

this nut. It is going to be a very difficult nut to crack, but it has to be if it is going to help our farmers because right now our farmers are being taken advantage of by the Europeans—pure and simple. Nobody disputes that.

It is up to us to try to figure out a way to solve that one. I know that the more we criticize Europe, the more it makes us feel good, but it probably causes Europeans to dig their heels in a little more, and I do not know how much it will get the problem solved. We have to find leverage and some commonsense way to go about it and deal with this issue.

The leverage I suggest is the WTO “trigger,” as I call it, the export subsidy trigger. This legislation I have introduced essentially provides that if the Europeans do not reduce their agricultural subsidies by 50 percent in a couple years, then the United States is directed to spend EEP dollars in a like amount. If they do not eliminate them in another year, then the United States is directed to spend several billion dollars in EEP directed and targeted exactly at European producers, the European countries. So that is one bit of leverage.

I am also going to introduce legislation soon. It is agricultural surge legislation, to prevent farmers from suffering so much from import surges from other countries to the United States. We need action such as that and then to sit down calmly and coolly to talk with the Europeans, talk with the Chinese and the Japanese and the Canadians, to find a solution.

There are a lot of other things we need to do to help our farmers. Many have talked about the concentration of the beef packing industry, and they are right; there is way too much concentration of the beef packing industry, which is hurting our producers. There is labeling in this bill that helps.

There is one big omission. Seventy Senators voted to end the unilateral sanctions on food and medicine. The conferees disregarded the views of 70 Senators. They took that out. I do not know why. It does not make any sense why the conferees took that out of this conference report, particularly when 70 Senators, on a bipartisan basis, said, hey, we should not have unilateral sanctions on medicine and food; it should not be there. I wish they had not done that. Clearly, we have to find a way to get that passed.

I will stop here, Mr. President, because I see a lot of other Senators on the floor who wish to speak. But I strongly urge a heavy vote for this conference report and in a deeper sense—because obviously it is going to pass—calling upon us to back off from the partisanship. Let's start to think as men and women, as people. We are supposed to be educated. We are supposed to be smart. We are supposed to be leaders in a certain sense. Let's do it.

Let's act as grownups, adults, problem solvers. That is all I am asking. It is not a lot. Over the recess, I hope we think a little bit about that, so when we come back next year, we can start to solve some problems.

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, on one other matter, although I told the Senator from Mississippi I would not address this subject, I am going to do so very briefly. That is the other matter before the Senate today, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

This is a no-brainer. It is an absolute no-brainer. It makes no sense, no sense whatsoever, for the Senate to disregard the views of the President of the United States to bring up the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty knowing it is going to fail. It makes no sense. It is irresponsible. It is tragic. I cannot believe the Senate will let that happen. I cannot believe it because of the obvious signal it is going to send around the world.

What is that signal? The signal is: The United States is abrogating its leadership. The United States is sticking its tail between its legs and running away. It is leaving the scene. It is not being a leader. I cannot believe the Senate will allow that treaty to come up knowing it is going to be a negative vote.

I do not know what planet I am on—Mars, Pluto, Jupiter—to think of what the Senate could possibly do today. It is outrageous.

While I am on that point, let me speak toward bipartisanship just briefly. It used to be when the President of the United States had a major foreign policy request of the Congress, politics would stop at the water's edge. Politics would stop because it would be such an important national issue, and the Congress—Republicans and Democrats—would work together on major foreign policy issues.

There is plenty of opportunity for politics in the United States. There is plenty of opportunity—too much. It is highly irresponsible for the Senate to stick its thumb in the eye of the President of the United States when the President of the United States requests that there not be a vote on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, whatever his reasons might be, and say: We don't care what you think, Mr. President; we're going to vote anyway because we want to knock this thing down.

I just cannot believe it. It is just beyond belief.

I very much hope that later on today and in future days, Senators will think more calmly about this, exercise a little prudence, and do what Senators are elected to do; that is, be responsible and do what is right, not what is political.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the conference report on the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations bill. I regret very much having to do this because I appreciate the fact that all across our country, farmers are in need of assistance. I recognize that it is important to try to get some of these programs out to them. But I am very frank to tell the Senate that I think the conference badly overlooked the pressing problems which the farmers in the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic are facing. I can't, in good conscience, support a bill which simply fails to take into account the situation with which we are confronted, a situation which is unparalleled.

Steven Weber, President of the Maryland Farm Bureau, was recently quoted as saying:

This is not just another crisis. This is the worst string of dry summers and the worst run of crop years since the 1930s. Talk to the old-timers. They haven't seen anything like it since they were young.

Our farmers have been absolutely devastated by the weather we have experienced, not only over this past farming season but in previous ones leading up to it as well. We face a very pressing situation.”

In addition, I think this bill fails to address the needs of our dairy farmers. I will discuss that issue subsequently. First, I want to address the disaster assistance.

Most of the disaster assistance that is available under existing programs is in the form of low-interest loans for those who have been rejected twice by commercial lenders. What this approach fails to recognize is that our farmers have been hit with a double whammy. First of all, they had the low commodity prices which farmers all across the country have confronted; and in addition, in our particular situation, our farmers were confronted by severe drought problems, as I have indicated, unparalleled in the memory of those now farming for more than half a century. Low-interest loans simply won't work to address the collective and drastic impact of these factors.

Recognizing that, we sought substantially more and more direct disaster assistance in the Conference Agreement. And the response that the Conferees made to this request—the \$1.2 billion that is in this bill—is clearly inadequate. The Secretary of Agriculture estimated that in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic, we needed \$1.5 to \$2 billion just for those States alone. Never

mind, of course, comparable damage, either drought or floods, that have occurred in other parts of the country which also need assistance. Indeed, it should not be our goal to identify an amount of funding where we have to take from one to give to the other. These states need assistance as well. What we are arguing is that this package ought to be comprehensive enough to meet the needs in the agricultural sector all across the country. I appreciate that other parts of the country have been hit with droughts and floods and that we must address these needs as well, but the amount provided in this conference report for disaster assistance is clearly inadequate to accomplish this goal. The amount that this legislation provides and that which will eventually make its way into the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic States will not enable us to confront the problem bleakly staring our farmers in the face.

We wrote to the conferees, a number of us from this region of the country, asking them to consider the following measures. I regret that very little weight was given to this request. All of them, I think, are exceedingly reasonable requests, and had they been addressed, it would have affected, obviously, the perspective I take on this legislation.

We asked the conference committee to consider the following measures: First, crop loss disaster assistance programs that provide direct payments to producers based on actual losses of 1999 plantings. These payments could be drawn from the Commodity Credit Corporation funds without an arbitrary limit. The arbitrary limit currently in the agreement precludes comprehensive assistance and delays the availability of the assistance. We asked that yield loss thresholds and payment levels be determined in advance so the payments can be made to producers as soon as they apply, rather than providing a fixed amount which would require all producers to apply before a payment factor can be determined and payments can be issued. We asked for this measure because these farmers need the help now. They need it quickly. They are under terrific pressure.

Secondly, we asked the committee to consider sufficient livestock feed assistance, which addresses losses in pasture and forage for livestock operations, provides direct payments to producers based on a percentage of their supplemental feed needs, determined in advance to speed payments and avoids prorating.

Thirdly, we requested the conference to consider credit assistance which addresses the needs of producers who have experienced natural and market loss disasters.

Fourthly, we asked the conference for adequate funding to employ additional staff for the Farm Service Agen-

cy and the National Resource Conservation Service so they could swiftly and expeditiously implement various assistance programs at the State and local level.

Finally, we requested cooperative and/or reimbursable agreements that would enable USDA to assist in cases where a State is providing State-funded disaster assistance.

All of these, had they been responded to as we sought, would have given us an opportunity to address the situation in our region, not only in a forthright manner but one that would accommodate the pressing crisis which we confront. As we indicated, this crisis has reached overwhelming proportions. We risk losing a substantial part of the region's critical agricultural sector. The measures in this conference report, I regret to say, are not sufficient, nor sufficiently focused on the needs of the Eastern States to address their problems. That is one major reason I oppose this conference report and will vote against it.

Secondly, this conference report deals with the dairy issue in a way that is harmful to our region. By failing to adopt option 1-A and disallowing the extension of the authorization of the Northeast Dairy Compact, the conference agreement has left our dairy farmers confronting a situation of instability. Milk prices have been moving up and down as if they were on a roller coaster. Our dairy farmers have been subjected to wide and frequent swings, which place our dairy producers in situations where they don't have the cash-flow to meet their costs in a given month. The price goes up; the price comes down. It takes an enormous toll on the industry in our State and elsewhere in the east.

As a result of these fluctuations, the number of dairy farmers in Maryland has been declining markedly over the last 2 decades. We fear that if this process continues, we are going to see the extinction of a critical component of our dairy industry and the farm economy; that is, the family-run dairy farm. Indeed, my concern is primarily focused on family farmers and on sustaining their presence as part of the dairy sector.

The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to enable Maryland to join the Northeast Dairy Compact. They also took measures in that legislation to ensure that the interests of consumers, low-income households and processors, would be protected when a farm milk price was established. In fact, a representative from those groups would be on the compact commission, as well as from the dairy industry itself. Other states that are a part of the Compact or want to participate have taken the measures to protect same interests. And we believe this established a reasonable solution to provide stable income for those in

the dairy industry, particularly family dairy farmers.

But the conference denied what I regard as a fair and reasoned approach—in refusing to extend the authorization of the compact, and therefore, committed our region's dairy industry to a continuance of this unstable and volatile environment.

Mr. President, agriculture is an important economic actor in the state of Maryland. It contributes significantly to our State's economy. It employs hundreds of thousands of people in one way or another. We really are seeking, I think, fair and equitable treatment. I don't think this legislation contains a fair and equitable solution for the crisis that faces farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Indeed, it seems to ignore the fact that we have farmers as well. The only farmers in the country are not in sectors other than the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic and the needs of all of our farmers should have been addressed in this legislation.

The Farm Bureau has written me a letter urging a vote against adoption of the conference report. I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. SARBANES. They write:

Maryland Farm Bureau believes that many of the provisions in the economic disaster relief package are important and necessary. We are concerned, however, that the adoption of the conference report as drafted will not meet Maryland's drought disaster needs. We also believe that the absence of the Option 1A dairy language will have long-term negative impacts on the State's dairy industry.

I agree with that. We should reject this package, go back to conference, and develop a package that addresses the dairy issue, allows us to develop the compact to give some stability and diminished volatility in the industry, and also increases the drought assistance package so it adequately and directly meets the needs of the farmers of our region.

The conference agreement should have done better by these very hard-working men and women, these small farm families. And because it has not—as much as I appreciate the pressing needs of agriculture elsewhere in the country, and as much as I, in the past, have been supportive of those needs—we in the region must take measures to have our farmers' needs addressed in the current context. We have experienced a very difficult and rough period for Maryland agriculture, and for agriculture generally in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Because this crisis is not adequately addressed in this conference report, I intend to vote against it.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU, INC.,
Randallstown, MD, October 12, 1999.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: I am writing to urge you to vote against adoption of the conference report on Agricultural Appropriations when it is considered on the floor tomorrow.

Maryland Farm Bureau believes that many of the provisions in the economic disaster relief package are important and necessary. We are concerned, however, that the adoption of the conference report as drafted will not meet Maryland's drought disaster needs. We also believe that the absence of the Option 1A dairy language will have long-term negative impacts on the state's dairy industry.

I urge you to vote to send the agricultural appropriations conference report back to the conferees with instructions that they add the Option 1A dairy language and that they increase the drought assistance package to adequately meet the needs of mid-Atlantic farmers.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN L. WEBER,
President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, before the Senator leaves the floor, I commend my colleague for his comments. He could have easily been speaking on behalf of the State of Connecticut in talking about the particular concerns of his home State of Maryland. In a moment, I will explain why I also have serious reservations about this bill. But his point that the New England States, the Northeast, contribute significantly to the agricultural well-being of this country is well founded.

I know Secretary Glickman came to Maryland and he came to Connecticut during the drought this past summer. The exact number eludes me, but it was surprisingly high, the number of farmers and the significant portion of agricultural production that occurs east of the Mississippi and north of the Mason-Dixon line, or near north of the Mason-Dixon line.

So when we talk about these issues, it may seem as if it is more sort of hobby farms to people, but for many people in Maryland and for the 4,000 people in Connecticut who make a living in agriculture—these are not major agricultural centers, but in a State of 3.5 million people, where 4,000 families annually depend upon agriculture as a source of income, it is not insignificant.

So when you have a bill that virtually excludes people from Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania from receiving some help during a time of crisis, I hope our colleagues who come from the States that benefit from this bill, who I know have enjoyed the support of the Senator from Maryland, this Senator, and others during times of crisis, because we have seen a flood in the Midwest, or a drought in the Midwest, or

cyclones and hurricanes that have devastated agriculture in other parts of our country—I never considered my voting to support people in those areas as somehow a regional vote. When I vote to support a farmer who has lost his livelihood because of a natural disaster, I think I am voting to strengthen my country, not to help out a particular farmer in a State that I don't represent.

So when we have a drought in the Northeast, as we did, a record drought this year that wiped out farmers, caused them to lose significant income, to lose farms and the like, and then to have a bill that comes before us that disregards this natural disaster—in my State, \$41 million was lost as a result of the drought—I am disappointed. My colleagues may have stronger words to use. I am terribly disappointed, as someone who, year after year, has been supportive of particular agricultural needs, although I didn't directly represent them, that our colleagues in the House and Senate could not see fit to provide some financial help beyond, as my colleague from Maryland said, the loan program, which is not much help. We don't have crop insurance for my row croppers. The small farmers don't get crop insurance. When they get wiped out or lose income, they have to depend upon some direct payment. A loan program is of little or no assistance to them.

I am terribly disappointed that this bill excludes those farmers from the eastern part of the United States. It was the worst drought that has hit our region in decades. Congressional delegations throughout the region have consistently supported our colleagues in other regions when their States have suffered catastrophic floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. We don't understand why it is so difficult for the eastern part of the country to convey to our colleagues how massive the devastation has been to our small farmers. As I have said, in my State alone, it is \$41 million. In other States, the numbers may be higher. I represent a small State.

The dairy industry is one of the major agricultural interests in our region. It has gotten a double hit in this legislation—inadequate drought relief assistance and the exclusion of provisions that would have extended the Northeast Dairy Compact. On top of the drought losses, our farmers will lose an additional \$100 million if the new milk marketing pricing goes forward.

While I am heartened by the recently issued court injunction postponing the implementation of the new pricing scheme, quite frankly, this is only a short-term solution and is no substitute for affirmative action taken by the Congress. Northeast dairy farmers are deserving of the same kinds of assistance we offer to the agricultural

sectors in other parts of the country. I believe it is grossly unfair that this conference report has chosen to ignore their plight.

We should not be placing one part of the country against another. I don't want to see a midwestern farmer or a western farmer be adversely affected by votes we cast here. But, likewise, I don't want to see farming interests in my State or my region of the country be harmed as a result of our unwillingness to provide some relief when they absolutely need it to survive.

