

moment about what this bill will mean to the American people and especially to our soldiers who are in the field.

This bill provides \$1.2 billion approximately for Afghanistan. It provides \$2.8 billion for defense health; for veterans health, \$1.7 billion; for readiness, military readiness which is important, we want our men and women, our soldiers, to be prepared, \$2.5 billion.

But at home, we have some needs as well, and this bill addresses many of our needs at home. Aviation security is important to us, \$1.25 billion. Port, transit and border security is important to us, \$1.25 billion. Disaster relief is important to people who were left behind, \$910 million.

There are those who have made comments about agriculture and the assistance that we are providing. Many of those persons who are in the field, who are in harm's way, came from the farm lands of America, and they have relatives who are still in need here. We must support the troops, but we can also do it and support the friends, relatives and family members that they left behind. So, yes, for agriculture disaster we have \$140 million.

We also have many children in this country who are not getting the proper health care, many children without health care in the richest country in the world. If we truly want to leave no child behind, we have to do more than fund schools. If we want to leave no child behind, we have got to make sure every child that goes to school is healthy, that every child is mentally ready to embrace the learning process. We have \$750 million for the CHIP program. This will help children have good health care.

There are wildfires in this country. Many family members and friends of our troops may have to suffer from an incident that could be prevented. So we do have wildfire suppression, \$500 million.

But there are people who may not be related to the troops, who may not be a friend of a member of our armed services in harm's way, and they, too, deserve some assistance, \$400 million for the energy assistance program.

I will close with this, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for the time. We must protect and defend our country and we have to protect our military in harm's way and the people who are left behind.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WILSON of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our Nation's agricultural producers. U.S. agriculture is innovative, adaptive and certainly responsive. I am here today to celebrate National Ag Week which ends tomorrow, as well as celebrate Na-

tional Ag Day, which we celebrated on Wednesday.

It goes without saying that agriculture is tremendously important to my district and the Nation as a whole. I hope you join me in celebrating everyone who works so hard to provide nutrition for the world.

I represent one of the largest agriculture districts in the country. My district ranks first in the value of sales of grains and oil seeds, second in total value of agricultural products sold, and first in cattle and calf inventory. According to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, my State ranks first in the Nation in commercial red meat production as well.

In 2005, agriculture industry cash receipts contributed more than \$11 billion to Nebraska's economy. Over 20 percent of all Nebraskans are employed in farm or farm-related jobs. Every dollar in agriculture exports generates \$1.48 in additional economic activity such as transportation, financing, warehousing and production. Cash receipts from farm marketings contributed more than \$11 billion to Nebraska's economy in 2005.

As impressive as those facts are, I do want to make sure that the rural way of life is enhanced and certainly encouraged to grow. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I look forward to helping draft the reauthorization of the next farm bill before it expires in September. My goal is to create a workable, comprehensive package which will strengthen American agriculture and provide long-term stability for our Nation's producers. Any attempt to make major reforms of the current farm program must be in the long-term interests of American agriculture. We know that we need good, sustainable policy. Taxpayers appreciate that, markets appreciate that, and we can achieve that with a good, hearty discussion. We must also aggressively pursue new markets and break down barriers to trade with other countries.

In doing so, we must remain mindful of other aspects of rural life, and that is, the shrinking communities throughout Nebraska and other rural areas. I serve as a member of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Rural Development, as well as the House Rural Caucus, and I know we must do all we can to strengthen and protect our rural communities, the backbone of our values and way of life. I look forward to helping create strong, sustainable world economies and responsible tax policies to encourage economic development for these areas.

As a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, I am also putting a priority on expanding modern technology in our district to support new and existing businesses, attract new employers and make our rural communities more competitive in the modern economy.

So what are we really celebrating this week? National Ag Day is a day to

recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture and our Nation's agriculture industry. Every year, producers, agriculture associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture during this week.

This year, National Ag Day was celebrated on March 21, 2007, the first day of spring, and National Ag Week of course runs through the rest of the week. Ag Day was first celebrated in 1973, and this is the 34th year of celebrating Ag Day on the first day of spring. I am proud to have this opportunity to make these remarks to take part in this celebration.

The Agriculture Council of America hosts the campaign on a national level; however, awareness efforts in communities across America are as influential, if not more, than the broad scale effort. If you are interested, I recommend checking out www.agday.org, once again www.agday.org. The Web site has a tremendous amount of information, and I thank the ACA for letting me use their information here today.

Ag Day is about recognizing and certainly celebrating the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced, to value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy, appreciate the role that agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

Why do we celebrate agriculture? Certainly, agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis, but too few people truly understand this contribution and certainly may not appreciate it as we should.

This is particularly the case in our schools where students may only be exposed to agriculture if they enroll in the very specific and related vocational training. By building awareness, the Agriculture Council of America is encouraging young people to consider career opportunities in agriculture.

Each American farmer feeds nearly 130 people, a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Let me repeat that: each American farmer feeds nearly 130 people and certainly a dramatic increase from the 25 people that each American farmer fed in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more and doing it better; and as the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

From a team of horses in the early 1900s to tractors with the power of 40 to 300 horses today, American farmers provide consumers with more and certainly better quality food than ever before. In fact, one farmer now supplies food, as I mentioned earlier, for about 129 people very specifically in the U.S. and abroad, compared to just 25.8 people in 1960.

