

John Salazar, Commissioner Department of Agriculture



Governor John Hickenlooper appointed John Salazar as Commissioner of Agriculture in 2011.

A sixth-generation farmer and rancher, Salazar served three terms representing Colorado's 3rd Congressional District and was a member of the House Agriculture Committee. Before his time in Congress, Salazar served in the Colorado General Assembly for two years.

"A thriving agriculture sector is critical to Colorado's economic recovery," Hickenlooper said. "Farmers and ranchers are also leading the way as business innovators. Their prosperity helps build a foundation for all of Colorado. And no one has been a more passionate champion for agriculture and rural communities than John Salazar. We are fortunate to have his leadership at the helm of the Department of Agriculture."

Salazar's advocacy in Congress earned him recognition for outstanding service by the American Farm Bureau and the Golden Triangle Award from the National Farmers Union. He played a key role in passing the historic farm bill of 2008. With a seat on the powerful House Appropriations Committee in his third term, Salazar worked on national energy issues, jobs creation and the economy.

Salazar was raised on a San Luis Valley farm, where he and his five siblings shared a bedroom and had no electricity or running water. His experience influenced his public career. He served on the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, the Colorado Agricultural Leadership Forum and the Colorado Agricultural Commission before being elected as a state Representative in 2002.

He was one of only a handful of active farmers in Congress after he was first elected in 2004. A veteran, Salazar served on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and was a proud member of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog congressional coalition.

Salazar earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Adams State College after serving three years in the U.S. Army.