Inadequate drought relief and the exclusion of the Northeast Dairy Compact would be reason enough to vote against the legislation before us today. But I want to raise another issue that has caused a lot of consternation during the debate on this Agriculture appropriations bill. I am referring to the amendment offered by the distinguished Senator from Missouri, Mr. ASHCROFT, myself, and Senator HAGEL of Nebraska. The House leadership literally hijacked this piece of legislation and denied the normal democratic process to work when it came to this measure that was adopted overwhelmingly in the Senate by a margin of 70-28—by any measure, an overwhelming vote of bipartisanship. This measure would have ended unilateral sanctions on the sale of U.S. food and medicine to countries around the globe.

The amendment had broad-based support from farm organizations across the country which, time and time again, have been forced to pay the price of lost income when Congress has decided to "get tough" with dictators and bar farm exports. Farmers, over the years, have rightfully noted that, although in some cases sanctions have been in place for 40 years, there is nothing in the way of positive foreign policy results to show for these sanctions.

On the other hand, the losses to our farmers are measurable and substantial—in the billions of dollars annually—as a result of these unilateral sanctions on food and medicine we have imposed for years.

Church groups and humanitarian organizations have joined farm organizations in strongly opposing use of food and medicine as sanctions weapons on moral grounds.

Ironically, U.S. sanctions—particularly ones on food and medicine—have been used as an instrument by hostile governments to shore up domestic support and retain power, the very power that we are allegedly trying to change through the use of sanctions actually having contributed to these dictators staying in power for as many years as some of them have. Whether or not the United States is fully responsible for the suffering of these men, women, and children in these targeted countries, it is hard to convince many of them that the United States means them no ill

will when we deny them the access to foodstuffs, critical medicines, and medical equipment—the reason seventy of our colleagues decided to end this policy of unilateral sanctions on food and medicine.

Unfortunately, the House Republican leadership would not allow the process to work in conference. As a result, this bill was tied up for days over this single measure.

Again, I compliment my colleague from Missouri, Senator ASHCROFT, and Senator HAGEL, who are leaders on this, along with others in fighting for this provision.

This is not a provision that is designed to help dictators. It is a provision to, in fact, change these dictatorial governments and to provide needed relief and opportunity for millions of people who are the innocent victims of these dictators, and not deny our own farm community and business interests the opportunity to sell into these markets and make a difference. They are prepared, of course, to deny, in the case of the major opposition, by the way, which comes from some Members.

I want to emphasize that some members of the Cuban American community feel particularly strongly about the government in Cuba. I respect their feelings. I respect it very deeply. These families have lost their homes, jobs, and family members as a result of the government in Cuba under Fidel Castro. There is no way I can fully appreciate the depth of their feelings and passions about this. As I say, I respect that.

The exile community is not founded in its deep concerns about what has happened on the island of Cuba.

Before I make any comments about the island of Cuba and what goes on there, I want it to be as clear as I can possibly make it that my sympathies, my heartfelt sympathies go to the exiled community that lives in this country and elsewhere. Their passions, I understand and accept, and I am tremendously sympathetic.

But I must say as well that there are 11 million Cubans who live on that island 90 miles off our shores who are suffering and hurting badly. Arguably, the problem exists with the government there. I don't deny that. But to impose a sanction for 40 years on the same of food and medicine to 11 million people in this country also is not warranted.

While we may want to change the government in Cuba—and that may happen in time—we shouldn't be compounding the problem by denying the sale of food and medicine to these people.

Many people say they won't set foot on Cuban soil while Castro remains in power. I understand that as well. But don't deny the 11 million people in Cuba the opportunity to at least have

basic food supplies and medicine. It seems to me that—in fact I believe—a majority of the Cuban American people in this country have similar feelings. Their voices are not heard as often as is oftentimes the case when a minority view is extremely vocal and can dominate. But I believe the vast majority of Cuban Americans feel strongly about Fidel Castro, want him out of power, and want democracy to come to their country but simultaneously believe the 11 million people with whom they share a common heritage ought not to be denied food and medicine by the United States.

To make my point, these Cuban Americans try on their own to do what they can by sending small packages to loved ones and family members and friends who live in Cuba. Others travel to deliver medicines. Some 150,000 Cuban Americans travel annually to go into Cuba to bring whatever they can to help out family members and friends. However, these gestures of generosity are no substitute for commercial sales of such products if the public health and nutritional need of 11 million people are going to be met.

Unfortunately, the antidemocratic forces have succeeded in stripping the Ashcroft-Dodd-Hagel amendment from this bill. I hope enough of my colleagues will vote against this legislation to prevent its adoption. We can delay a few days, send this measure back to conference, and reestablish this language that was supported overwhelmingly, and I think supported in the House of Representatives, the other body, as well, and bring the measure back.

If this measure goes forward without the inclusion of the Dodd-Hagel-Ashcroft amendment, rest assured we will be back on this floor offering similar amendments at every opportunity that presents itself, and we will continue to do so. The day is going to come when a majority of the Congress and the will of the American people, including the Cuban Americans, I strongly suggest, is going to prevail.

On that day, the United States will regain a moral high ground by ceasing forever to use food and medicine as a weapon against innocent people.

I argue, as Senators ASHCROFT, HAGEL, GRAMS, and others, that the adoption of amendments that would allow for the lifting of unilateral sanctions on food and medicines will also be a major contributing factor to changing governments in these countries.

Aside from helping out farmers and businesses that want to sell these products and the innocent people who can't have access to them in these countries, I believe the foreign policy implications of allowing the sale of food and medicine will be significant for our country and for the people who live under dictatorial governments.

For those reasons, and what is being denied our farmers and agricultural in-

terests in the State of Connecticut and elsewhere in the Northeast, and the rejection of the Ashcroft-Hagel-Dodd amendment, I will oppose this conference report, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, some of our colleagues have denounced the Agriculture appropriations conference report as inadequate. I must agree. Without a doubt this bill is deficient.

It fails to acknowledge the full impact of natural disasters that have been experienced by agricultural producers across the country.

It fails to include adequate funding for the drought that has hit the Northeast.

It fails to provide adequate funding for the hurricane damage to the Southeast and the Northeast.

It fails to include adequate funding for flooded farmland in my own part of the country.

This bill is also deficient in the way it got here because in the conference committee when it became clear that there were going to be steps to change the sanctions regime of this country, the minority, the Democrats, were simply shut out. That is wrong. That should not happen. But it did happen.

So we are left with that result. As a result partly of that lockout, this bill fails to provide the kind of sanctions reform that ought to have occurred.

In 1996 when we passed the last farm bill, the Republican leadership promised American farmers that what they lost in domestic supports they would make up through expanded export opportunities. That was a hollow promise. The harsh reality is that now the prices have collapsed, farmers are in desperate trouble, and there must be a Federal response.

I wish this bill were better. I wish it contained adequate assistance for those who have been hit by hurricanes. I wish it had adequate assistance for farmers who have had their acreage flooded. I wish it had sanctions reform.

Food should not be used as a weapon. It is immoral; It is ineffective; and it is inhumane. But the harsh reality is we are where we are. We have a conference report that is flawed. Indeed, it is badly flawed.

The easy thing to do would be to vote against this conference report. But it would not be the right thing to do. This bill is not just about responding to natural disasters. It also responds to the price collapse that has occurred and threatens the livelihood of tens of thousands of farmers in my State and across the country.

The need for emergency income assistance could not be more clear.

I can say that in my State many farmers are relying on this bill as their only chance for financial survival. I don't say that lightly. It is the reality.

If this assistance is not passed and distributed immediately, literally thousands of farmers in my State are going to go out of business. It is that simple. A way of life and the tradition of farming will be lost in dozens of communities across my State. The funding in this bill only meets the most basic needs of our producers. Make no mistake, it is absolutely essential. Prices for agricultural commodities are at their lowest levels in 50 years in real terms. Wheat and barley are the lowest they have been in real terms in over 50 years. Farm bankruptcies are rising; auctions are being held on an unending basis. If nothing further is done, thousands of our farmers will go out of the business. That is the stark reality in farm country.

If we fail to pass this bill, we are going to mortgage the future of literally thousands of farm families. I think we should keep in mind this is not our last chance to get something done for those who have been so badly hurt, whether it is my farmers who have flooded acres, whether it is people in the Northeast and the Southeast hit by hurricanes, whether it is farmers in the Northeast hit by drought. There is another chance this year to get additional assistance. I sympathize with my colleagues from the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic States. They are not alone. In my State this year, we have been hit by severe storms, flooding, extreme snow and ice, ground saturation, mud slides, tornadoes, hail, insects, and disease. It is unbelievable what has happened in my State.

Growing up in North Dakota I always thought of my State as dry. I now fly over much of North Dakota and it looks similar to a Louisiana rice paddy. There is water everywhere. Millions of acres are inundated and were never planted this year. Our farmers planted the lowest level of spring wheat since 1988, the year of intense drought. Yet prices remain very low—in fact, record lows. Barley production in North Dakota is down 42 percent. Yet prices remain very low.

Things have gone from bad to worse this fall. Farmers were anxious to get into the field for harvest but were forced to stay at home and watch the rain. North Dakota farmers suffered through 2 weeks of rain at the end of August and early September, the key time for harvest. As a result, the completion of harvest has been delayed. Damage resulting from a delayed harvest is deducted from prices farmers receive for their crops. At this point, there is absolutely no way some farmers will come anywhere close to matching their expenses for this year. We simply must pass this bill to allow entire communities to survive.

I was called by a very dear friend of mine 2 weeks ago describing what had happened to him. He was just beginning harvest when the rains once again

resumed in our State. He had just cut his grain. It was on the ground and the rains came and continued day after day after day. As a result, that grain that was on the ground sprouted. He had 30-percent sprout in his fields. He took a sample into the elevator and the elevator said: Don't even bother trucking that in; we aren't going to buy it at any price.

That happened all over my State. I know it has happened in other States, as well.

Passing this bill and releasing this funding is absolutely critical for those farmers who have been so hard hit. Remember, passing this bill does not bar Congress from doing more in the future. We have other opportunities this year to help those who have been hit by a hurricane. There is other legislation moving through this body that has funds for those hit by hurricanes. That package can be improved upon. When we passed the emergency supplemental bill last May, we agreed to revisit agricultural emergency spending once the extent of the price disaster was known. We have done that. We can pass this bill now and assess future needs in response to natural disasters while this assistance is distributed.

The statement of the managers on this bill made several references to the need for additional Federal spending for 1999 disasters. They have recognized the reality. I hope colleagues on the floor will understand there are additional opportunities to achieve the result they seek. The answer is not to kill this bill. This bill, however flawed, is a step in the right direction. It would be a profound mistake to defeat it.

I close by urging my colleagues to support this conference report. We had an overwhelming vote in the Senate yesterday. It was an important vote to send the signal that this legislation ought to pass.

My colleagues in the Northeast are not alone. In many ways, we are in the same circumstance. We desperately need those farmers who have flooded acres to have legislation that addresses their needs. We will have another chance. We will have another opportunity. That is the great thing about the Senate; there is always another chance.

I close by looking at a picture that shows what is happening in my State. This is several sections of land in North Dakota. Everywhere you look is water, water, water—water everywhere. I have flown all over my State. It is truly remarkable; places that were dry for 30 years are now saturated.

I talked about the price collapse. I want to visually show what it is farmers are contending with. This chart shows clearly what has happened to spring wheat and barley prices over the last 53 years. The blue line is spring wheat; the red line is barley. These are

two of the dominant crops of my State. Today the prices in inflation-adjusted terms, in real terms, are the lowest they have been in 53 years. That is the reality.

This chart shows the cost of wheat production with the green line; the red line shows what prices are. Prices have been below the cost of production the last 3 years. This is a disaster scenario of its own. This is the reality of what is happening in my State. This threatens the economic future of virtually every farmer in my State. The price is far below the cost of production. There are not many businesses that survive when it costs more to produce the product than is being received—not for a few months but for 3 years.

The next chart shows a comparison of the prices farmers paid for their inputs—the green line that keeps going on—versus the prices that farmers received. We can see there is a gap and it is a widening gap. In fact, the closest we came to having these two on the same line was back at the time of the passage of the 1996 farm bill. Since that time, the prices farmers pay have gone up. Thank goodness they have stabilized somewhat in the last couple of years, but the prices they have received have collapsed. That is the hard reality of what our farmers confront. These are, by the way, statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

I want to conclude by saying we ought to pass this bill. It is not perfect. In fact, in many ways it is deeply flawed. But it is far better than the alternative of nothing. It is far better than to take the risk of sending this bill back to conference and having it come back in much worse shape. At least we can take this and put it in the bank because this does address the question of price collapse. It does not do a good enough job on the disaster side, but we have other opportunities that will come our way before this session of the Congress concludes.

I will end by thanking the Senator from Mississippi, the chairman of the subcommittee, and Senator KOHL, his counterpart, for the good job they have done under very difficult circumstances. Make no mistake, there are 100 Senators and there are probably 100 different opinions of what agricultural policy should be and what an Agriculture appropriations bill should look like. But we do respect and admire the work they have done. We again thank them for their patience and perseverance bringing this bill to the floor. It deserves our support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, agriculture across most of America is in a state of crisis. We are facing incredibly low livestock and grain prices, coupled with weather disasters in many parts

of the country, all simultaneously. The legislation before us, as my colleague has noted so ably, is imperfect. Some have referred to it as throwing a leaking liferaft to a drowning person, and there is some truth to that. But it is urgent legislation. It is legislation we need to move forward because the need is immense and the urgency is critical. There is certainly no assurance, if we were to vote this particular bill down, that it would be back to us anytime soon or that it would come back to us in a better situation than it is now.

I think we need to recognize the inadequacies of the legislation, but at the same time that we move forward, we do so with a commitment to do better, still this Congress and in the coming year, to address the underlying problems that at least contributed to the crisis we have in rural America. Faulty agricultural policy brought to us by Freedom to Farm, combined with low prices, natural disasters, and weak export markets, resulted in an inadequate safety net—for family producers, in any event—across this country.

We have seen net farm income absolutely plummet from \$53 billion in 1996 to \$43.8 billion in 1999. Off-farm income in many of our States, including mine, South Dakota, is responsible for 80 to 90 percent of our family producers being able to stay on the farm. If it were not for off-farm income, there would be an even more massive exodus off the farm and ranch than we are seeing.

Are there inadequacies in the bill? Certainly. I commend our colleagues, Senator COCHRAN, Senator STEVENS, Senator KOHL, and many others, for hard work on this legislation under circumstances that surely were trying, where the level of resources would certainly not permit what they would prefer to see happen. Nonetheless, I think we have to acknowledge we need a recommitment in this body and from our friends on the other side of the Capitol to address the underlying structural problems agriculture faces today. I believe that involves revisiting the Freedom to Farm legislation. I believe that involves strengthening our marketing loan capabilities.

I would like to see us pass my country-of-origin meat labeling legislation. I am still working with a bipartisan group of colleagues this week to put together legislation addressing vertical integration in the packing industry, so we do not turn our livestock producers into low-wage employees on their own land. I fear that is the road we are going down.

We have to address issues of trade, value-added agriculture, farmer-owned cooperatives, and crop insurance reform. All of these are issues that cry out for attention, above and beyond anything done in this legislation.