The efficiency of the American farmer pays off in the price American consumers pay for food as well. The United States consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food, compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan, 27 percent in South Africa, and 53 percent in India. That is a pretty good deal.

This great value is due in large part to improved equipment efficiency, enhanced crop and livestock genetics through biotechnology and conventional breeding, and advances in information management.

All Americans are asked to enjoy and admire the wonders of American agriculture as National Agriculture Day is celebrated on the first day of spring as it was this last week.

Today's farmers work nearly 3½ times more land than their predecessors from the 1900s. Their needs are different, the crops are different, and the rules governing production practices are different. Most American farms are still family farms. Today, almost 99 percent of all U.S. farms are owned by individuals, family partnerships, or family corporations. Less than 1 percent of America's farms and ranches are owned by non-family corporations according to the Census of Agriculture.

Biotechnology certainly increases capacity and product quality. It is another factor in efficiency of American farmers in their ability to provide more and certainly higher quality food and livestock. Biotechnology provides benefits similar to traditional plant and livestock breeding but does so in a more controlled environment and with faster results.

Advancements made in plant biotechnology provide consumers with better quality products in many areas, and those benefits are just beginning.

There are many products in the biotechnology research pipeline that will provide better livestock feeding, resulting in leaner meat for consumers. Many of these same products will lessen the environmental impact of livestock production by reducing waste and/or the chemicals found in animal waste.

Pharmaceutical companies are actively working with farmers to develop crops that can go directly from the field to pharmaceutical production, eliminating some of the processing steps that occur in today's operations. This research will significantly reduce the costs required to produce many life-saving drugs.

Research and technology advancements have also resulted in new uses for commodity crops like corn, soybeans and various grains. Use of products like ethanol and soy diesel will reduce American dependence on fossil fuels and improve air quality throughout the United States and the world. Ethanol is the largest industrial use of these commodity crops, but soy diesel and other uses are emerging every year.

When it comes to ethanol, America's farmers do not just produce fuel for our bodies. Crops such as corn and soybeans are used to produce fuel for our vehicles. Renewable fuels contribute to a cleaner environment, reduce pollution and reliance on foreign oil and contribute to the stability of the world farm economy by creating commercial markets for crops.

With the record production of 2.81 billion gallons of ethanol in 2003, 1 billion bushels of corn and 12 percent of the grain soybean crop were used to produce fuel for our vehicles. In 2003, 73 ethanol plants were in operation in the United States, several in my district and in Nebraska. In fact, according to the USDA, one in every 10 rows of corn went into ethanol production in 2003. In both his 2006 and 2007 State of the Union addresses, President George Bush called for making renewable energy sources a national priority.

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His recent call for 35 billion gallons of renewable fuels, including ethanol and biodiesel, has led to crop producers and customers alike asking how we will meet the challenge without disrupting traditional markets.

The demand for corn, for ethanol production grew rapidly in 2006, and it will grow rapidly again this year. That has caused concern among corn and other end users, including the livestock industry and importers, like Japan. There is no question that a big transition is taking place. As producers will have to react more quickly to the market, so will our customers, the livestock industry, importers and ethanol industry.

There are new markets for ethanol 85, or E85, as we call it. Ethanol today is largely a blend component with gasoline. E85 is a mix of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. The ethanol blend adds octane and displaces toxics, which helps refiners meet Clean Air Act specifications. There are about 600 E85 refueling stations across the country. New market opportunities include E85 and ethanol fuel cells. Today there are millions of flexible fuel vehicles capable of using E85, but they make up less than 3 percent of the total U.S. motor vehicle fleet.

A valuable coproduct of ethanol is dried distillers grain solubles, a high-protein feedstock. A bushel of corn used in the dry-grind ethanol process yields 2.8 gallons of ethanol, 17 pounds of carbon dioxide and 16 pounds of distillers grains. Wet grains go to dairy and cattle rations; dry goes to hog and poultry, or when it is shipped. A majority of DDGs is fed to beef and dairy; however, swine and poultry consumption is increasing, although a very small percentage can be used now as the feed industry gains a better understanding of how best to utilize that product in those rations.

According to commodity specialist companies, dairy accounted for 45 percent of 2005 distillers grains consump-

tion in North America, while beef accounted for 37 percent. Swine accounted for 13 percent of the North American distillers grains use, while poultry made up 5 percent.

In the 2005–2006 marketing year, 8.35 million metric tons of distillers grains were produced. In 2006 and 2007, more than 10.8 million metric tons will be produced. By 2011 and 2012, the industry is expected to produce more than 20 million metric tons.

The supply of distillers grains has a displacement on the corn feed market. In 2005 and 2006, distillers grains displaced an estimated 3.89 million bushels of corn from feed markets, making that corn available for other uses.

Ethanol and biodiesel are just the beginning. Research continues to find new uses for agriculture commodities and waste. For example, livestock manure is being used to create electricity. Commodities such as soybean and canola are being developed as lubricants to replace petroleum-based products. Corn starch is replacing petroleum-based plastics. It's exciting to see these advancements.

American agriculture can also be celebrated for its effort in environmental conservation. Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for approximately 75 percent of this Nation's wildlife. The current farm bill has provisions for farmers to create environmental habitats that will ensure protection of the land and water resources of this country.

