

Northey to USDA, Naig new Iowa ag secretary

In a whirlwind of activity in early March, the U.S. Department of Agriculture gained a new under secretary and a new Iowa secretary of agriculture was installed.



Bill Northey, who had served as Iowa secretary of agriculture for eleven years, resigned from the position on March 5 and was sworn in the following day as USDA under secretary of agriculture for farm and foreign agricultural services by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue during the Iowa Agriculture Leaders Dinner.

"I want to thank President Trump for nominating me and Secretary Perdue for his support and encouragement throughout the confirmation process," Northey said in a statement. "I also want to thank Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst for their strong support and their tireless work on behalf of my nomination."

The U.S. Senate confirmed Northey for the USDA position on Feb. 27 after Texas Senator Ted Cruz lifted his hold on the nomination. Northey had been waiting to fill the post since September after his nomination was unanimously approved by the Senate Agriculture Committee. Cruz placed a hold on the Senate vote in retaliation against a recent effort by several Midwest senators to prevent changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard.



Gov. Kim Reynolds selected Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Deputy Secretary Mike Naig to replace Northey, citing a commitment to continuity and stability. Naig was sworn in at a ceremony at the Iowa Supreme Court Chamber on March 5 following Northey's resignation.

"Mike Naig has been a dependable deputy for Bill Northey, serving since September 2013," Reynolds said. "He has gained the experience, knowledge and staff connections necessary to complete Bill's term through January 2019. I am pleased Mike has stepped up to serve his fellow Iowans in this elevated role."

Naig thanked Reynolds for the opportunity to work with her and her administration to continue efforts to support Iowa's dynamic agriculture industry.

"I have spent my entire career in agriculture and am inspired by the passion and commitment of the hard-working men and women who keep us fed and fueled," Naig said in a statement. "I look forward to travelling the state as secretary to meet with and hear from Iowans to better represent their interests and be responsive to their needs."

Naig said he's committed to building on the momentum that has been created on water quality and accelerating adoption of conservation practices.

"With long-term funding now in place, we are positioned to build on the exciting progress that has already been made and scale-up our efforts to achieve the water quality goals we all share," he said. "We must also continue working to build markets for the crops and livestock we raise so well here, including promoting renewable fuels and expanding international trade."