I do applaud the effort in this bill to include mandatory price reporting on

the livestock side. I do applaud some modest funding, at least, for my school breakfast pilot project that is included in this bill. I am concerned, however, the process led us to legislation that involves a distribution process that may not be as equitable as what I think the American public deserves. I will quote briefly from an analysis by the Associated Press, Philip Brasher, where he observes:

Some of the largest, most profitable farms in the country would be among the biggest beneficiaries of Congress' \$8.7 billion agricultural assistance package because it loosens rules that we intended to target government payments to family-size operations.

An individual farm could claim up to \$460,000 in subsidies a year—double the current restriction—and the legislation creates a new way for producers to get around even that limit.

The payment limits apply to two different programs: crop subsidies that vary according to fluctuations in commodity prices; and annual "market transition" payments, which were guaranteed to producers under the 1996 farm law.

Farmers are technically allowed to receive no more than \$75,000 in crop subsidies and \$40,000 a year in market transition payments under current law. But many farms, legally claim twice that much because they are divided into different entities. A husband and a wife, for example, can claim separate payments on the same farm.

The aid package would double those caps, so farms could get up to \$300,000 in crop subsidies and \$160,000 in market transition payments this year.

Last year, about 550 farmers nationwide claimed the maximum amount in crop subsidies, USDA officials said.

Critics of the looser payment rules fear they will encourage the consolidation of farms and hasten the demise of smaller-scale operations. "Big farms will use the extra cash to buy up land from the neighbors, driving up land prices in the process," said Chuck Hassebrook, program director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, NE.

"What is the purpose of these farm programs? Is it to help very wealthy, very large landowners get bigger and get richer?"

These are the kinds of questions and concerns many of us have. I think they are profound questions, having to do with the very nature of agriculture, the very nature of rural America. What road we are going down, in terms of ag and rural policy in America, policy responsible for feeding so efficiently and so effectively and in such an extraordinary manner the people of our Nation?

But for all its failings and shortcomings, many of which I briefly raised this morning, the fact is there is absolute urgency this legislation go forward, that we address the problems of income collapse, disaster all over America, with this legislation; and, hopefully, upon passage of this legislation, we recommit ourselves to going expeditiously forward to address the remainder of these other issues I have raised, and others of my colleagues have raised, reflecting upon the inadequacies and inefficiencies and the

shortcomings of this legislation. They are many. But to stop this legislation now would only hasten the demise of still more family producers all across America. It would not guarantee a return to a better policy anytime very soon. We need to pass this bill, then go forward with additional legislation to redress these inadequacies.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on passage of this legislation and to work with us in a bipartisan fashion on the remainder of these agricultural issues and budget issues before the country.

I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I yield 8 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the conference report for the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations bill addresses one of the most beleaguered fisheries in the United States. The Norton Sound region of Alaska has suffered chronically poor salmon returns in recent years. Norton Sound is an arm of the Bering Sea off the west coast of Alaska. It lies to the north of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, which has also seen very poor salmon returns in recent years.

Both of these regions are extremely rural and heavily dependent on commercial and subsistence salmon fishing for survival.

The provision in the conference report addresses the Norton Sound problem in several ways. First, it will make the Norton Sound region eligible for the Federal disaster assistance made available to the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region last year.

Second, it changes the income eligibility standard from the Federal poverty level to that for the temporary assistance to needy families program.

The standard of living in many of these fish-dependent communities is well below the poverty line. This was one of the chief complaints voiced to my staff and several Commerce Department officials when they visited western Alaska last summer. This provision will allow more needy families to qualify for 1999 disaster assistance, much of which has gone unallocated.

Additionally, this bill will provide \$10 million in grants through the Economic Development Administration for infrastructure improvements in the Norton Sound region.

The conference report included is \$5 million in disaster assistance under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to determine the cause of the decline and to identify ways to improve the area's fisheries in the future. These funds will be available in 2001.

The main reason these communities are unable to ride out cyclical fishery

failures is the lack of commercial infrastructure in rural fisheries. The EDA grants will help provide ice machines and other equipment to help these communities modernize their processing capabilities and extract more value from the resources they harvest.

I was also pleased to work with my colleagues from New England on their request for fishery disaster assistance. New England will receive \$15 million in 2001 for cooperative research and management activities in the New England fisheries. These funds will provide New England fishermen with an important role in working to solve the problems of their own fisheries.

Within this conference report, I have also asked that the Agricultural Marketing Service—the AMS—convene two national meetings to begin development of organic standards with respect to seafoods. One of these meetings will be held in Alaska and the other meeting will be held on the Gulf of Mexico coastal area.

The AMS will use the information gathered at these meetings to develop draft regulations establishing national organic standards for seafood to be published in fiscal year 2000.

It is estimated that the sales of organic foods will reach \$6.6 billion by the year 2000. The organic industry has been growing at a rate of 20 to 24 percent for the last 9 consecutive years.

Ocean-harvested seafood should be at the same level with other qualifying protein commodities, such as beef, pork, and chicken. I hope that these protein sources will be included in the proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture rules to be finalized by June 2000. Ocean-harvested seafood should not be excluded as an organically-produced product when USDA issues its final rule.

This issue is very important to Alaska, as the harvesting of seafood is an industry that employs more Alaskans than any other industry. In particular, I am concerned about the inclusion of wild salmon within USDA's final rule for the National Organic Program. Wild salmon is an organic product.

This past summer, two private certifying firms for organic food products visited two Alaska seafood processors to determine whether the wild, ocean-harvested salmon processed at these facilities could be certified as organic. One of the certifiers, farm verified organic, inspected capilliano seafoods. Their report is very positive. In fact, their approval allowed capilliano's salmon to be admitted to natural products east, which is a large organic food show in Boston, Massachusetts. In order to be admitted to this trade show, a product must be verified as organic.

I, frankly do not know what the dispute is about. Natural fish, wild fish should certainly be verified as organic.

I am confident that the AMS will find Alaskan wild salmon a very heart-healthy protein source, to be of high quality and organic, for the purposes of USDA's national organic program.

I thank my friend from Mississippi and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I know a number of Members are waiting to speak.

The Governors and legislators in the six New England States had five goals in mind when they enacted the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact into law in each of their States.

They wanted to assure fresh, local supplies of milk to consumers. In fact, they wanted to do it at lower prices than found in most other parts of the Nation. They wanted to keep dairy farmers in business, they wanted to protect New England's rural environment, and they wanted to do this without burdening Federal taxpayers.

It turned out the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact was a stirring success on every one of these points. But it also had an added benefit. It increased interstate trade into the region as neighboring farmers took advantage of the compact. Not only did prices come down, but the number of farmers going out of business has declined throughout New England for the first time in many years. We find there are still some who favor having Federal bureaucrats run this farm program, at a cost to the taxpayers, instead of the States themselves, with no cost to the taxpayers.

Because it has been so successful, half the Governors in the Nation, half the State legislatures in the Nation, asked that the Congress allow their States to set their own dairy policies, within certain limits, through interstate compacts that, again, cost taxpayers nothing. The dairy compact legislation passed in these States overwhelmingly.

Perhaps most significant, and I mention this because we have heard those from Minnesota and Wisconsin attack this, what they do not tell us is that the retail milk prices in New England not only average lower than the rest of the Nation, but they are much lower than the milk prices in Minnesota and Wisconsin. So those in these parts of the country who are attacking the Northeast Dairy Compact say they are concerned about consumers and ignore the fact that consumers pay a lot more in their States than they do in New England.

One has to ask, Why does anybody oppose the Dairy Compact? GAO and OMB report that consumer prices are lower and farm income is higher than the average for the rest of the country, without increased cost to the taxpayers. Why would anybody oppose it?

One of the things I learned long ago is to follow the money, and there is one

group making a whole lot of money on this issue. They are the huge milk manufacturers, such as Suiza, or Kraft which is owned by Philip Morris, or other processors represented by the International Dairy Foods Association. They oppose the compact not because they care for the consumers, not because they care for the farmers, but because they care for their own huge, bloated profits.

Indeed, they sent around corporate front organizations to speak for them. One was the Public Voice for Food and Health Policy. When it finally became clear that Public Voice was going around fronting for these organizations, and that their policies were determined not by what was best for everybody but by corporate dollars, they finally went out of business.

I've talked about the close alliances between a lead executive who handled compact issues for Public Voice who negotiated a job to represent the huge processors.

I will give the press another lead on the next public interest group whose funding should be investigated, the Consumer Federation of America. One of their officers, formerly from Public Voice, has been going around Capitol Hill offices with lobbyists representing dairy processors.

One might ask why would Philip Morris want to use these organizations instead of going directly to the editorial boards of the New York Times or the Washington Post to bad mouth the compact? Why not have somebody who appears to be representing the consumers rather than Philip Morris coming in and talking about it?

The consumer representative, being paid by the big processors, could come in and say: Editorial board members, milk prices are higher for children in the School Lunch Program under this compact.

We ought to compare those prices. Let's compare the retail milk prices in New England against retail milk prices in the upper Midwest. A gallon of whole milk in Augusta, ME, was \$2.47. The price was up to 50 cents more in Minneapolis, MN, the area opponents used as an example of how to save money.

I think we ought to take a look at these issues because when we hear some of the big companies, such as Philip Morris and Kraft and Suiza, saying, well, it's not the money. But you know, of course, it is the money. When they say "we are here because we're concerned about the consumers," you know—with their track record—that the consumer is the last thing on their mind. And when these processor groups say they want to protect the farmer . . . oh, Lordy, don't ever, ever believe that, because there is not a farmer in this country who would.

Lastly, if anybody tells you the dairy compact will cost you money, I point

out, not only does it not cost taxpayers any money, but the cost of milk is much lower than in States without a compact.

Mr. President, the Governors and legislators in the six New England states had five goals in mind when they enacted the Compact into law in each of their states.

They wanted to assure fresh, local supplies of milk to consumers—at lower prices than found in most of the nation—they wanted to keep dairy farmers in business, they wanted to protect the New England's rural environment from sprawl and destructive development, and they wanted to do this without burdening federal taxpayers.

The Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact has delivered beyond the expectations of those Governors and state legislators.

The Compact provided an added benefit—it has also increased interstate trade into the region as neighboring farmers took advantage of the Compact.

This great idea—coming from those six New England states—has created a successful and enduring partnership between dairy farmers and consumers throughout New England.

Thanks to the Northeast Compact, the number of farmers going out of business has declined throughout New England—for the first time in many years.

It is unfortunate that most still favor federal bureaucrats running the farm programs—I think Congress should look at more zero-cost state-initiated programs rather than turning a deaf ear to the pleas of state legislators.

Indeed, half the Governors in the nation, and half the state legislatures in the nation, asked that the Congress allow their states to set their own dairy policies—within federally mandated limits—through interstate compacts that cost taxpayers nothing.

And the dairy compact legislation passed with overwhelming support in almost all these states.

One of the most difficult challenges posed by the New England Governors is that the Compact had to cost nothing—yet deliver a benefit to farmers. The Compact is scored by CBO as having no costs to the Federal treasury.

Major environmental groups have endorsed the Northeast Dairy Compact because they know it helps preserve farmland and prevent urban sprawl. Indeed, a New York Times and a National Geographic article that I mentioned yesterday discuss the importance of keeping dairy farmers in business from an environmental standpoint.

Perhaps most significantly, retail milk prices in New England average lower than the rest of the nation and much lower than milk prices in Minnesota and Wisconsin, according to GAO.

The question is: why does anyone in America oppose the dairy compact? Since GAO and OMB report that consumer prices are lower and farm income is higher than the average for the rest of the country, without increased costs to taxpayers, why does anyone oppose the Compact?

The answer is simple, huge milk manufacturers—such as Suiza, headquartered in Texas, Kraft which is owned by the tobacco giant Philip Morris, other processors represented by the International Dairy Foods Association—oppose the Compact.

Even the most junior investigative reporter could figure out the answer to my question with the above information. All anyone has to do is look up the donations made by these, and other, giant processors. All the negative news stories about the compact have their genesis in efforts by these giant processors and their front organizations.

I have explained the details of this on the Senate floor so scholars who want to know what really happened can check the public records and the lobby registration forms.

Indeed, one of the corporate front organizations—Public Voice for Food and Health Policy—apparently could not continue to exist when it was so obvious that their policies were determined by corporate dollars rather than good policy.

A simple glance at the list of corporations who funded and attended their functions could be easily researched by any reporter. It will demonstrate that sad and disturbing relationship—now ended as Public Voice had to close up shop because it lost its conscience.

I have detailed the close alliances between their lead executive who handled compact issues for them and the job he negotiated to represent the huge processors a couple of times on the Senate floor.

I will give the press another lead on the next public interest group whose funding should be investigated—the Consumer Federation of America. Indeed, one of their officers—formerly from Public Voice—is being taken around Capitol Hill offices by lobbyists representing processors. A glance at who funds their functions and efforts will be as instruction as investigations of Public Voice.

Why should Philip Morris or Kraft want to use these organizations instead of directly going to the editorial boards of the New York Times or the Washington Post to badmouth the compact? The question does not need me to provide the answer.

What would be the best attack—whether true or not—on the Compact that might swing public opinion?

It might be to simply allege that milk prices are higher for children in the school lunch program. Who would

the editorial boards more likely listen to regarding school children: a public interest group or a tobacco company?

By the way, I would be happy to compare milk prices after the Compact was fully implemented.

I would be pleased to compare retail milk prices in New England against retail milk prices in the Upper Midwest.

A GAO report, dated October, 1998, compared retail milk prices for various U.S. cities both inside and outside the Northeast compact region for various time periods.

For example, in February 1998, the average price of a gallon of whole milk in Augusta, ME, was \$2.47. The price in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was \$2.63 per gallon. Prices in Minneapolis, Minnesota, were much higher—they were \$2.94 per gallon.

Let's pick another New England city—Boston. In February 1998, the price of a gallon of milk was \$2.54 as compared to Minneapolis which where the price on average was \$2.94/gallon.

Let's look at the cost of 1% milk for November 1997, for another example.

In Augusta, Maine, it was \$2.37 per gallon, the same average-price as for Boston and for New Hampshire and Rhode Island. In Minnesota, the price was \$2.82/gallon. It was 45 cents more per gallon in Minnesota.

I could go on and on comparing lower New England retail prices with higher prices in other cities for many different months. I invite anyone to review this GAO report. It is clear that our Compact is working perfectly by benefitting consumers, local economies and farmers.

I urge my colleague to vote against this bill because, as I mentioned yesterday, it does not provide enough disaster assistance to the East and it does not provide enough disaster assistance to the nation.

Also, I cannot vote for it because it does not extend the Northeast dairy compact and does not allow neighboring states to also participate.

It also ignores the pleas of Southern Governors who wanted to be able to protect their farmers without burdening U.S. taxpayers.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate is scheduled to vote on final passage of the fiscal year 2000 Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. It is critical that we complete action on this bill today to speed assistance to American farmers in need. Therefore, I shall vote for the bill and urge my colleagues to support it also.