Farmers use computer and satellite technology to map the fields for production inputs. This increases yields and reduces crop inputs like fertilizer and crop-protection chemicals. With today's technology, farmers are better able to match seed production characteristics and production practices to soil type and climate conditions. The result is higher yields with lower input costs for more efficient use of chemicals, fertilizers and tillage. Ultimately, that results in more food at a lower cost for consumers.

Today's farmers understand the importance of improving the quality and quantity of food available to the world. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, it is estimated that there will be 7.5 billion people in the world by the year 2020. We currently are at 6.2 billion. It's agriculture's job to find a way to feed those people.

Advancements in crop technology, equipment technology and information management will make that possible. American farmers and others involved in the agriculture industry have met and will continue to meet this challenge again and again. World population growth is creating needs for food and fiber, obviously. World population is at 6.2 billion today, and expected again to reach 7.5 billion by the year 2020. There will be millions of new mouths to feed, many of whom rely on the United States' food production to meet this need.

The United States is best positioned to meet this growing need, as agriculture is America's number one export. Again, agriculture is America's number one export. About 17 percent of raw U.S. agriculture products are exported yearly.

U.S. farmers and ranchers produce more than 200 raw commodities yearly for domestic and export markets. One-fourth of the world's beef and nearly one-fifth of the world's grain, milk and eggs are produced in the U.S.

Through research and changes in production practices, today's food producers are providing Americans with the widest variety of foods ever. Research and advancements in biotechnology are now in the marketplace with tastier fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are not damaged by insects. Consumers derive health benefits from changes in farm production, including less fat in meat, longer-lasting fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as tofu, a soybean product which has been shown to reduce the risk of some cancer and heart disease.

Certainly technology leads the way in today's agriculture protection. Precision farming boosts crop yields and reduces waste by using satellite maps and computers to match seed, fertilizer and crop-protection applications to local soil conditions. Sophisticated global positioning systems, as we call GPS, can be specifically designed for spraying herbicides and pesticides. A weed detector equipped with infrared light identifies specific plants by the different rays of light they reflect and then sends a signal to a pump to spray a preset amount of herbicide onto the weed.

Biogenetics is another technology that is being utilized in crop production. A particular trait is implanted directly into the seed to protect the seed against certain pests. Artificial insemination of livestock is producing more and certainly better meat supplies.

Farmers are utilizing four-wheel-drive tractors with up to 300 horsepower, requiring fewer passes across fields, saving energy and time. Huge combines are speeding the time it takes to harvest crops. That leads to more efficient use of energy.

With modern methods, 1 acre of land in the U.S. about the size of a football field can produce 42,000 pounds of strawberries, 11,000 heads of lettuce, 25,400 pounds of potatoes, 8,900 pounds of sweet corn, or 640 pounds of cotton lint. America is producing not only more food, but certainly higher quality and lower costs.

Two out of every three bushels of corn in the world originate in the United States. In 2001, 45 percent of the world's soybeans were grown in the United States. American consumers spend the lowest percentage of their annual income on food, just 9.3 percent. Nearly 19 billion pounds of pork, the most widely eaten meat, were processed in 2001. Cotton is by far the most dominant fiber produced in the United

States, and, as you know, is used for apparel, home fabrics, as well as industrial uses.

Fertilizer and pesticides contribute to increases in production, as crop-production products have tripled the output of resource-intensive food like cooking oil, meat, fruits and vegetables. Crop-production products have doubled the production of world food calories since 1960. Without synthetic crop-production chemicals, American farmers certainly cannot feed the world.

Farmers are good stewards of the land's environment as well. Farmers and ranchers are the first environmentalists, maintaining and improving the soil and natural resources to pass on to the future generations. Farmers use reduced tillage practices on more than 72 million acres to prevent erosion. Farmers maintain over 1.3 million acres of grass waterways, allowing water to flow naturally from crops without eroding soil. Contour farming, planting crops, which is planting crops on hillsides instead of up and down, keeps soil from washing away. About 26 million acres in the United States are managed this way. Cattle ranchers and others control water run-off with sod waterways and diversions, erosion-control structures and catch basins.

Just as urban families recycle grass, newspaper and aluminum, farm families have practiced recycling for a long time by applying manure to fields to replace nutrients in the soil. Food service food scraps are used to make animal feed. Agriculture land provides habitat, again, for 75 percent of the Nation's wildlife.

Let's discuss the profile of the farmer. More than 3 million people farm or ranch in the United States. Individuals, family partnerships or family corporations operate almost 99 percent of U.S. farms. Over 22 million people are employed in farm or farm-related jobs, including production agriculture, farm inputs, processing and marketing, and wholesale and retail sales.

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, 50 percent of the farmers are 55 years of age or older, up only 3 percent from 1997. The average age of the principal operator is 55.3 years. Forty-one percent of U.S. total land area is farmland. In 1900, the average farm size was 147 acres, compared to 441 acres today.

The top five agriculture commodities are cattle and calves, dairy products, broilers, corn and soybeans. U.S. farmers produce 46 percent of the world's soybeans, 41 percent of the world's corn, 20.5 percent of the world's cotton and 13 percent of the world's wheat.

Let me repeat that, because I believe that we are losing sight of how important these markets are. U.S. farmers produce 46 percent of the world's soybeans, 41 percent of the world's corn, 20.5 percent of the world's cotton and 13 percent of the world's wheat.

