Development subcommittees, the Lower Mississippi Delta Caucus, and the Select Committee on Hunger's Domestic Task Force.

Yeutter served as secretary 1989 to 1991. He held numerous positions, including president of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange until 1985 when President Ronald Reagan appointed him U.S. trade representative. Yeutter later served as chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Block served as secretary from 1981 to 1986. Previously he was Illinois secretary of agriculture. After leaving the USDA, Block became the president of the National-American Wholesale Grocers' Association based in Washington, D.C.

For more than 40 years, Kansas State University's Alfred M. Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues has brought prestigious speakers to campus. Alfred Landon served two consecutive terms as Kansas governor and was the 1936 Republican Party nominee for president of the United States.