The severe drought that has gripped the Eastern United States this year is, by all accounts, the most damaging

and prolonged such occurrence since the early 1930s. Just like that period nearly 70 years ago, springs have gone dry, streams have ceased to flow, pastureland and crops have broiled in the relentless Sun until all possible benefits to livestock or man have burned away. In the 1930s the drought turned much of our Nation's farmlands into a veritable dust bowl. Modern conservation practices today may have helped to reduce the erosion by wind, but the soil is just as dry, and farmers in West Virginia and all along the East Coast are suffering from the natural disaster of a generation. Some farmers have had to make the painful decision to sell off their livestock or to give up farms that have been in their families for generations. This is what has been happening in West Virginia. This is nothing short of an emergency. It demands our attention and response.

This bill provides funding for many ongoing and long running programs as well as much needed assistance to farmers who suffered at the hands of Mother Nature this year. The \$8.7 billion emergency package that is attached to this appropriations bill contains \$1.2 billion specifically for 1999 natural disasters, including drought. In all, more than \$1.2 billion will be available for direct payments for farmers suffering crop and livestock losses from natural disasters this year, up significantly from the \$50 million in the version that first passed the Senate in August. That may not be enough to fully cover the still-mounting losses to farmers, but it is a good start. These emergency funds will be able to be distributed upon enactment of this legislation to farmers who have been waiting and waiting for the Federal Government to deliver. American farmers cannot afford to wait any longer for Federal assistance, and the Senate cannot afford to delay final passage of this fiscal year 2000 Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report.

Unfortunately, once this measure reached the conference committee, the process that we follow yearly as routine in conferences was sidelined. When difficult issues came before the conference, after only an evening and a morning of debate, the conference committee adjourned for lunch, and never returned. For several days, the conference was "out to lunch," until deals could be reached behind closed doors guided by invisible hands, and our tried and true procedure was circumvented. I believe that this selective bargaining is why some Members have expressed their dissatisfaction with the final bill. The best work of the Congress is demonstrated when, as a body, we cooperate and allow ourselves to be guided by the rules and the traditions that have allowed our Government to flourish under the Constitution now for over 200 years.

I have stood before this body on numerous occasions since visiting West

Virginia with the Secretary of Agriculture on August 2 of this year to impress upon my fellow Members what a significant impact the drought has had in West Virginia, and, of course, in other Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern States. Many of these States received a secretarial emergency declaration that has provided some limited USDA assistance to farmers who have experienced losses as a result of the drought. But, unfortunately, much of the assistance came in the form of loans to farmers who were already deep in debt. The recent losses caused by Hurricane Floyd make clear that more emergency assistance will be needed. We can do better for farmers, so I supported the Statement of Managers language directing the administration to conduct full estimates of the remaining need, and to submit to the Congress a supplemental budget request as soon as possible for both hurricane and additional drought assistance.

When we consider all of the natural disasters that have affected farmers this year, from frosts that killed citrus trees, to devastating drought, to States ravaged by storms, and by the hurricane, I feel that it is highly appropriate that the Senate act now because it seems a certainty that the \$1.2 billion will be insufficient to help farmers who have been harmed by nature. But the current emergency package attached to the conference report is essential to begin addressing the crisis in rural America that has only been compounded by the weather disasters of 1999. Failure to pass this measure will only allow the suffering of struggling farmers to continue without relief.

The House of Representatives passed this measure on October 1, 1999. It is now time for the Senate to pass this measure.

I want to thank Senator COCHRAN in particular for his study and consideration and for the skill with which he has brought this bill to its present status. I want to thank him also for supporting some of my requests in the bill.

I requested that there be grants to farmers, livestock farmers in particular, in the amount of \$200 million and also that there be provisions whereby farmers could restore their land, where there could be new vegetation planted so that they could have a chance of starting over again. It was in that conference that the chairman, in particular, supported my effort.

I was one of the three Democrats on this side who signed the conference report, and did so in particular because of the funding which had been provided, at my request, for the livestock farmers. There are livestock farmers in my State who were selling out their entire herds, not just for this year but for good. Some of those livestock farmers have been in the farming business for years, and the farm indeed has come down to them after one or more

generations. It is important not only from the standpoint, I think, of helping these people who are so in need and who have to work every day, 365 days a year, who can never be sure what the weather is going to be, and who are at the mercy, in many instances, of Mother Nature—it is important that we come to their aid—it is also important for our country that we continue to sustain the small farmer.

In the Roman Republic, the small farmers left their farms in the Apennine Mountains and went into the cities and joined with the mob. When those farmers, those peasants of the land in Italy, left the land and migrated into the cities, the Roman republic began to collapse. It was in the homes of the Roman farmers that family values and the Roman spiritual values flourished. When those peasants left the land, the spiritual values of the Romans began to deteriorate because it was in the homes that they venerated their ancestors and worshipped their gods. They were pagan gods, but the Romans worshipped those gods.

Those family values, which included respect for authority and order—there is where the stern Roman discipline had its beginning. It was because of that stern Roman discipline that came out of the homes of the peasants—it was because of that stern Roman discipline that the Roman legions were able to conquer the various other nations around the Mediterranean basin.

It was the same way in our own country in colonial days. Most of the people in this country were from farming stock. There was a time when over 90 percent of the people in this country were from the farms. That day has long gone, as the corporate farms have largely taken over, just as in the Roman Republic, the latifundia—large corporate farms—which were owned mostly by Roman senators, pushed the small farmers off the land.

I suppose Oliver Goldsmith had that in mind when he wrote "The Deserted Village." In his lines, he told the story of the Roman farmers as well as our own people.

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:

But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

I thank all Senators for listening. I hope Senators will soon vote for this important bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his kind comments about the handling of the legislation. I thank him for his valuable assistance in the crafting of the language of our disaster assistance provisions and other provisions as well.

I yield 8 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the conference report on the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations bill. I do so with considerable reluctance because the distinguished senior Senator from Mississippi, the subcommittee chairman, has always been so responsive to the needs of rural Maine. And the Senator, in his capacity as chairman, has provided valuable assistance to the State of Maine, particularly in the area of agricultural research, which is very important to my State.

Unfortunately, circumstances largely beyond the control of my good friend from Mississippi have brought this measure before us without a component that is absolutely critical to the survival of Maine's dairy farmers. The lack of provisions reauthorizing the Northeast Dairy Compact creates a serious regional inequity and places an unfair burden on Maine's dairy farmers.

While this measure contains \$5.4 billion in payments for farmers harmed by low commodity prices, it ignores a mechanism that provides stability in pricing for dairy farmers in the Northeast. The Northeast Dairy Compact is a proven success, and it is absolutely critical to the survival of dairy farmers in Maine and throughout the Northeast.

First approved by Congress as part of the 1996 farm bill, the Northeast Dairy Compact has a proven track record of benefits for both consumers and farmers. The compact works by simply evening out the peaks and valleys in the fluid milk prices, providing stability to the cost of milk, and ensuring a supply of fresh, wholesome local milk.

The compact works with market forces to help both the farmer and the consumer. As prices climb and farmers begin to receive a sustainable price for their milk, the compact turns off. When prices drop to unsustainable levels, the compact is triggered on. The compact simply softens the blow to farmers of an abrupt and dramatic drop in the volatile fluid milk market.

It is important to reiterate that consumers also benefit from the compact. Not only does the compact stabilize prices, thus avoiding dramatic fluctuations in the retail cost of milk, but also it guarantees that the consumer is assured of the availability of a supply of fresh local milk. Let us remember that the proof is in the prices.

Under the compact, New England consumers have enjoyed lower retail fluid milk prices than many other regions operating without a dairy compact. Moreover, the compact, while providing clear benefits to dairy pro-

ducers and consumers in the Northeast, has proven that it does not harm farmers or taxpayers in other regions of the country. Indeed, a 1998 report by the Office of Management and Budget showed that during its first 6 months of operation, the compact did not adversely affect farmers outside the compact region and added no Federal cost to nutrition programs. In fact, the compact specifically exempts WIC, the Women, Infants, and Children's Program, from any costs resulting or related to the compact.

The reauthorization of the Northeast Dairy Compact is also important as a matter of States rights. We often hear criticism of the inside-the-beltway mentality that tells States that we here in Washington know better than they do, even on issues that traditionally fall under State and local control.

That is simply wrong. In the Northeast Dairy Compact, we have a solution that was devised by our dairy farmers, that was approved by the legislators and Governors of the New England States, that is supported by every State agricultural commissioner in the region and overwhelmingly, if not unanimously, by the dairy farmers of the region. We in Congress should not be an obstacle to this practical local solution.

It is not too late. There are a variety of ways that Congress can allow dairy farmers in the Northeast to help themselves. All we need to do is to reauthorize the compact and take advantage of those opportunities. I am very disappointed, however, that Congress is missing the logical opportunity to renew this important measure through the Agriculture appropriations bill. Therefore, I must oppose this conference report. But I look forward to working with my colleagues to resolve this matter before we adjourn.

Again, I thank the Senator from Mississippi. He has been extremely responsive to the needs of agricultural producers in my State. I know that he shares my commitment to resolving this matter and coming to a solution that will help our dairy farmers survive before we adjourn this session of the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield back to the chairman any remaining time I might have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Maine for her kind comments. We will certainly continue to do everything possible to be responsive to the needs of agricultural producers both in New England and elsewhere in the country.

I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the FY 2000 Agriculture Appropriations bill. I oppose

the Agriculture funding bill not because of what's in the bill, but because of what has been left out.

I have listened to several of my colleagues speak in support of the disaster aid in this bill. They have spoken passionately on how we need to help our family farms. I, too, support providing relief to farmers and ranchers across the nation who have suffered from weather and market related disasters.

However, this bill has ignored one of this nation's most important agriculture sectors—our dairy farmers. The bill, which provides \$8.7 billion in aid to farmers, in large part as direct payments, has neglected dairy farmers, not only in my home state of Vermont, but the dairy farm families in the entire country.

Unlike the commodity farmers throughout the country, dairy farmers have not asked for assistance in the form of federal dollars. Instead, they have asked for relief from a promised government disaster in the form of a fair pricing structure from the Secretary of Agriculture and the extension of the very successful Northeast Dairy Compact, at no cost to the federal government.

Mr. President, I would like to remind my colleagues from the states and regions of the country that will be receiving billions of tax payer dollars in aid for their farmers, that the Northeast Dairy Compact has no cost to the federal government and has no adverse impact on any farmer outside the compact region.

If my colleagues who have opposed our efforts to bring fairness to all dairy farmers truly supported family farms across this country they would support my efforts to help protect the dairy farmers in my state as well as the dairy farmers in the rest of the nation.

While Congress is providing needed government assistance to commodity farmers across the nation, I would like to remind my colleagues on just how well the Dairy Compact helps dairy farmers protect against sudden drops in the price of their products.

This no cost initiative has given farmers and consumers hope. In large part based on the success of the Northeast Compact, which includes the six New England states, no less than nineteen additional states have adopted dairy compacts.

In total, twenty-five of the states in the country have passed compact legislation. During the past year Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Georgia, Kansas, and Missouri have all passed legislation to form a southern dairy compact. Texas is also considering joining the Southern Compact.

The Oregon legislature is in the process of developing a Pacific Northwest Dairy Compact. In addition, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, New York

and Pennsylvania have passed state legislation enabling them to join the Northeast Dairy Compact.

The Northeast Dairy Compact, which was authorized by the 1996 farm bill as a three-year pilot program, has been extremely successful. The Compact has been studied, audited, and sued—but has always come through with a clean bill of health. Because of the success of the Compact it has served as a model for the entire country.

One look at the votes cast by each state legislature, and you can see that there is little controversy over what is in the best interest for the consumers and farmers in each respected state. For example, in Alabama and Arkansas, both legislative chambers passed compact legislation unanimously. It passed unanimously in the North Carolina House. In the Oklahoma State Senate, it passed by a vote of 44-1 and unanimously in the Oklahoma House. It passed unanimously in the Virginia State Senate and by a vote of 90-6 in the Virginia House. In Kansas, the bill passed in the Senate by a vote of 39-1 and an impressive 122-1 in the Kansas House.

The Northeast Dairy Compact was also approved on overwhelming votes in each of the New England state's legislative bodies.

Mr. President, given its broad support among the states, we all know that the issue of regional pricing is one that will continue to be debated. I am pleased with the tremendous progress the Southern states and other Northeastern states have made to move their compacts forward.

Thanks to the leadership of Chairman COCHRAN, Senator SPECTER and others progress has been made.

While the debate continues, we must allow the Northeast Compact to continue as the pilot project for the concept of regional pricing.

I am, of course, aware that some of my colleagues oppose our efforts to bring fairness to our states and farmers by continuation of the Northeast Dairy Compact pilot project. However, why do Members who share my admiration and respect for family farms oppose an initiative that has no cost to the federal government and has no adverse impact on farmers outside the region?

Unfortunately, Congress has been bombarded with misinformation from an army of lobbyists representing the national milk processors, led by the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and the Milk Industry Foundation. These two groups, backed by the likes of Philip Morris, have funded several front groups such as Public Voice and the Campaign for Fair Milk Prices to lobby against the Dairy Compact and other important dairy provisions.

The real fight over dairy compacts should not come from Members of the Senate that support protecting small farms and consumers, but from the Na-

tional Milk Processors who work against all farmers to the benefit of their bottom line, because they control the price now, and that gives them higher profits. All we want is a fair price.

It is crucial that Congress debate the issues presented on dairy compacts on the merits, rather than based on misinformation. When properly armed with the facts, I believe you will conclude that the Northeast Dairy Compact has already proven to be a successful experiment and that the other states which have now adopted dairy compacts should be given the opportunity to determine whether dairy compacts will in fact work for them as well.

Mr. President, federal dairy policy is difficult to explain at best. As a Member of the House of Representatives, I served as the ranking member of the Dairy and Livestock Subcommittee. During my years in the House, I worked very closely with the programs that impacted dairy farmers and consumers. I know the industry, I know the policies, and the compact is a raving success.

Of all the programs and efforts by the federal government to help our nation's dairy farmers and protect the interests of consumers, the most effective and promising solution I have seen thus far is the creation and operation of the Dairy Compact.

Unfortunately, many of my colleagues have not yet seen the benefit of compacts and may be basing their reasons on misinformation.

In addition to being sound public policy, the Dairy Compact represents a state's right to do all it can under the law to protect its farmers and consumers.

The courts agree that the Compact is legally sound. Last January, a federal appeals court rejected a challenge to the Dairy Compact by the Milk Industry Foundation. The Court found that the Compact was constitutional and the U.S. Agriculture Secretary's approval of the Compact was justified.

In November of 1998, a Federal district court judge also ruled in favor of the Compact Commission in a challenge brought by five New York-based milk processors. The court found that the Commission had the authority to regulate milk that is produced or processed outside of the region but distributed within the Compact region. In each case, the courts found that the work of the Commission is of firm and legal grounds.

Mr. President, in recent weeks Governors from throughout the Northeast and Southeast sent a letter to the Majority Leader of the Senate and House, urging Congress to consider and support the Dairy Compact legislation.

The Governors of the Compact regions speak not only for their farmers and consumers but for the rights of the States. The message to Congress from

Governors nationwide has been clear. "Increase the flexibility of states and support legislation that promotes state and regional policy initiatives."