Farmers and ranchers are independent business people who provide for their families by growing and pro-

ducing food and fiber. Farmers and ranchers are producing meat lower in fat and cholesterol. This has resulted in retail cuts that are 15 percent leaner, giving consumers better value for their dollar. For example, a pork tenderloin now has only one more gram of fat than a skinless chicken breast, one of the true fat lightweights, so to speak. Also much leaner beef cuts are being produced much more now than 20 years ago, resulting in 27 percent less fat reaching the retail case than in 1985.

Research and advancements in biotechnology are now in the marketplace with better fruit and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are not damaged by insects. A new technology called precision farming boosts the crop yields and reduces waste by using satellite maps in computers to match seed, fertilizer and crop-protection applications to local soil conditions.

As the amount of mechanization and horsepower and farm machinery has increased, the time needed to complete tasks has decreased. Combines, these huge machines used to harvest grains such as corn, soybeans and wheat, have dramatically changed agriculture. In the 1930s, before the machines were available, a farmer could harvest an average of 100 bushels of corn by hand in a 9-hour day. Today's combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour, or 100 bushels of corn in under 7 minutes.

The efficiency of U.S. farmers benefits the United States consumer in the pocketbook. Americans spend less on food than any other developed Nation in the world. On average, again, in 2004, Americans spent only 2 percent of their disposable income on meat and poultry compared to 4.1 percent in 1970.

I think it's important, as we reflect on all of these numbers, it can be a little overwhelming. But it's important to reflect the importance of agriculture, as we look at National Agriculture Week, and certainly as we look to the future. Hopefully we can learn from our past, the policies that, perhaps, discourage trade or policies that come down in a Draconian manner on farmers and ranchers. I will get to more of that in a few minutes.

Meanwhile, I would like to yield to my friend from Iowa, as he would like to discuss American agriculture as well.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) for bringing the highlight on agriculture here, because this is Agriculture Week. I am confident there have been some Agriculture Weeks go by here in this Congress without mention of such an important event.

I would like to take this discussion, if I could, I would like to take this discussion to a broader point, an overall point over the components that Mr. SMITH has laid out here and try to put it into a perspective of where we are today in agriculture, and what it means for the future of agriculture, and what it means for the future of the world.

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And I look back upon some of the great movements that have taken place in the history of humanity. And those movements being, for example, we go back to the stone age, and then from the stone age we move into the bronze age, and then the iron age, and then the industrial age.

In the industrial age we figured out how we could have labor that would be compartmentalized in its approach so that it wasn't one person that made all the components of a machine and put it together, but it was mass production. And in the industrial era, when we took to mass production, we raised the level of the standard of our living and raised the level of our technology dramatically. That was the Industrial Revolution.

And then we came along into the information age, where we figured out with the invention of the microchip that we could store and transfer information faster and more efficiently than ever before. And it took both the industrial era and the information age, took our society, took our culture to a higher level. A quantum leap in our economy.

Well, agriculture has really sat here, and since the inception of agriculture, the first time I think it was a cavewoman, planted some seeds outside the cave or recognized that they were growing, and they figured out how to cultivate crops thousands of years ago. What agriculture has done for thousands of years has just produced food and fiber. Produced it a lot better than they ever did before, more efficiently than ever before, as Mr. SMITH has articulated very well about the increase in our production and our production capability, nearly an entire semi-load in a single hour today. But it is still food and fiber. Food and fiber for thousands of years the foundation of agriculture. But today we are going the next level up. We are food, fiber, and renewable fuels. A third level now for agriculture.

And I believe that the fuel components, the ethanol, the biodiesel in particular, and then the way we are able to render animal fats back into biodiesel, so now we have taken this next level not just for energy and not just for fuel, but at the same time where biotech has moved agriculture up to another level to where we are really in the middle of science at the same time.

But I think that agriculture has gone from that level of food and fiber and has taken the kind of quantum leap up into food, fiber, renewable fuel, and biotech products, the same kind of quantum leap that our society took when we went into the information age or when we went into the Industrial Revolution. Those are huge, huge things that we need to contemplate here, the efficiencies that have come into agriculture and the technology.

So today I have the privilege of representing one of the top ethanol production and biodiesel, actually wind

generation of electricity production, renewable fuels production congressional districts in America. And I have watched that capital be invested. Private capital last year invested over \$1 billion in infrastructure to produce renewable energy just in my congressional district, one out of 435 congressional districts, Mr. Speaker. And that is a huge investment, but it also says a lot about an industry that is being developed and an industry that is growing, and it is making us less dependent on Middle Eastern oil.

And as we move forward into cellulose, and we are very confident that we can develop the technology to produce cellulosic ethanol, that opens up vast acres for the production of cellulose that has not been used in that kind of an efficient fashion before. And, again, that will produce a significantly larger portion of our ethanol that will go then to reduce our dependency on Middle Eastern gas.

But that is the energy side of this. And I talk about the energy side a lot, and I would like to maybe stretch our minds a little bit on what can happen with the biotech side, what is happening with the biotech side.

For example, there is biotech research that recognizes that there are 25 million little babies in the world each year that die unnecessarily due to the dehydration that is associated with diarrhea. And if the lactopheron, the component of mother's milk, can get into that little baby, that little baby that is on its last gasp and if we can put lactopheron in that baby, within 3 to 4 days that baby has its health back, its vigor back, and the baby is ready to go home with its mother. Well, we can't find enough and produce enough lactopheron by going to the mothers to extract it from their milk. But what we have done with biotech is spliced that lactopheron genetic chain into rice; and so then when we harvest the rice, we bring the rice back in and we extract the lactopheron, that genetic chain of lactopheron from the rice, and turn it into a little powder lactopheron that is a little piece of powder in a packet like maybe the sugar you put in your coffee. You tear that, drop that into a little vial of water, stir it up, warm it a little, give it to that baby that would be dead in a few hours, and that baby springs back to life and in 3 to 4 days that baby is ready to go home. That is science and technology.

