Mr. President, that is not what we heard this year. We heard from every commodity group that they were willing to do their fair share in moving us toward that balanced budget, and in so recognizing, they would get greater flexibility in the marketplace to move their cropping programs toward the market with the kind of flexibility and planning, instead of being stuck, if you will, or found in lockstep to farm policy, afraid to lose and therefore afraid of stepping outside that.

We have provided a safety net, and that marketing loan will provide that. The loan will allow farmers a reasonable time period to market their crops. These loans will be stabilized in the market cycle and continue to protect consumers as well as the producer. It will avoid the kind of unnecessary market gyrations.

In crafting these sound programs, the Senate and the House committees worked hard and worked long, together, to solve this issue and to bring us to balance in a very diverse segment of America's economy. And that is American agriculture.

In my State of Idaho, in Florida, in Louisiana, in Colorado, in Montana, and in the Dakotas, sugar, sugar beet and cane raising remains a very important commodity crop. Inside the legislation that was vetoed by the President was, again, a new compromise, a new program, a reduction in the program. Listening to the consumer's side, we made the kind of changes that bring us to the marketplace in a variety of these areas, that allow the producer to say, ''I am farming now to the market and not to the farm.''

Planning flexibility, as I have already mentioned, could clearly be jeopardized. Traditional nonprogram crops like fruits and vegetables, in my State of Idaho, potatoes, could be thrown in jeopardy if we do not deal with this program and deal with it now.

When we saw in the Freedom to Farm Act limited flexibility, it was the Senate that spoke up and said we want flexibility so farmers can move to the marketplace in lieu of what we want to solve with a balanced budget. At the same time, we want to make sure that we protect a variety of these program crops.

Here we are, not at the 11th hour, not at the 12th hour, but well beyond that, into 1996, with a farm bill that expired on September 30, 1995, with a policy that was cautiously and carefully crafted between both the House and the Senate, put in the Budget Reconciliation Act, sent to the President, and the President vetoed it. Now, the Secretary of Agriculture—and I appreciate the Secretary's problem—is terribly frustrated by a need to conduct farm policy at the same time no law is in place as a result of that Presidential veto.

So I come to the floor tonight in behalf of our Speaker, Leader DOLE, myself, Chairman LUGAR, Chairman COCHRAN, Senator GRASSLEY, and others.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2491

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that Title I, the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1995, of H.R. 2491, the 7-year Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995, as vetoed by the President, be introduced as a freestanding bill; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be advanced to the third reading and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, all without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object, and I will object.

I would like to comment on the offering by the Senator from Idaho under the reservation, which, as I indicated, will result in an objection to this request.

The Senator from Idaho proposes that we strip from the budget reconciliation bill the cobbled version of the Freedom to Farm Act and bring it to the floor as a separate bill and deem it passed with this action. That is, in my judgment, not a good way to legislate farm policy. It follows last year's circumstances, rather than doing what has traditionally been done with 5-year farm bills. Instead of the development of a bipartisan approach in the Agriculture Committees of the House and Senate, and a markup in which there was bipartisan participation, there was a partisan writing of a farm proposal. It was brought to the committee with this statement, ''Here is the proposal. We can have a few votes if you want, but we are all going to vote the same way. This is what we are reporting out.'' That is what was done last year. This tends, in my judgment, to follow in the same steps.

I am not ascribing any improper motives. The Senator has every right to do this, and I understand the purpose of it. But I am constrained to object, and I intend to offer a unanimous consent request on my time.

Mr. President, at this point I object to the unanimous consent request.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, before the Chair puts the consideration, I would like to explain to the Senate that this would allow the Senate to once again pass the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1995, thereby giving the House their opportunity to once again enact the farm bill. Farmers of this country, as I have already explained, need this legislation now. The President has vetoed it. It is very clear he has vetoed this policy.

I certainly do not agree with my colleague that this has been cobbled up. We have been 5 months in the making of this legislation, in creating these difference. I think we are moving toward planting in the Southern parts of our country. As I mentioned in my earlier comments, farmers are now sitting down with their bankers to put the farm policy together, or their farming programs together, for the year. And we certainly need legislation at this time.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1523

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise to propound a unanimous consent request, and I shall explain the request.

I introduced earlier today a bill that is now deemed S. 1523 which provides for a 1-year extension of the current farm program. The bill provides for enormous planting flexibility for farmers who operate under this program to allow them to plant what they want on base acres and not having the Government tell them what to plant, when to plant it or where to plant it. So there is substantial flexibility. And third, it would provide for the forgiveness of the advanced deficiency payment for those farmers that suffered crop losses last year.

I will ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of this because I agree with the Senator from Idaho that farmers deserve an answer. They deserve certainty. They deserve to know under what farm program will they be planting in just a matter of weeks in some parts of the country as they begin their spring's work.

I do not believe this is necessarily the first choice. It is not necessarily the best choice. But the piece of legislation that the President vetoed was a budget reconciliation bill which included a farm bill that I described as a cobbled product. The President vetoed a reconciliation bill which took with it a bad farm bill.

Now, why did that occur? Because this is the first time in history that rather than debate a 5-year farm bill on its own merits in this Chamber and the House, the majority party decided to stick the farm bill in the reconciliation bill which by last July people knew was going to be vetoed.

Now, that does not talk about the merits of the farm bill itself. The merits of this farm bill would be to say, ''Disconnect the price support programs from need. If market prices are high, ignore that. Still give the farmers the payment. And if after 7 years market prices are low, ignore that. There will be no farm program.''

I do not think and did not think this was a good approach. I believe the President thinks it is not a good approach for those who care about having a network of family farms in our country in the long term. That is why we did not support this approach.

It should never have been put in the reconciliation bill in the first place. It was never done previously. Doing so produced the jeopardy that now exists for farmers in January of 1996 in not knowing what the farm program will be for spring planting.