Governors from the twenty-five Compact states represent diverse constituents. They have all considered the benefits and potential impacts by compacts on all those in their states. In the state of Rhode Island for example, there are nearly six million consumers and only 32 dairy farmers. Yet, the dairy compact passed overwhelmingly in the Rhode Island State legislature and is supported by the entire Rhode Island delegation. A similar story is true for Massachusetts.

As I mentioned previously in my statement, nearly all the states supported the Dairy Compacts overwhelmingly.

The success of the three year pilot program of the Northeast Dairy Compact, has created an opportunity for a partnership between Congress and the States, to help strengthen the fundamental federalism movement.

The New England states by joining together as one are doing what any large state can do under the law such as California. A large State can do it. We can't because of the commerce clause. We have to join together and get a compact. We did that.

The reauthorization of the successful experimentation of the Northeast Compact and the creation of a Southern Compact as a pilot program will help maintain that the States' constitutional authority, resources, and competence of the people to govern is recognized and protected.

Mr. President, the Compact also stands on firm constitutional grounds. Does Congress possess the authority to approve the Northeast Interstate and Southern Dairy Compacts?

The answer to this question is clear, simple, and affirmative. Under the Compact Clause of the United States Constitution, states are expressly authorized to seek congressional approval of interstate compacts, even states in the Upper Midwest. And congressional approval, once given, endows interstate compacts with the force of federal law. The Compact Clause, and the Compacts that Congress may license under it, are important devices of constitutional federalism.

Despite what some of my colleagues have said, the Northeast Dairy Compact is working as it was intended to. Instead of trying to destroy an initiative that works to help dairy farmers with cost to the federal government, I urge my colleagues to respect the states' interest and initiative to help protect their farmers and encourage that other regions of the country to explore the possibility of forming their own interstate dairy compact.

For many farmers in Vermont and New England, the Compact payments have meant the difference between

keeping the farm and calling the auctioneer.

Dairy farming in Vermont represents over seventy percent of the agricultural receipts in the state. No other state relies on one sector of agriculture more than Vermont depends on dairy.

What we were trying to accomplish in the Agriculture Appropriations bill was about helping farmers and protecting consumers. Farmers deserve our support and recognition. It is sometimes easy to forget just how fortunate we are in this country to have the world's least expensive and safest food supply.

Dairy farmers work harder than many of us realize. The cows have to be milked at least two times a day, 365 days a year; farmers work on the average 90 hours per week, an average of 13 hours a day; farm owners receive an average hourly wage of \$3.65, take few if any vacations or holidays and have no sick leave. That is why they are so sensitive to something which may destroy or reduce the prices.

Prices received by farmers in the month of October will be lower than the prices received over 20 years ago. Can you imagine maintaining your livelihood or business with salaries of 20 years ago? Think about what that means to consumers also. The price of milk, if you look on an inflationary scale, is well below what it would be for softdrinks or anything else.

I am certain that my colleagues will agree with me that dairy farmers deserve a fair price for their product. What does it say about our values when some of the hardest working people, our farmers, are underpaid and unappreciated? Mandating option 1-A and continuing the dairy compact ensures that dairy farmers will have the needed tools to help face the challenges of the future.

In Vermont, dairy farmers help define the character of the state. I am proud to work to protect them to protect the traditions and special qualities of the state. Dairy is not just a farming operation for Vermont and other states in New England, it is symbol of our culture, history and way of life. Its survival is a highly emotional subject.

Vermonters take pride in their heritage as a state committed to the ideals of freedom and unity. That heritage goes hand and hand with a unique quality of life and the desire to grow and develop while maintaining Vermont's beauty and character. Ethan Allan and his Green Mountain Boys and countless other independent driven Vermonters helped shape the nation's fourteenth state while making outstanding contributions to the independence of this country.

Today, that independence still persists in the hills and valleys of Vermont. Vermonters have worked hard over the years to maintain local control over issues that impact the

charm and quality of the state. Vermont's decision to enhance and protect its wonderful scenic vistas by prohibiting bill boards along its highways and roads was a local, statewide decision. Because of the vision Vermonters many years ago had, driving throughout Vermont enjoying the beautiful landscapes and nature beauty is a pleasurable experience. And it would not be without cows on the hillside. Vermonters choose to control their state's destiny. They should, as any other state have the right to protect their consumers, farmers and way of life.

Most Americans know Vermont as a tiny state in the Northeast that has good skiing, great maple syrup, and beautiful fall foliage—a charming place where the trees are close together and the people are far apart—far from the problems that plague many communities across the country. It is nearly impossible to drive down any country road in Vermont and not pass a farm with a herd of cows. Dairy farms still define the nooks and crannies of the rolling hills. Maybe there's a small pond nearby and a few horses or sheep. Or maybe there's a pasture with bales of hay and cows lining up at the barn waiting for milking time.

The look of Vermont distinguishes it as a throwback to a bygone, simpler time. Vermont is the home of stone fences, covered bridges, and red farmhouses. Vermonters have a special place in their hearts and lives for farmers.

Vermonters of today are struggling to keep step with the modern world while holding onto the state's classic rural charm and agriculture base. It's a difficult task requiring much thought and work. But then again, overcoming difficulties through hard work is what the native Vermonter is all about. Farm families know all about hard work.

Mr. President, dairy farmers did not ask Congress for billions of dollars in disaster aid? Instead, and most appropriately, they asked Congress to provide them with a fair pricing structure and the right of the states to work together at no cost to provide a structure that would help them receive a fair price for their product—not a bail out from the federal government.

Therefore, I must oppose the Agriculture Appropriations bill and suggest that Members whose farmers will be getting federal dollars in disaster assistance take a close look at how the Northeast Dairy Compact helps protect farmers and consumers with no cost to the federal government or any adverse impact on farmers outside the compact region.

I urge my friends to watch closely what is happening to dairy and to give us the opportunity to continue to live in a beautiful State with cows on the hillside.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep disappointment with the agriculture conference report that we in the Senate will vote on today. This agriculture appropriations bill falls well short of helping the Connecticut farmers whose very livelihood was badly hurt by this summer's record drought, and who are depending on our assistance to recover from the devastating losses they have suffered. Instead, this plan simply leaves farmers throughout the Northeast even higher and drier, and leaves me no choice but to vote against this bill.

In August, I joined with Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman in visiting a family farm in Northford to inspect the drought damage done in Connecticut this year. On that day, the Secretary declared the entire state a drought disaster area. Since then, it has been estimated that farmers in our state have incurred losses of \$41 million; together, the 13 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states estimate their losses at \$2.5 billion.

Sadly, despite strong bipartisan pleas for support, the agriculture appropriations bill shortchanges our state as well as the entire Northeast region. Of the \$8.7 billion in "emergency" farm relief this bill provides, only \$1.2 billion is available for natural disaster aid. This smaller allocation of money must be distributed, in turn, to farmers nationwide for drought, flood, and other natural disaster damage. It is likely that the drought-stricken farmers of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states would receive only about \$300 million—less than one-eighth of their estimated recovery costs.

Historically, hard working Connecticut farmers benefit from very little federal assistance. During the last fiscal year, for example, Connecticut farmers received less than one-tenth of one percent of the \$10.6 billion paid out by the government-funded Commodity Credit Corporation. It is only fair that when they need emergency recovery assistance, the government come through for Connecticut farmers too. Sadly, this bill is not fair.

This agriculture spending plan is regionally inequitable, offers insufficient disaster assistance for Connecticut farmers, and represents unacceptable public policy. In times of legitimate farm crises, Congress has repeatedly provided a helping hand to farmers in the Midwest and South. We owe nothing less to the farmers in Connecticut and throughout the Northeast who make a critical contribution to our economy. They deserve real help, not a bill of goods.

I am also concerned by the disappearance during conference of the Northeast Dairy Compact, which had been approved by the House of Representatives. Because the usual conference

committee proceedings were circumvented this year, it is impossible to know why the Dairy Compact is missing in action. Regardless of the answer to this question, the subversion of the conference committee process disturbs me and represents a bad precedent for our legislative process.

Because this bill does not provide real, equitable relief for Connecticut farmers and does not include reauthorization of the Northeast Dairy Compact, I will join my colleagues from the Northeast in voting against it. I thank the chair, and I yield the floor.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a matter that will severely affect milk producers and processors in my state of Arizona and impede their ability to compete effectively in the state of Nevada. Under the Secretary's final rule, Arizona and Clark County, Nevada, make up one of the 11 consolidated Federal Milk Marketing Order Areas. During consideration of the Agriculture Appropriations bill, a provision was agreed to in the Senate by voice vote that attempted to remove Clark County, Nevada from this proposed order. I say attempted because the drafting of this language was fatally flawed. It would not have achieved its intended goal of allowing Nevada to remove itself from the system. Of course, the Nevada Senators realized this mistake and moved to amend the language in conference. I notified the committee, both in writing and orally, that I objected to any attempt to amend or modify the Senate-passed language. Unfortunately, the language change sought by the Nevada Senators was approved, and is now found in Section 760 of the Agriculture Appropriations bill of FY 2000.

Section 760 creates, for the first time in nearly 75 years of federal milk-price regulation, a category of milk handler which is statutorily exempt from milk-price regulation. Anderson Dairy—the sole processor in Clark County—will gain a tremendous competitive advantage from this exemption at the expense of the Arizona dairy industry. Allowing Anderson to be removed from the Arizona/Nevada order will make it the only milk processor with sales in Clark County that enjoys a regulatory exemption. But its competitors—such as the Arizona processors—will continue to be regulated on all Clark County sales, which make up approximately 20 percent of their market. In other words, Anderson will be able to price its milk well below that of the Arizona processors who remain subject to the pricing structure of the milk-order system.

Moreover, this statutory exemption will extend to Anderson Dairy sales outside of Clark County. Anderson Dairy would, therefore, enjoy a commercial advantage in its sales in Arizona while its competitors would continue to be regulated on all such sales.

A good argument can be made in support of a milk industry that is free from pricing regulations; however, that is not the case today. Competitive equity has been the foundation of Federal Milk Orders for over one-half century. Under 7 U.S.C. 608(c)(5)(A), handlers are subject to the same uniform classified prices as their competitors, and under § 608(c)(5)(B)(ii), revenue from handlers is pooled and blended so that producers may benefit from "uniform prices" irrespective of handler use of milk.

Section 760 of the FY 2000 Agriculture Appropriations bill strikes at the heart of each component of regulatory equity by exempting the Clark County handler from the uniform price and economic standards applicable to competitors within the order, and by excluding from the producer-revenue pool all revenue from milk sales to the plant. For the plant operators in Arizona who continue to operate under price regulation, competing against an exempt plant such as Anderson is like fencing with your sword arm tied behind your back. Anderson can exploit its commercial advantage by expanding sales to current or prospective customers of nonexempt handlers. Such expansion would, in the end, severely harm Arizona producers.

Mr. President, legislative exemption for Clark County plants should greatly enhance Anderson's asset value for acquisition purposes. Several national and international dairy companies have aggressively expanded their operations in the United States during the past few years. These include Dean, Suiza, and Parmalat. A price-exempt plant in the nation's fastest growing major metropolitan area would be very attractive to any expanding dairy enterprise. Should this occur, the producers and processors in Arizona would be negatively impacted.

Having one state subject to the pricing structure of the milk-order system and another, contiguous state free to set its own price creates an uneven playing field. When Anderson is granted the right of removal from a system created to maintain stability and equity within that region, we have effectively undermined the intent of that system.

Some 56 years ago, U.S. Appellate Judge Frank lamented that "the domestication of milk has not been accompanied by a successful domestication of some of the meaner impulses in all those engaged in the milk industry." *Queensboro v. Wickard*, 137 F. 2d 969 (1943). Regional preferences and exemptions will only fuel these cynical impulses. I hope we can find a way to rectify this egregious situation and maintain a level playing field for the Arizona milk industry.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to this conference report. The East Coast suffered through months of drought this summer, caus-

ing enormous crop losses to our farmers. Then Hurricane Floyd arrived with severe rains, further affecting farmers with widespread floods.

These two acts of nature are serious emergencies affecting millions of people, yet this conference report does not do nearly enough for farmers on the East Coast.

In my state of New Jersey, agriculture is a \$1 billion a year business involving 830,000 acres on over 8,000 farms. While in some more rural states these statistics may not be significant on a relative basis. But in a densely populated place like N.J. they are overpowering.

This summer's drought caused losses on 406,000 acres affecting 7,000 of those farms. All 21 counties in my state were declared drought disaster areas. It has taken a truly devastating toll on our farm community.

According to Secretary Glickman, the drought alone resulted in a total of \$1.5 to \$2 billion in damages throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

And now, we have the devastation of Hurricane Floyd on top of the drought disaster. If any state has suffered a true farm disaster this year—it's New Jersey as well as our neighbors in the northeast.

Unfortunately, although this conference report contains \$8.7 billion in emergency assistance for farmers, only \$1.2 billion of that is for weather related disasters. And this \$1.2 billion is spread out over the 50 states. That will not leave a fair share for New Jersey and other northeastern states that actually suffered a disaster this year.

Numerous New Jersey farmers have been left with no hay, no crops and no livestock worth taking to market.

Without our help, the result of these disasters may force some farmers to end decades of family farming and to give up the way of life that they love.

This Congress must do more. The situation facing East Coast farmers is a true emergency, in every sense of the word. At a time when we are watching entirely predictable activities like the census being declared emergencies, we are doing little to assist those who face true acts of God.

I cannot support this conference report until the farmers in New Jersey and up and down the East Coast receive the help they need.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I plan to cast my vote in favor of the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations conference report. I do so, however, with great disappointment in the final package crafted by the Republican leadership. In short, I believe the conference report inadequately addresses the needs of our Nation's farmers, falls short on lifting economically dangerous embargos, and has turned a usually bipartisan, open, and fair process into a backroom operation.

With that said, Mr. President, I cannot stand in the way of at least some relief for to our struggling farmers and our fragile farm economy. The Illinois Department of Agriculture estimates that \$450 million from the \$8.7 billion agriculture relief package will directly benefit Illinois producers through receipt of 100 percent of their 1999 Agriculture Market Transition Act (AMTA) payments. This is in addition to the more than \$450 million already received by Illinois farmers this year to help them through this crisis.

The Illinois farm economy is in trouble. Farm income in Illinois dropped 78 percent last year to just over \$11,000, the lowest in two decades and down significantly from the \$51,000 figure in 1997. Lower commodity prices and record low hog prices, in particular, are primarily to blame for this net farm income free fall in my home State.

The Illinois Farm Development Authority recently noted that the financial stress faced by Illinois farmers today is higher than it has been for 10 years. Activity in the Authority's Debt Restructuring Guarantee Program is four or five times higher today than last year. The Authority approved 7 to 10 loans per month in 1998. In 1999, the Authority has been approving 30–40 Debt Restructuring loans per month—a 300-percent increase. This is a record level, unmatched since the 1986–87 farm crisis.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has predicted that prices for corn, soybeans, and wheat will remain well below normal and that farm income will again drop this year. Nationally, farm income has declined more than 16 percent since 1996.

USDA is facing the largest farm assistance expenditure in its history. USDA processed 2,181 Loan Deficiency Payments LDPs in 1997, about 2.1 million in 1998—a thousand times more, and will work through a projected three million LDPs this year. Unfortunately, it appears that this crisis will drag on for the foreseeable future, further draining USDA's resources and reserves.