And today we can save the lives of 6 million babies on 60 acres of rice. And we are extracting that lactopheron up there in our neighborhood, not very far from the Missouri River, I would add, Mr. SMITH. It is on my side. That is one of the great things that we can do and are doing with science.

Another one is trypsin, and that is a component that you find in your tears. And as those tears wash across the eyeball, they are an antiseptic that keeps your eyes from getting infection in them, and one of the things from that would be pink eye. So we have also

learned how to synthesize trypsin. And you see the pictures, especially Africa and in poor countries, of flies walking across little children's eyeballs. Well, the trypsin cures the blindness that comes from that kind of an affliction. That is another piece of biotech science that we have going on.

Another one, and I would say, Mr. Speaker, this is the most impressive and fantastic development and I am going to call it also agriculture. Of all the presentations that I have heard, of all the briefings that I have had the privilege to receive, this one is I believe the most impressive and has tremendous implications for all of humanity, and that is that today we have spliced through transgenics, and we can clone and use transgenics in the same operation, and it goes on thousands of times a day in America, at least the attempts to do, but splice through transgenics the human immune system into that of a hog. Now, we raise a few hogs in our neighborhood, too, so we are paying attention to those things. But it happens that not very far from where I live there is only one person in the country that is, at least for profit, bringing pigs by cesarean in a sterile environment. And this is Dr. Rexanne Struve, Manning, Iowa. She is working with a doctor from Pennsylvania who is working out of Blacksburg, Virginia, Virginia Tech University. And there they have spliced the immune genetics from a baboon into that of a hog, and raised that hog up until the hog was of adequate size that they could go in and harvest the heart from that hog and transplant it into a baboon.

Now this being an experiment, the baboon lived for 6 months. Now, that is a little better than the first human heart transplant; I think significantly better.

But what they have proven now is that they are confident that they can transplant through transgenics this human immune system into a hog. And in doing so, and we are only 3 years, maybe 4 years away from being able to do this effectively, they can also custom build the organ rejection genetics. There are 12 major indicators, and they can put together the configuration of those 12 major indicators so they have the highest possibility of organ acceptance on a transplant and the lowest possibility of rejection for an organ transplant. So we will be able to very soon custom raise human organs in hogs. And today we are transplanting out of hogs anterior cruciate ligaments, knee ligaments, Mr. Speaker, and also heart valves. And we have done that for years. And the reason we can do that is that cartilage, and so there is not a rejection factor for cartilage.

But organs themselves; so I brought up we can raise in hogs 28 different organs. Not just hearts, but lungs, esophagus, stomach, bladder. One of the important ones, kidneys, pancreas, liver. Name your organ. Except for the brain;

we really don't plan to transplant that hog's brain in there. I think there are some folks in this Congress that might have had that already happen, Mr. SMITH. At any rate, we would limit that organ. But there are 28 organs that we believe we can utilize in transplanting those organs from a hog into a human being. We had success doing that with anterior cruciate ligaments and with heart valves. We can surely do that with all the other organs.

And one of the most important is skin transplants. The burn victims that we have, the burn victims coming back from Iraq, to be able to give them a new skin that is custom raised in the feed lot in a sterile, sterile environment. And then the next step after that is to match your identical DNA, Mr. Speaker, so you can have your own customized hog there that has got customized organs that are identical as if they happened to have been your twin brother.

We will get there with this science, and it won't be there very long from now, 2 to 3 years on the first part of this matching the DNA chains exactly to take a sample. And raising those organs will happen within about, I am going to say, 12 to 15 years. But those are some of the things that we can do with biotechs in both the plant and animal science. And couple that with the renewable fuels, couple that with the tremendous production that we have provided. At the same time, we have more soil conservation, better water conservation, more fertilizer conservation, better land management, better processing and handling of our manure, for example.

There is no better steward for the environment than the American farmer. No one cares more about their water quality. No one cares more about their air quality. They live right in the middle of that every day, and they care about their land. They want to hand that along to the next generation and the next generation. The best stewards are the ones in charge, and they are in Iowa, they are in Nebraska, they are all across the Corn Belt, all across the soybean area, and they go from coast to coast with the specialty crop farmers.

This is a tremendous production system that we have in the United States, with outstanding and impressive people that commit their lives to feeding the world. And we need to honor them today on Ag Week here on the floor of Congress. And I certainly appreciate and respect the gentleman from Nebraska for raising this issue and being here tonight and for the opportunity to say a few words.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING). I appreciate the fact that you speak to the future. As we look at so many of the aspects of agriculture, I think sometimes we forget about the future and how far we have come.

We have water challenges in Nebraska. And it is interesting, in the

middle of about a 7-year drought, I don't think enough credit is given to the better practices that have been engaged in Nebraska relating to irrigation, that we are seeing record amounts of yields, record yields amidst about 50 percent reduction in irrigation.

Now, there are also those critics out there, they tend to be critical of the fact that there aren't return flows from the former flowing of irrigation perhaps that many would consider waste. But it is interesting that as farmers become more and more efficient, they are also criticized along the way, and I think that that is unfortunate. When you talk about energy, it is absolutely vital that we realize that, even amidst corn prices that are strong, we have unprecedented costs of inputs especially related to energy, whether it is the fertilizer or whether it is the diesel for the tractor.

And that is what makes me nervous about these urges to regulate industry even more, that it will drive up the cost. And not only electricity for the consumer in their residence, but it will drive up the cost of energy, as we see it on farms and ranches. And that will drive up the cost of food, plain and simple. And as I stated earlier, we have come a long way in terms of producing food in an affordable format.

I was reading through, and I noticed part of the essay contest winner from the Ag Council of America, and this is the 2007 winner, LaTasha Cote, a 12th grader from Myrtle, Missouri Couch High School. And students from 7th to 12th grade submitted original essays of 450 words about the importance of agriculture in the United States. Under the theme, "American Agriculture in 2025," students were encouraged to focus their essays on the potential landscape of American agriculture in 2025 based on where we are today and the opportunities that lie ahead. And Ms. Cote read her essay to industry representatives, Members of Congress, Federal agency representatives, media and others in a celebration of agriculture; and let me share with you just an excerpt:

"The alarm sounds off at about 8:00 a.m. A young man reaches over to turn it off, gets up, jumps in the shower, eats his breakfast, and then heads out the door toward the milk barn. There is no rush to get to the cows because they have already been milked.

"He begins to check the computer system to see the amount of milk produced from the third milking of the day. Immediately, a very precise chart pops up and gives the percentage of milk given per second, the amount of butter fat, and accurately tells the farmer the exact weight of the milk.

"Wait, where is the reality check? Well, there isn't one. This is only one example of how far the industry in all farms has come since the year of 2007."

And I haven't had a chance to read the entire piece, but I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms.

Cote and every student who submitted an essay in the contest. I think that it may be even sooner than 2025 when we see these things come about, but it is great to see young people looking to the future.

As we look at the big picture of agriculture, certainly globally we always think of trade, and I think the unfortunate situation with the closure of our beef, the rejection of our beef in many cases to Asia, but it does I think send a message to the larger issue of where we are at with livestock in America. It is interesting that we do find ourselves with a bit of a shortage of grain to feed our livestock.

□ 1415

And as we try to address this shortage, certainly, I think it can be best if the government stays out of the way. But when I hear concerns of this and the livestock industry, perhaps, getting a little worried, it worries me, too, because the livestock industry has been absolutely crucial to economies of rural America. And the fact that these economies are not, I think, appreciated like they should be, it is interesting to note how further regulations of the recent past have led to many livestock operations having to become much, much larger. And as they become much larger, certainly, others become concerned about the livestock waste.

And it was encouraging to me last year to finally see some understanding that we don't want policies that force the producer to get larger. We want them to have the options of getting larger should they pursue that. Should they feel comfortable with their current status, that is fine, too.

It is interesting, though, as we see large operators, small operators, middle-size, medium-size operators, we have to realize that I believe our fundamental responsibility is to create opportunities. Government can create opportunities, not through a check necessarily, but we can create policy opportunities so that the little guy has the option of getting larger and can prosper and pursue the economic dreams that they wish to.

And the gentleman from Iowa certainly pointed out the fact that there are a lot of promising scenarios out there. As I go across the Third District of Nebraska and I visit operators, whether they are small or large, it is so encouraging to see people engaged in the economy. And as they are engaged, whether it is at a beef cattle processing plant or a pork processing plant, or an ethanol plant, or whether they are even creating biodiesel in their garage, I think there is just tremendous opportunity, and that I believe it is my responsibility to maybe not protect that opportunity, but to expand that and to make sure that every producer, every taxpayer has that opportunity to grow and, hopefully, make a greater living, and the government won't take it all away from them, and they can reapply that through available capital back into the economy.

And if the gentleman from Iowa would like to participate, go ahead.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I appreciate the gentleman from Nebraska yielding. And as you discussed, the future of agriculture, and especially the young families, the families that are going to be raising their families on the farm and working in agribusiness in the towns, and it occurs to me that we often don't discuss about entrepreneurial agriculture. And it used to be that that was all we had was entrepreneurial agriculture. The traditional agriculture that I grew up with and in the middle of was purely, almost purely, entrepreneurial.

And yet we went through the farm crisis in the 1980s, and I recall those days. I lived for 3½ years with a knot in my gut, Mr. Speaker, wondering if I was going to make it through from week to week. And sometimes your identity of your life's work is what you do. And I was in an ag-related business.

But the point that I want to make is that I saw this happen. And I saw producers, our bank closed April 26, 1985, Friday afternoon, 3 o'clock, not too far from where this clock sits right now. And the red tag went on the door of the bank, and the Highway Patrol guarded the doors. And everybody's account was frozen; my account, the accounts of my customers. And I had a payroll to meet, and I literally had two pennies in my pocket was all I had to work with. I could rub them together and, in fact, I did rub them together and think about the symbolism of what had happened.

Also, we had pretty good balanced ag operations going on at that time, with a significant commitment to the livestock industry. And so we had row croppers there raising soybeans and corn, and also cattle, hogs and some turkey feeders.