I served as a conferee on this bill. However, I never had the opportunity to fully debate the disaster provisions or bring up important matters such as producer-owned livestock processing and marketing cooperatives. Also, I find it unacceptable that the conference report excludes Cuba from the list of countries exempted from embargoes and sanctions for food and medicine. The Senate voted overwhelmingly in August to include the Ashcroft-Dodd provision in this bill. And Senate conferees insisted on this important language. When it became clear that the House conferees were on the verge of agreeing to a food and medicine exemption for Cuba, the House Republican leadership shut down the conference and completed the outstanding issues behind closed doors.

I did not sign the conference report because I believe the process was tainted—conferees were excluded from important final decisions. I hope this is never repeated. It undermines the credibility of the entire Congress.

Once the Senate acts on the conference report and sends it to the President, our role in helping to improve conditions in rural America does not end. We should vigorously explore other ways to help our Nation's farmers and our rural economy. We should work on short-term remedies like additional targeted disaster assistance as well as long-term solutions such as expanded trade opportunities—including ensuring that agriculture has an equal seat at the table for the upcoming round of WTO talks, promotion of renewable fuels like ethanol, and tax fairness.

I hope the president will sign this bill quickly and then work with the Congress to submit a supplemental request taking into account the devastating financial crisis that continues in rural America. To delay further action on this matter would be a great disservice to the men and women who dedicate their lives to production agriculture.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to comment on the conference report and the crisis in agriculture that came to pass in my State of West Virginia during the historic drought of 1999.

I am happy that after seeming to be a forgotten issue for so long, the necessity of emergency assistance for the victims of weather-related disasters has been included in the final bill that will be sent to the President. I commend the diligence of my colleague, the senior Senator from West Virginia, in working to ensure that this funding made it, and for working to include a specific mention of West Virginia's horrible statewide drought in the final report language.

Earlier this year, I saw the devastation visited on my State by this drought, and I vowed to do whatever I could to help West Virginia farmers and producers. I probably have written or signed onto more letters about agriculture funding this year than in all my years in the Senate. I invited the Secretary of Agriculture to come out and see the damage first-hand, and I walked along with him and Senator BYRD through the parched fields of Mr. Terry Dunn, near Charles Town, West Virginia. Farmers from around West Virginia told us how terribly the drought was hurting them. Many of these people work their farms and another full-time job, in hopes of keeping viable family farms that have passed down through four, five, and six generations.

I voted today to approve the conference report, although I believe the amount of emergency assistance should have been much higher. I voted for clo-

ture because this money is needed, wherever it will eventually go, as soon as it can be dispersed. I made the decision that "too little right now" was better than "too little, too late."

I also realize that other, more divisive, issues have bogged down the conferees much more so than the prospect of providing a helping hand to struggling agricultural producers in the Northeastern, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeastern states. Actually, I am led to believe that some level of drought funding was among the least contentious issues, and that the conferees ultimately based their number on estimates provided by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Still, I remain troubled that the amount appropriated seems so low, and that emergency funding took so long to become a sure thing. I am mindful of the severe budget constraints under which they are operating, and the tense debates that have accompanied any attempt to appropriate emergency funding. But if the drought of 1999 was not a valid emergency, when will we see one?

Another thing that I will never understand is how the U.S. Senate—including Senators whose own states have suffered the worst drought damage since records were kept—could have voted down emergency funding when we originally debated this bill. I voted for the Democratic package which lost, and now finds its way into the final report. Another thing that troubles me is that while the conferees used Secretary Glickman's preliminary estimate of drought losses, they grouped those losses together with losses incurred during the devastation wrought by Hurricane Floyd, estimates of which exceed the emergency assistance in this bill by many billions of dollars, and did not appropriate a more realistic sum.

Once again, I know the conferees have attempted to give guidance to USDA in how this money should be distributed, and I look forward to an emergency supplemental appropriation that will allow for meaningful rehabilitation of the flood-ravaged agricultural areas of the Southeast and New Jersey. I hope, Mr. President, that if any such supplemental assistance is proposed, that there be included with it sufficient additional funds for our many drought survivors as well.

I hope for this, because this drought might be the last straw that ends the farming life as last for as many as ten percent of my state's small- and medium-sized farmers. Because of this terrible drought, it is estimated that West Virginia will suffer truly horrendous losses: As much as \$89 million in cattle; half of our annual apple crop—for the worst yield since 1945; half of our corn; almost half of our soybeans; and nearly 90 percent of our new Christmas trees, a relatively new crop for West Virginia

farmers, but one that has allowed many family farms to remain in the family.

In closing, Mr. President, I once again applaud the efforts of my colleague Senator BYRD for doing all that he could to see that our farmers weather this crisis. And I call upon the rest of my colleagues to recognize that most farmers in the drought- and flood-ravaged portions of the eastern United States will need much more help, as soon as it can get to them.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep frustration with the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture Appropriations conference report before us today.

Two weeks ago, the Republican leadership pulled the plug on conference negotiations—and killed our prospect for comprehensive sanctions reform and additional assistance for agricultural communities hit by economic and natural disasters. When we look back at this first session of the 106th Congress, I believe we will see that decision as an enormous missed opportunity.

Mr. President, Washington State is the most trade-dependent State in the nation. And agriculture is one of its top exports. The growers in my State need open markets. Many times, market access is closed or limited because of the actions of foreign countries. We can and must fight to break down barriers erected by other nations.

We must also fight to break down the barriers to foreign markets created by our own government. Sanctions that include food and medicine do not serve the interest of the United States, and they certainly do not serve the interests of American producers. Oftentimes with the best of intentions, we have cut off all trade with states that sponsor terrorism, fail to live up to critical agreements, or refuse to share our principles of democracy.

Mr. President, we cannot and must not tolerate reprehensible actions by rogue states. But it is clear to me, and to 69 other Senators who voted for sanctions reform, that we do not act in the best interests of American foreign policy or American agricultural producers when we impose unilateral food and medicine sanctions. The people in the world we hurt most with unilateral sanctions are American growers.

The Senate sanctions reform package was a huge step in the right direction. It deserves to become law. Wheat growers in my State deserve access to Iran, which was once our largest export market for soft white wheat. And pea and lentil growers deserve access to Cuba, a market valued at more than \$17 million. In both of these cases, our foreign competitors have stepped into the market vacuum created by U.S. sanctions policy.

The Administration started sanctions reform earlier this year. I ap-

plaud those efforts—belated as they were. I also applaud those in the Senate who worked so hard for passage of the Ashcroft-Dodd amendment. But now the Republican leadership has sent the message to our foreign competitors that they can continue to conduct business as usual—that U.S. growers will not soon be players in markets like Iran and Cuba.

After hearing for years from some Republicans that the Administration lacked the will to reform our nation's outdated and ineffective sanctions policies, the Republican leadership proved it could not lead American agriculture into the 21st century. Too many of our producers already have empty wallets and empty bank accounts, and—in response—Congress delivered empty rhetoric on sanctions reform.

In September, I met with representatives of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, the Washington State Farm Bureau, and the Washington Growers Clearing House. I expressed my strong support for the sanctions reform package and my hope that some agreement could be reached between the Senate and House. I did not count on the procedural maneuvering that doomed the sanctions package. Our growers deserved a better process and a better outcome.

Mr. President, in a perfect world this bill would include sanctions reform. Its emergency provisions would include more money for specialty crops, additional funding for the Market Access Program, and increased Section 32 money for USDA purchases of fruits and vegetables. It would include more resources for farm worker housing and Natural Resource Conservation Service conservation operations.

On the subject of minor crops, I would like to discuss the plight of apple growers in my state. The apple industry in particular is in the throes of the economic conditions as bad as anyone can remember. Poor weather has played a role, but more important are the economic factors.

Apple juice dumping by China has removed the floor price for apples. Chinese apple juice concentrate imports increased by more than 1,200 percent between 1995 and 1998. I was pleased to sponsor a letter with Senator GORTON, signed by a total of 21 Senators, to Commerce Secretary Daley urging the administration to find that Chinese dumping is destroying our growers and to impose stiff retroactive duties. Weak Asian markets and high levels of world production have contributed greatly to the terrible economic situation in central Washington State.

As a result, many small family farms that grow some of the best fruit produced in the world are going out of business. Many of these are not marginal producers. They are efficient growers whose families have been growing high quality apples and pears and other commodities for generations.

As in other parts of rural America, the communities that rely on tree fruit production for their economic base are reeling. It is hard to diversify when your economic foundation is crumbling. It is estimated approximately 20 percent of Washington apple growers will lose their farms in the next three years. And that is a conservative estimate. Over the August recess, I met with community leaders in north central Washington State. Okanogan County alone has experienced \$70 million in losses in the tree fruit industry leading the county to declare an economic disaster.

Language in the conference report directs the Farm Service Agency to review all programs that assist apple producers, and review the limits set on operating loan programs used by apple growers to determine whether the current limits are insufficient to cover operating expenses. I urge FSA to complete this review as soon as possible so that those of us who represent apple producing states can improve the Federal Government's assistance to our growers.

The conference bill before us provides \$1.2 billion in disaster assistance. The report language for that section of the bill mentions the plight of apple growers and urges the USDA to address the problem. However, let's be clear that it will be very difficult for my state's apple producers to get meaningful assistance through this bill. Simply put, this bill is not a victory for apple growers or their communities.

In the future, some of my colleagues may criticize the Secretary of Agriculture for not recognizing the critical need in apple country and failing to deliver assistance. Earlier this year, August Schumacher, Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, came to Washington State to hear from apple growers. I know the administration understands the needs of growers in my State. But the administration can't realistically address the needs of growers all over the country with only \$1.2 billion. Nevertheless, I look forward to working with my colleagues to direct aid to apple growers in Washington State.

I believe this Congress needs to accept responsibility for the shortcomings in the bill. The Republican leadership certainly bears complete responsibility for the unacceptable manner in which this bill was taken out of the hands of congressional appropriators in the middle of conference negotiations.

Mr. President, while this bill is flawed, it is still a step in the right direction. I intend to vote for the conference report. Although we didn't do it two weeks ago, we must send the message this week that Congress will try to reestablish opportunity in rural America.

I will vote for this bill because it provides emergency assistance to many of

our farmers and ranchers. It funds research, including new positions for potato and temperate fruit fly research that are critical to minor crop producers in my state. It delivers a nearly \$52 million increase for programs in President Clinton's Food Safety Initiative, including \$600,000 for research into listeriosis, sheep scrapie, and ovine progressive pneumonia virus (OPPV) at ARS facilities in Pullman, Washington and in DuBois, ID. It provides critical funding for WIC and other feeding programs, and for P.L. 480.

Mr. President, I was tempted to vote "no" on this conference report. But just as I believe the Republican leadership should have embraced responsibility on sanctions reform, I believe voting to pass this conference report is the most responsible approach. It is my sincere hope the Senate will pass sanctions reform and other legislation to provide greater economic security to communities that rely on agriculture before the end of this session.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for a provision by Senator ASHCROFT included in the Senate version of the Agricultural Appropriations Act for FY2000. This provision passed with 70 votes in the Senate but it was subsequently stripped out of the conference report after the conference stalled and never reconvened.

The Ashcroft provision is simple. It substantially curtails the use of unilateral sanctions of food and medicines without removing them absolutely from the palette of foreign policy options. If the President decided to include food and medicine in future sanctions, he would have to receive the approval of Congress, through an expedited procedure.

Mr. President, American farmers have spoken and they want help. In the past year, cotton prices have tumbled 46 percent and wheat is down more than 60 percent. Corn sells for as low as \$1.50 for a bushel in some places. It is not surprising that net farm income dropped almost one billion dollars between 1996 and 1998. Storms and drought have destroyed our Nation's crops. We must help our struggling farmers out of this crisis.

The farmers in my home State of Arkansas have made it clear to me that one measure needed to help them out of the current crisis is an expansion of export markets. Indeed, our farmers are missing out on millions of dollars in exports each year. It is estimated that agricultural sanctions have robbed U.S. farmers out of an estimated ten percent of the world wheat market and half a billion dollars in sales. Before agricultural sanctions were placed on Cuba in 1963, that country was the largest U.S. export market for rice, taking more than 50 percent of total rice exports. Even today, Amer-

ican farmers are losing out to farmers in Canada, Europe, and Asia who sell \$600 million worth of food products to Cuba.

While President Clinton issued an executive order in April of this year allowing food and medicine sales to Sudan, Libya, and Iran, these sales would still face significant restrictions. Sales would be licensed on a case-by-case basis and made only to non-governmental entities. In some cases, where there are no non-governmental entities buying food for the people, no sales could be made.

It is true that the regimes that are sanctioned from food and medicine, including the governments of the Sudan, Libya, Iran, Iraq, and Cuba, are reprehensible. But we must also consider the populations of these countries—people with whom we have no argument, people who are starving, people who are sick because they do not have enough food or medicine. While governments may intentionally withhold food and medicine from their populations, both to foster anti-American sentiment and to keep the people under subjection, we benefit no one by denying our farmers the opportunity to sell their crops. If we allow these sales—if we rein back our food and medicine sanctions, then we leave these regimes without an excuse for not providing their people with food. We close off a channel of resentment and make clear to people living under repression that their government is solely responsible for leaving them hungry. And we leave these governments with less money for weapons. Senator ASHCROFT's provision accomplishes all of these things.

Mr. President, I am not arguing for a provision that has been defeated and will never reappear. Let me say again that the Senate passed this provision with 70 votes. I am confident that it will advance this legislation favorably again.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, Chairman COCHRAN and his staff have done a highly commendable job of crafting a bill to help agriculture in these tough times. Important funding is included in the bill for agricultural research, nutrition programs, natural resource programs, food safety, export enhancement, rural development, and marketing and regulatory programs. I am exceptionally pleased with the funding that will go to Montana to carry out important agricultural research and promote rural development.

Times are tough in agriculture. In Montana, thousands of farmers and ranchers are experiencing a severe price crunch. Commodities simply are not bringing the prices agricultural producers need to break even. Now is an essential time to provide producers opportunities for diversification and increased marketing opportunities. Times are tough and times are changing.

The Federal Government has the opportunity to provide agricultural producers with enhanced options for marketing. We can do that through funding for agricultural research and rural development and policy changes for sanctions reform, country-of-origin labeling, rescission of the USDA grade, balance of trade laws, and price reporting.

I am extremely pleased with the inclusion, at my request, of reporting in this bill. Mandatory price reporting is a milestone for livestock producers. For too long there has been too much mistrust between agricultural producers and meat packers. Four major packers control 79 percent of the meat-packing industry. Many producers raising and feeding livestock feel that packers can control the market by not providing data on either the number of cattle they buy or the prices they pay for it. The USDA collects the information voluntarily. This legislation mandates that packers will provide that data twice daily and make it easily accessible to ranchers.

Mandatory price reporting provides Montana producers with all the pertinent information they need to make the best possible marketing decision. It means that a Montana rancher can check the daily markets. They will have the necessary data to make the decision to sell their livestock immediately or hold out for a better price. A five cent increase in the market can mean an extra \$30 per animal. On a 300-head operation that means an extra \$9,000. To those experiencing the best economic times in years, \$9,000 doesn't seem like much. I can tell you—to a rancher who hasn't met the cost-of-production in three or four years, any amount of money in the black looks pretty good.

Lately ranchers have not had the money even to buy necessities for operating expenses. Due to the nature of the business and risks involved, farmers and ranchers are used to utilizing credit and operating loans. However, this economic crisis has bankers and rural business worried. Main Street Rural America is hurting too. Producers making knowledge-based marketing decisions helps everybody. It helps agricultural producers—and it helps rural communities who depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Kent and Sarah Hereim own a 300-head operation between Harlowton and Judith Gap, MT. Nine thousand dollars means to them a new computer. That gives them even more accessibility to marketing information and the ability to make better marketing decisions. A computer provides access to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange or the Chicago Board of Trade for futures marketing options. It provides an updated mechanism to pay bills and keep spreadsheets on operating expenses. A computer can be a valuable tool for ranchers to keep production records,

carcass data, grazing plans, and other management information. These records allow producers to be better managers and increase profits.

Nine thousand dollars can mean a new bull in addition to the computer. Buying better seedstock increases genetic capability and produces better animals. Increase in quality increases profit. More and more emphasis is being placed on paying producers on a grid. Paying on a grid means ranchers are paid on the quality of their animals not merely the number of pounds. This gives producers who strive for better genetics and meat quality a clear advantage.

Rural communities win too. An extra \$9,000 helped the local computer store and it helped others in the industry. That new bull Kent and Sarah bought helps the seedstock (bull) producer who now has extra money to buy fencing supplies from the local agricultural supply store. The owner of that ag supply store now has extra money for Christmas gifts at the local clothing store. That clothing store owner puts extra money in a CD at the bank. In a rural community a dollar turning over makes a world of difference.

This example is why it is so important to put control back in the hands of the livestock producer. It is exceedingly important to producers to have an assurance that they are receiving timely and accurate data. It doesn't make sense for those raising the commodity to be a passive price-taker. Having the information readily accessible puts the rancher in a position to make good marketing decisions and not be left fully at the mercy of the buyer.

In Montana, livestock outnumber people by at least twice. There are less than a million people in Montana and over 2.5 million head of livestock. Sixty-four percent of the land in Montana is used for agricultural production. Livestock producers depend on the livestock markets for their livelihood. Mandatory price reporting gives them that data and the controls to use it.

Also important to livestock producers is the Sheep Industry Improvement Center. This center, which is located at USDA, has a \$30 million budget to assist the sheep and goat industries in research and education.

I realize that no long-term solution will work until this current economic crisis is taken care of. This bill goes a long way in getting producers back on their feet and on the way to a better agricultural sector. Immediate funding needs of farmers and ranchers are addressed in a manner that will give them an opportunity to get back on track.

The \$8.7 billion package contains important funding for Agricultural Marketing Transition Act (AMTA) payments for wheat and barley producers

in Montana, as well as \$322 million for livestock producers and \$650 million in crop insurance.

I am pleased that important language for durum wheat producers was included in the bill. Before this change, the method for calculating loan deficiency payments (LDP) repayments unfairly presumed a high quality for durum, which resulted in a lower repayment rate for their crop. However, as a result of this language, the USDA has agreed to correct inequities in the current loan deficiency program (LDP) program for durum wheat.

The crop insurance portion of the bill will provide \$400 million to provide agricultural producers with a premium discount toward the purchase of crop insurance for the 2000 crop year. Currently, farmers would pay a higher premium for the year 2000 than for 1999 or 2001. With the lowest prices in years, agricultural producers cannot afford higher premiums.

I am disappointed that sanctions reform was taken out of the bill. I believe these concerns must be addressed as soon as possible. I will support Senator ASHCROFT in his efforts to exempt food and medicine from sanctioned countries. American farmers and ranchers stand much to lose by not having all viable markets open to them.

Imposing trade sanctions hurts American farmers and ranchers. Sanctions have effectively shut out American agricultural producers from 11 percent of the world market, with sanctions imposed on various products of over 60 countries. They allow our competitors an open door to those markets where sanctions are imposed by the United States. In times like these our producers need every available marketing option open to them. We cannot afford lost market share.

Trade sanctions are immoral. Innocent people are denied commodities while our farmers and ranchers are denied the sale to that particular country. It is my sincere hope that my colleagues will see fit to open up more markets by supporting Senator ASHCROFT.

Farmers and ranchers must be provided a fighting chance in the world market, and the people of sanctioned countries must be allowed access to agricultural commodities.

Again, I thank the fine chairman Mr. COCHRAN, and his staff, for all their work on this bill. I will continue to fight for Montana farmers and ranchers and provide a voice for agriculture.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I am disappointed that the conference committee on H.R. 1906, the Agricultural appropriations bill for FY 2000 included a legislative rider sponsored by Senator MCCONNELL that would fundamentally change the H-2A temporary foreign agricultural worker program.

I am concerned that the McConnell rider would be harmful to both foreign

and domestic farm workers. The McConnell rider would essentially allow agribusinesses to import as many H-2A foreign guest workers as they want, regardless of whether there are workers here in America who want those jobs.

That would be harmful to the U.S. farm workers who want the jobs, obviously. But it would also be harmful to other farm workers, who would then have to compete with more easily exploitable foreign labor. And I believe it would not be good for the guest workers themselves, who would have few of the protections and benefits to which Americans are entitled.

The Administration opposes the McConnell rider. So does the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of La Raza, the Farmworker Justice Fund, and the United Farm Workers. The McConnell rider also flatly contradicts the recommendations of the General Accounting Office.

Let me take a moment to describe how the H-2A foreign guest worker program works, and maybe that will help explain what the McConnell rider does. The H-2A program allows agricultural employers to import foreign workers on a temporary basis, but only when there is a shortage locally of available U.S. workers. The Labor Department has to issue a labor certification that there is a shortage of available U.S. workers. But before employers can get that certification from the Labor Department, they have to recruit U.S. workers during a period of 28 to 33 days.

The McConnell rider would substantially shorten the period during which agricultural employers have to recruit U.S. workers. Under current law, the recruitment period is 28 days, though it can be extended to 33 days if employers have to refile their application. The McConnell rider would shorten the recruitment period to 3 days, with a 5-day extension for refile. The recruitment period would shrink from 28 days to three days.

Three days! Does anyone think any kind of meaningful recruitment is going to take place in a period of three days? Of course not. Shortening the recruitment period to three days would turn the labor certification process into a sham and a charade. The result would be that U.S. farmworkers who want those jobs wouldn't be able to get them, and employers would have almost automatic access to cheap, exploitable foreign guest workers.

GAO agrees that shortening the recruitment period to three days would undermine the labor certification process. A December 1997 GAO report looked at this very proposal and found that "employers will not have sufficient time to meet their duties as required by the program and domestic workers will not have ample opportunity to compete for agricultural employment."

The issue here is whether we should make the deplorable working conditions of farmworkers in this country even worse, because that would be the effect of the McConnell rider. I don't think my colleagues really want to do that.

Given the—frankly—miserable working conditions that many farm workers have to endure, I think it would be unconscionable for us to add to their burdens. Farm workers don't have a lot of power. They don't have a lot of economic power, and they don't have a lot of political power. They don't have a lot of money to contribute to political campaigns. You don't see a lot of farm worker faces among the lobbying groups that visit our offices.

Yes, there are some people who advocate on their behalf—groups like the U.S. Catholic Conference, National Council of La Raza, the Farmworker Justice Fund, the UFW. But farmworkers are largely disenfranchised and disempowered. Ultimately, they are dependent on our good will. I hope we can show a little good will towards people who don't have much leverage over us, but people who are very decent and hardworking and deserve better.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the agriculture appropriations conference report. First, I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator COCHRAN and Senator KOHL, for their hard work on this legislation. They faced multiple challenges in trying to find funds for so many different and critical areas within agriculture.

I support this bill, Mr. President. I support it because it will help provide some immediate relief to our farmers, who, in many states, are facing a twin blow from drought and low commodity prices. I know that in my home state of Ohio—where agriculture is the number one industry—many of our farmers are in serious financial trouble. When you're getting hit from both drought and low commodity prices, it really hurts.

I am pleased that the bill we will send to the President today will take an important step toward helping agriculture producers overcome some of the current problems resulting from this summer's drought and low commodity prices. For example, the conference report includes \$5.54 billion in emergency assistance for Agricultural Market Transition Act payments (AMTA). This amount will double producers' AMTA payments for 1999 crops. Also, the bill enables farmers to receive AMTA payments at the beginning of the fiscal year rather than in two installments. This is very important for many of Ohio's farmers who are struggling right now to make ends meet. The Senate should get this bill to the President as quickly as possible. Our farmers need relief now—not later.

This summer has brought with it one of the most prolonged periods of drought in this century. I have talked to many farmers back home and have driven along the highways and back roads in Ohio—you can see how this summer's drought has severely stunted the growth of corn and other key crops. It's devastating. And this devastation is widespread. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has designated all but one of Ohio's eighty-eight (88) counties as natural disaster areas. Of those, Secretary Glickman designated sixty-six (66) counties as primary disaster areas.

According to the Governor of Ohio, our state's farmers are expected to lose \$600 million in income due to the drought. Let me repeat that, Mr. President. In Ohio, our farmers stand to lose \$600 million. When combined with the current low commodity prices, it is no wonder that many farmers in Ohio are asking themselves—and us—how they and their families are going to make it.

In response, the bill we will send to the President today provides approximately \$1.2 billion—to assist farmers plagued by the drought. It's a decent start. But, while this assistance will surely help lessen the immediate financial worries of many of our drought-stricken farmers, it doesn't address a fundamental issue here—and that is that our farmers aren't equipped to withstand cyclical economic downturns and natural disasters over which they have no control. As I see it, we have failed to give agriculture producers the tools they need, over the long-term, to manage risks—whether those risks come from the market or nature. There are things that we, in Congress, are trying to do to help get to the root of the challenges facing our farmers today. Let me explain.

The United States is the most open market in the world. While our farmers are the most productive in the world, market barriers against the free and fair trade of our agriculture products exist. Dismantling these barriers must be a top priority. Congress can help by giving the President fast track authority to negotiate trade agreements. Fast track authority would allow the Administration to enter into trade agreements with other countries, where we are the most competitive and to negotiate with specific regions of the globe.

Failure to pass fast track puts our farmers at a serious disadvantage with global competitors. For instance, the Latin America and Caribbean region offers great opportunities for increased agriculture exports. It is one of the fastest growing markets for U.S. exports and will exceed the European Union as a destination for U.S. exports by next year. This market is expected to exceed both Japan and the European Union combined by the year 2010. Other nations already are working to break down barriers in this region. The United States cannot afford to sit on

the sidelines—just watching—much longer. We need to get into the game. That would help our farmers.

When our foreign trading partners are not trading by international rules, and doing so to the detriment of our farmers, our trade authorities should use all the tools available to them. For example, I introduced bipartisan legislation, the "Carousel Retaliation Act," which would increase pressure on our trading partners to comply with World Trade Organization rules by requiring the U.S. government to rotate targets every six months.

What's happening is that our nation—and especially our farmers—are being injured by the refusal of some foreign countries to comply with World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement rulings. Noncompliance with Dispute Settlement rulings severely undermines open and fair trade. As many of our farmers, cattle ranchers, and large and small business owners know firsthand, this is having a devastating impact on their efforts to maintain or gain access to important international markets.

The "Carousel Retaliation Act" would help ensure the integrity of the WTO Dispute Settlement by rotating—or carouseling—the retaliation list of goods to affect other goods 120 days from the date the list is made and every 180 days, thereafter. Currently, the U.S. Trade Representative has the authority to carousel retaliation lists, but is not required to do so.

The Carousel bill requires the U.S. Trade Representative to rotate and revise the retaliation list so that countries violating WTO Dispute Settlements cannot merely subsidize the affected industries to recover from retaliation penalties. American farmers are the most efficient and competitive in the world. When given the opportunity to compete on equal footing, they will be the most successful, as well.

Besides opening new markets abroad, there are things we can do here at home to help our farmers prosper under the Freedom to Farm Act we passed three years ago. I cosponsored legislation that would allow farmers to open savings accounts into which they can place—tax free—a certain percentage of their profits during good economic times. These funds can remain in their accounts for up to five years. If hard times come along—as we know they do—farmers can withdraw funds from their accounts. The only time these funds would be taxed is when they are withdrawn from the account or after five years.

This bill, the Farm and Ranch Risk Management (FARRM) Act, was included in the \$792 billion tax-relief package that I supported and Congress passed. That tax relief package had many other provisions helpful to farmers. Besides the FARRM provision, the bill included the elimination of estate

taxes, broad-based tax relief, the elimination of the marriage penalty, and the full deductibility of health insurance for the self-employed. Unfortunately, President Clinton vetoed this reasonable tax relief package—that doesn't help our farmers.

Most important, we should get the federal government off the backs of our farmers so they can have the freedom to do what they do better than any other country—and that's produce. I have cosponsored the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act, which would require the Environmental Protection Agency base pesticide use decisions on sound science rather than worst-case scenarios. Also, I have cosponsored legislation that would require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to base any ergonomic standards on sound science.

Mr. President, our farmers need assistance—the kind that is provided through the agriculture appropriations bill and the kind of assistance that comes from pursuing trade and tax policies that would further the economic strength and freedom of American agriculture.

I urge the President to sign the appropriations bill immediately so that farmers in Ohio—and throughout the country—can receive short-term relief as quickly as possible. I also urge the President to take a long, hard look at how we can give our farmers the kind of lasting relief they need to stay in business not just this year, but for generations to come.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues the plight of our nation's farmers. Now, one might ask, what is a Senator from Rhode Island doing speaking about farming? Isn't that usually handled by Members from the Midwest? Well, Mr. President, that is not the case. Farming is alive at our nearly 700 farms in Rhode Island. However, these same family farmers in Rhode Island and those across the nation are looking to Congress for some much needed help in the wake of this summer's horrible weather conditions.

Today, the Senate will be asked to vote on final passage of the conference report on the Fiscal Year 2000 Department of Agriculture and related agencies appropriations bill. This bill is just one of the thirteen spending bills which Congress must approve and the President must sign before the beginning of the new fiscal year. This is a major bill which funds many important farming and environmental programs. However, I must reluctantly vote against final passage of this report for two reasons.

During the debate on the bill earlier this year, farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic were in the middle of what would become one of the worst droughts in the history of this region. In fact, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported

that Rhode Island experienced its driest growing season in 105 years of recordkeeping. As a result, crop damages were widespread. According to the Farm Service Agency in my state, crop losses ranged from 35 percent to an astounding 100 percent. These losses created a terrible financial burden on the farmers in Rhode Island, as well as the entire state economy.

In response to these problems, as well as those experienced by farmers across the country, the Senate approved a \$7.4 billion emergency relief package, and I was glad to support it. In the House, no such funding existed. However, as the difficulties worsened and the need for additional funding was necessary, I was committed to making sure that our family farms in Rhode Island would not be left out of the pot. To that end, I pressed for direct assistance to specifically address drought damage in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. As everyone knows the 1999 drought knew no state barriers or boundaries. Senators from both sides of the aisle knew that making this a partisan issue would not make federal assistance for our farmers come any quicker. We needed to help our farmers and farming families to start the process of rebuilding for new crops and a new season.