And as the new owner in the bank, which was identified over the weekend, began to take up the loan applications and the financial applications, now this is right in the middle of prime corn-planting time, April 26 in 1985. To have your account shut down, have your credit line shut down, and if you didn't have your inputs all purchased and delivered, no one knew if you had any credit or if they would ever be paid or not or how it would unfold.

So what happened was loan applicant after applicant that had been financed the day before began to line up to get applications, get their application reconsidered by the new owners. And the new owners, being prudent financiers, took a look at those balance sheets and the list of assets, and they asked the question, where are we the most vulnerable? Where are we most likely to lose our money? Well, that would be the livestock because it can die. And what is the most liquid commodity you have that you can turn it into cash the most quickly? That would also be the livestock.

And so the livestock was loaded up, hauled to the sale barn, ordered to

slaughter, and farmer after farmer, neighbor after neighbor was taken out of the livestock business. And then they could set up so that these same producers could stay in the row crop business, and, because of the programs we had and the risk management tools that were in place then, and we have better ones in place today, because of that, they could lock them into the point where if they had a reasonable yield and not too much bad luck, they could stay in business another year and maybe another year.

So these balanced risk-spread operations, diversified ag operations, became row-crop operations. Livestock went on the truck and was shipped. And then so went the equipment that was necessary to support the livestock. Often the best combine was lined up and sold, and maybe even the best tractor, or even the best pickup, also sold, shrunk the operation down to where they could stay in business.

Now, that was a good thing to keep them in business, but we lost the livestock tradition. And we are rebuilding that now, and the industry has changed so much. But the entrepreneurialism that came with that, much of that disappeared at the same time, Mr. Speaker. And so what we need to have is people that can make a good living by taking risks and by investing in new ideas and new approaches.

Now, livestock has been a traditional approach, and it has been the mortgage lifter for years. Especially the hog production has been the mortgage lifter. But then to broaden that out and to raise specialty crops today with some of the biotech industry we had that I mentioned a little bit earlier.

Or I happened to come across, about 4 years ago, during a political campaign, a family in my district that had 1,300 acres. Presumably they were crop acres. I would suspect they were not all crop acres. But one of those 1,300 acres, it was all to corn that year except 1 acre, and that 1 acre was set aside to what I would call a glorified garden. And they had six kids, and these six kids must have turned out a lot of good, healthy development child labor. But that single acre, that acre of corn that that year that it went in was only penciled out at \$300 an acre. This single acre of this glorified garden, high labor-intensive, highly managed type of an operation produced \$27,000 worth of crop on that single acre. Now, they might have put \$40,000 worth of child labor into that, but they learned a work ethic, and they learned marketing, and they learned rotation, and they learned irrigation, and they learned weed management. But \$27,000 per acre.

So when I found out about this, and I am sure there are other similar stories out there. It occurs to me that someplace between that, it is more than \$300 an acre now, of course, but on that day, about \$300 an acre for that field of corn versus \$27,000 for that single acre of garden.

Between those two are all kinds of alternatives that are there for the entrepreneurs. So if they want to go the route of a lot of hard stoop labor and a lot of intense management and take on that labor to do that and try to pull that \$27,000 out of that acre, or if they want to add some other things like organic, or if they want to raise specialty crops, all of these things need to be open for the young producers, and that is where they will find their extra margin profit. Not raising so much program crops; that is a baseline income that maintains the value of the land. But to up the ante, take a little more risk, put more management skill in, more labor in, and raise these specialty crops that, some of which I have talked about, and the organics on top of that, we will see young producers take that on because it is more labor-intensive, and young people are usually short of capital, and so what can they do? Well, they have got more labor that they can provide. They can do the work.

So I am looking forward to watching and hoping to provide the tools for the young agricultural entrepreneurs in both the crop and in the animal sciences for them to develop high-value commodities. And as they begin to feed the world, species after species, crop after crop, and we haven't gone anywhere near touching the surface of the things that we can do with biotech.

One of the other points, this is another scientific mind-stretcher, and that is that about, let's see, the years now come, about 32 years ago there was a rather dangerous species of an Asian animal, a bovine-related animal called a gaur, spelled G-A-U-R. And that animal had been in the San Diego Zoo for years. This poor gaur was getting old and had gone down, and it looked like it was going to die. Well, the zookeepers there or the scientists took a punch out of the ear of that gaur, froze it in liquid nitrogen at about, I think, 421 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and kept that little piece of that ear of that endangered species animal that had died frozen for 28 years. And they picked that up and they sent it, then, about, oh, I am going to say 6 years ago on up to a town, a lab in Sioux Center, Iowa, called Trans Ova. There Dr. Jan Schietemann took that frozen piece of tissue, and he cloned that gaur animal by implanting the nucleus of that that he could take from that cell and cloning that into the egg of a cow, and implanted that embryo that was created, the cloned embryo of the gaur, into the uterus of the cow, where this gaur, this rare animal, kind of looks like a yak if you look him up on the Google image page.

This animal then was cloned and raised up, and the cow had this calf, a genetic copy of the animal that had died more than 28 years earlier. And about a year later, they shipped that young juvenile gaur back to the San Diego Zoo, where I presume he is still walking around and living happily ever after.

Now, that is a space age, Star Wars kind of a thing. But when you think about what we can do with that kind of science and how we can improve our herds, how we can improve productivity, how we can improve the meat quality and the feed conversion factors, how we can reduce and eradicate and in some cases eliminate disease, how we can work with all of that, at the same time opening up the field so that the ag producers across this country can continue to make a living and feed America is a very, very optimistic story. And I think we are in the best position right now in agriculture that we have ever been in the history of the United States and, in fact, the history of the world, and I am just sorry I am not going to be around long enough to see where it is going to take the next generation of humanity.

But I wanted to express those things. And I appreciate it. And I yield back to the gentleman from Nebraska and thank him.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. I thank the gentleman from Iowa. As I wrap this up, I certainly want to thank the gentleman for really focusing on the future, and I think the sky is the limit when we can focus on the benefits of agriculture and perhaps the things we take for granted.

But as we talk about the future and younger generations engaging in agriculture, I find it unconscionable that the so-called death tax, or, in a more technical sense, the estate tax, would go back up to 55 percent, and that a subsequent generation on a farm or ranch would have to come up with cash to inherit that farm or ranch. That is sad. That is un-American. I think it is insensitive to taxpayers, and I think it has an immense disregard for the future and economic impact that that would have.

I think too many people think that only certain departments of the grocery store really come from agriculture, as we would think of it. But the fact is it is involved in health care, whether it is pharmaceutical, surgical sutures, ointments, X-ray film, latex gloves, gelatin for capsules and heart valves, or with construction, lumber, paint, brushes, tar paper, other things. And I could go on a list that would take much more time than I can consume here today.

But the fact is, we have come a long way, and we can go a lot further as we focus on opportunities, as we look at the fact that we need each other. Farmers need consumers. Consumers need farmers. And in between those entities, there is opportunity, whether it is processing, whether it is research. I think we can go a lot further than we have already come as we look to the future.

□ 1430

Again I would like to thank the Agriculture Council of America for providing a lot of this information and the very hands-on approach that they take

and certainly look forward to working with them as I serve the people of the Third District of Nebraska and as farmers of the Third District of Nebraska and farmers and ranchers continue to feed the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LOEBSACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, and our entire Democratic leadership for the opportunity for the 30-Something Working Group to once again come to the floor and talk about the priorities of the Democratic Caucus and the new direction for America that we are humbled to be able to lead this country in.

On November 7 of last year, the American people spoke loudly and clearly, Mr. Speaker, that it was imperative that we move this Nation in a new direction on a variety of issues, not the least of which is the direction that we are going in in this war in Iraq. And I am so proud today to be able to stand here knowing that the vote that I cast personally and that the 217 other Members that passed that legislation off this floor this afternoon cast so that we can now finally begin to ensure that our troops will have the armor that they need, the armor and equipment that they need, a plan to get them home most importantly, and to ensure that we can begin to transition in Iraq so that the Iraqi people will be able to stand on their own, run their democracy and make sure that they can focus on solving the civil war and the strife that is going on in the midst of their country, because that is essentially what we have been doing for them. What we have been doing for them that we can no longer continue to do is inserting ourselves in the middle of their chaos without plans to be able to withdraw, without a single brigade of their army completely trained to stand on their own. It is time and the American people have insisted that it is time to begin to move in the direction where we can shift the mission from combat to training, where we can focus our troops that will remain there by the end of next year on counterterrorism, on putting down the insurgency and on making sure that the Iraqi troops are well trained so that they can continue to move forward with their experiment in democracy. That is what the legislation that we passed today will do, and I am so proud of our caucus and of our colleagues and of our leadership for the work that we have done together, for the unity that we showed, for the courage that so many of our colleagues showed, Mr.

Speaker. We have a very diverse caucus, a very diverse group of Democratic Members who for a variety of reasons, for a variety of soul searching were able to come together from all of the different facets of the philosophical spectrum, to come together today and pass this extremely important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in public office for 14 years. I have only served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 2 years, but that was one of the most emotional experiences and the most difficult experiences that I know I have gone through. And I cast that vote knowing that I had the support of my constituents, knowing and confident that my constituents want to make sure that we can bring those American troops home.

I had an opportunity to travel and spend some time with our troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center a few weeks ago before we voted on the resolution opposing the President's escalation proposal. I have said this the last few times we have talked about this on the floor. I had a chance to speak to a number of different troops individually. One young man who has stayed with me, and I think I've thought about him and his family every single day since then. As a mom with little kids, I have 7-year-old twins and a 3-year-old little girl. Almost every major vote I cast, I cast with them in mind. There is another generation of Americans who we are going to protect from that vote that we cast today. And this young man who I had a chance to meet with, he had just gotten home from his third tour of duty. Each was a year. His third tour and his 6-year-old little boy was in the room along with his wife and his little boy was so excited and just full of vibrancy and life. He shook my hand. It was just so neat to be able to talk to him. He told me that his daddy was finally going to be coming home for good, forever, in August. He had come down with a really inexplicable illness and was convalescing at Walter Reed. And when the young man told me that he had been through his third tour of duty and that his boy was 6, it was not lost on me that he had missed half of his son's life, a 6-year-old little boy with his dad gone for 3 separate years. That is just unacceptable. That is not what the procedures are supposed to require of our men and women in uniform. There is supposed to be at least 365 days of noncombat duty in between tours. The legislation that we passed today will ensure that that will happen. The legislation that we passed today will ensure that our troops have the equipment that they need. It will ensure that \$1.7 billion in funding will provide the health care that our veterans need.

I listened to a lot of the speeches on the floor, almost all of them, today. What we continually heard from our friends on the other side of the aisle was almost as if maybe they didn't