In the end, an additional \$1.2 billion was allocated for assistance to farmers across the country who have incurred losses for crops harvested or intended to be planted or harvested in 1999. The key word in that sentence is "across the country." In the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic alone, damage assessments range from \$2 to \$2.5 billion. However, this additional money will not go directly to those farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic that need it the most. Instead, the money will be available to all farmers who have suffered from flooding, Hurricane Floyd, and the drought. This certainly is not sufficient funding for our region's family farmers.

I also must vote against this conference report because of its failure to include language that extends the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. This is an issue that has the support of a majority of the Senators in this body. In fact, during debate on the agriculture spending bill, a majority of Senators—53 to be exact—voted to end a filibuster on the dairy compact issue.

As many of my colleagues know, the Compact was a state-generated response to the decline in the New England dairy industry over the last decade. In the early 1990s, all six New England states approved identical legislation to enter into the Compact. Congress approved the Compact as part of the 1996 Freedom to Farm bill.

Due to the unique nature of fluid milk, it must be worked quickly through the processing chain and get to store shelves within days of its production. Due to these conditions, dairy

farmers are at a distinct disadvantage when bargaining for a price for their product. As a result, the minimum farm price fluctuated wildly over time. The Compact corrected this problem and leveled the playing field at no cost to the American taxpayer. How can one be against that?

I am heartened by the consistent efforts of my colleagues Senators JEFFORDS, SPECTER, and LEAHY among others to keep these dairy farmers in mind throughout the debate on the bill and in conference. Although we were not successful, the issue will not go away. The dairy compact issue will be revisited and the voice of the majority of Senators will be heard.

I thank the chair for this time, and I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues today in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2000 Agriculture Appropriations Conference bill. Usually, it's a testimony to someone's power when they can "kill two birds with one stone." Well, amazingly the managers of this bill were able to kill three birds with one stone - - the Northeast Dairy Compact, drought relief and agricultural sanctions.

Unfortunately, the impact felt by small farmers in the Northeast will be meteoric. I have heard from many of my colleagues about the price drops their farmers have experienced this year. Well, dairy farmers witnessed a 40 percent price drop in one month. If it was not for the Northeast Dairy Compact, this drop could have crushed Vermont dairy farmers.

They have also suffered through one of the worst droughts this century. And how does this Conference bill respond? It doesn't.

Instead, the Conference Committee blocked Senator SPECTER from even raising his amendment to extend the Northeast Dairy Compact and denied any targeted disaster relief for farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic who suffered through fifteen months of drought.

However, we are yet again sending disaster payments and price supports to the Midwest and Southeast. I guess the Conference committee decided to ignore the old adage that you should not hit someone when they are down. Why not continue to prop up grain prices so that when Vermont farmers have lost all their livestock feed to the drought they can pay even more for feed from other states?

When we passed the Freedom to Farm bill, one of the premises its success was based on was that farmers would also have the freedom to market. By expanding our markets overseas, our farmers would not have to depend on subsidies from the federal government. Yet, after the Senate overwhelmingly passed an amendment to update our sanctions policy and allow our farmers access to more markets,

the Conference committee decided to continue with the old system of guaranteeing farmers the price they want through artificial means and expect taxpayers to go along with it.

Now, I am sure that many of these crops did suffer significant price or market losses and may deserve assistance. But, farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are just as worthy. In Vermont alone, we have witnessed over \$40 million in drought damage. Without some assistance many of our farmers are not going to make it through the winter. In the last two years they have suffered through an ice storm, flooding, and two summers of drought.

What is so galling to me is that although Congress authorized \$10.6 billion in disaster payments in Fiscal Year 1999, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic have only received 2.5 percent of that assistance. Today, we will likely pass \$8.7 billion in disaster assistance and our farmers will probably only receive 2 cents out of every dollar.

Adding salt to our wounds, the Conference Committee also saw fit to block any extension of the Northeast Dairy Compact. Our region developed and implemented a system to help our dairy farmers at no cost to the federal government.

I cannot understand how it made sense to the Conferees to stop a program that is supported by farmers and consumers alike because it does not increase retail price and does not cost the taxpayers money while continuing programs that do cost the taxpayers money. In fact, retail milk prices within the Compact region are lower on average than in the rest of the nation.

I could go on for hours about the ironies contained in this Conference bill. Although I am tempted to run through the virtues of Vermont dairy products like my colleague from Wisconsin did last week, I will let the "Best Cheddar" award won by Vermont's Cabot Creamery at the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest in Green Bay, Wisconsin speak for itself.

However, I do want to take just a few more minutes to reiterate the importance of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. Thanks to the Northeast Compact, the number of farmers going out of business has declined throughout New England—for the first time in many years.

If you are a proponent of states' rights, regional dairy compacts are the answer. Compacts are state-initiated, state-ratified and state-supported programs that assure a safe supply of milk for consumers. Half the Governors in the nation and half the state legislatures asked Congress to allow their states to set their own dairy policies—within federally mandated limits—through compacts.

When it was clear that federal policies were not working to keep dairy farmers in business, states took the

matter into their own hands to insure that dairy farmers stay in business and to assure consumers fresh, local supplies of milk. It saddens me that Congress is now standing in their way.

The Northeast Compact has done exactly what it was established to do: stabilize fluctuating dairy prices, insure a fair price for dairy farmers, keep them in business, and protect consumers' supplies of fresh milk. Many of our friends in the South saw how the Compact provided a modest but crucial safety net for struggling farmers. They, too, want the same for their farmers, and their farmers deserve that same opportunity.

Unfortunately, opponents of dairy compacts—large and wealthy milk manufacturers, represented by groups such as the International Dairy Foods Association—have thrown millions of dollars into an all-out campaign to stop compacts. These processor groups are opposed to dairy compacts simply because they want milk as cheap as they can get it to boost their enormous profits to record levels, regardless of the impact on farmers.

Mr. President, it is time for Congress to go back to worrying about small farmers in this country. That is why this Conference bill is such a disappointment to so many of us. The triple whammy of blocking the Northeast Dairy Compact, providing no drought relief and closing the door to new markets will jeopardize the future of small farmers in my region.

These farmers do not usually come to Congress asking for help and they have rarely received it. Now, when they are facing one of their bleakest moments Congress has said "no." I expected better.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the passage of this very important bill for American agriculture. I want to thank Senator COCHRAN and his staff for all of their hard work to produce this legislation under very difficult circumstances. Although I feel much more needs to be done to address the problems in the farm sector in my state, I will be supporting this conference report today in the hopes that it will provide immediate help to agriculture producers across the country still reeling from the combination of low prices and poor weather this year.

Although the underlying bill provides some \$60 billion for domestic nutrition programs, food safety, agriculture research and extension, and other important programs administered by the Department of Agriculture, I would like to speak specifically to the farm relief package component of this conference report. This bill contains \$8.7 billion in emergency farm assistance for producers hard hit by recent plunges in commodity prices and, in many parts of this country, weather disasters. Of this total, nearly \$5.5 billion will go to

program commodity producers in the form of increased AMTA payments to help compensate for lost markets. In Oregon, we produce a considerable amount of wheat for export to Asia, especially in the Pendleton area where I am from. For many Oregon wheat producers reeling from collapsed markets and prices, I know these increased AMTA payments may make the difference between keeping land in production and having to sell the farm. Since the beginning of this farm crisis, we have used this mechanism to deliver ad-hoc market loss payments to keep program commodity farmers afloat, and it may be the best and most efficient tool available to us in the short term. However, I believe the only long-term solution is to expand overseas market opportunities for our commodities. Although unilateral sanctions reform was taken out of this bill in conference, I hope we will have an opportunity to revisit this issue before the end of this session so that we may begin to address some of the root causes of our commodity price problems.

This farm aid package also provides \$1.2 billion for weather-related disaster assistance. Severe droughts, both in the Mid-Atlantic States and in parts of my state, have caused tremendous agricultural losses this year. In addition, as we all know, flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd brought severe farm losses to the Carolinas this fall. Rising waters are also a problem for the second consecutive year in the Malheur-Harney Lakes Basin of southeastern Oregon, an issue which the conferees have noted in this conference report. Certainly Mother Nature has not been kind to many of our farmers this year, and I am concerned that the \$1.2 billion set aside in this conference report to address these weather-related losses may be inadequate. Should this turn out to be the case, I hope that my colleagues and the Administration will be willing to provide the resources to address these needs in a future supplemental appropriations vehicle.

Perhaps the biggest reservation I have with this farm assistance package is that it does not provide any funding to address the problems of the so-called minor crops. When the bill passed the Senate last August, it contained a \$50 million earmark for fruit and vegetable producers. While these farmers have persevered with virtually no federal assistance in the past, they have not been immune to the Asian financial crisis and the historic downturn in the agriculture sector that we have seen in recent years. Nursery and potato producers are just as much a part of Oregon agriculture as wheat and cattle, yet they are not represented in this relief package. I am especially concerned about the future of Oregon's tree fruit industry. A number of producers in my state may be forced to tear out apple

and pear orchards due to the deadly combination of international market collapse, frost and other weather problems, and mounting domestic regulatory and labor costs. I did note that the conferees made fruit and vegetable producers eligible for the \$1.2 billion in weather-related disaster assistance money. However, I am afraid that none of this funding will reach Oregon tree fruit producers, considering that this same pot of money will be stretched to the limit to assist producers impacted by weather problems this year. I believe specialty crop farmers deserve a place at the table alongside our program commodity producers, and I hope we will better address their needs in future appropriations legislation.

Mr. President, despite the reservations I have about this conference agreement, I find that the few negatives are, in the end, outweighed by the many positive aspects of this bill for the Oregon farm sector. While I look forward to the opportunity to work with my colleagues on the pressing farm issues that have not been spoken to in this conference report, I will be casting a vote in favor of the bill. I hope that we will act affirmatively on this legislation today and not further delay the delivery of this needed relief to family farmers across the country.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I plan to vote for the Agriculture Appropriations Bill today, and I would like to thank those who have helped move the ball down the field. But I'd like to state for the record my opposition to the Conference Committee's decision to remove language previously approved by the Senate that would have removed barriers to trade for domestic producers.

I am extremely disappointed and disheartened that this year's Agriculture Appropriations bill will not take steps to open up additional trade markets to domestic producers, especially after this body voted 70-28 to pass legislation that would exempt agricultural products from unilateral economic sanctions.

In short, Mr. President, a small handful of people have overturned the will of the majority by strong-arming Congress with decisions made behind closed doors. The Members who removed sanctions language from the Conference Report are the very same members who promoted the Freedom to Farm Act. It's beyond me how they expect Freedom to Farm to work when they remove the best chance for our farmers to compete in a global economy.

For months our farmers have been left hanging when it comes to disaster relief payments, loan guarantees and crop insurance reform. Producers in Arkansas should not be let down by Congress again. They should be looking forward to sending 300,000 metric tons of rice to Cuba next year. Arkansas

producers have been particularly affected by trade sanctions with countries such as Cuba, Iran and Iraq.

According to Riceland executive Richard Bell, who testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee in May, "Probably no domestic commodity or product has suffered more from these trade sanctions than rice. The sanctions towards Cuba in particular were a major blow to our industry, especially to growers in the South who produce long-grain rice."

There is bipartisan support for changes in the way this country considers economic and trade sanctions. So, in light of the conferees' decision to remove sanctions language, I hope my colleagues will take a serious look at cosponsoring S. 566, the Agricultural Trade Freedom Act, which would exempt exports of food and other agricultural products from any current or future U.S. unilateral sanctions imposed against a foreign government. I also encourage my colleagues to consider supporting S. 1523, The HOPE Act, which will require the President to justify how economic sanctions serve our national interests and to report to Congress on an annual basis the costs and benefits of food sanctions.

It's foolish to let our foreign policy objectives cloud common sense. Without access to foreign markets, we cannot expect the agricultural community to survive. Without a better long-term farm policy, it most certainly will not.

While this bill provides some relief, it doesn't go far enough. What we must do is give our farmers a consistent, workable agriculture policy. We must give them some idea of what they can count on from their government in terms of consistent farm policy. Repeatedly passing emergency disaster relief bills isn't the answer. And it is clear that Freedom to Farm has not worked. According to today's Washington Post, "Congress has now spent \$19 billion more in the first four years of Freedom to Farm than it was supposed to spend during the bill's entire seven-year life-span."

This relief package will hopefully get several of our nation's producers through this growing season, but it does nothing to ease the minds of our agriculture community for next year. We've taken care of the short term needs of our agriculture community, I hope that my colleagues will soon take care of the long term.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I would like to once again reiterate my support for the reauthorization of the very successful Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, and I must vote against the FY2000 Agriculture appropriations conference report without its reauthorization. This past Thursday night, I came to the Senate floor to urge my colleagues to consider certain points that should prove that support of the Compact is justified and I would like to briefly reiterate them again today.

The Northeast Dairy Compact has addressed the needs of states in New England who compacted together within their region to determine fair prices for locally produced supplies of fresh milk. All of their legislatures and the governors approved the Compact and all that is required is the sanction of Congress to reauthorize it.

The Compact has proven to be an effective approach to address farm insecurity. The Compact has protected New England farmers against the loss of their small family dairy farms and the consumers against a decrease in the fresh local supply of milk. The Compact has stabilized the dairy industry in this entire region and protected farmers and consumers against volatile price swings.

Mr. President, over ninety seven percent of the fluid milk market in New England is self contained within the area, and fluid milk markets are local due to the demand for freshness and because of high transportation costs, so any complaints raised in other areas about unfair competition are quite disingenuous.

All we are asking, Mr. President, is the continuation of the Northeast Dairy Compact, the existence of which does not threaten or financially harm any other dairy farmer in the country.

Only the consumers and the processors in the New England region pay to support the minimum price to provide for a fairer return to the area's family dairy farmers and to protect a way of life important to the people of the Northeast.

Under the Compact, New England retail milk prices have been among the lowest and the most stable in the country. The opposition has tried to make the argument that interstate dairy compacts increase milk prices. This is just not so as milk prices around the U.S. have shown time and time again that prices elsewhere are higher and experience much wider price shifts than in the Northeast Compact states.

Also, where is the consumer outrage from the Compact states for spending a few extra pennies for fresh fluid milk so as to ensure a safety net for dairy farmers so that they can continue an important way of life? I have not heard any swell of outrage of consumer complaints over the last three years. Why, because the consumers also realize this initial pilot project has been a huge success.

Mr. President, there is almost \$8 billion in the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report for farm disasters partially created by competition in the global marketplace and because of a series of weather-related problems. The funding will be paid for by the federal government. Now, some of my colleagues want to create a disaster situation for Northeast dairy farmers by taking away a program that has not cost the federal government one cent.

There has been no expense to the federal government—not one penny—for the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. The costs to operate the Dairy Compact are borne entirely by the farmers and processors of the Compact region. And, when there has been a rise in the federal milk marketing prices for Class I fluid milk, the Compact has automatically shut itself off from the pricing process.

In addition, the Compact requires the compact commission to take such action as necessary to ensure that a minimum price set by the commission for the region does not create an incentive for producers to generate additional supplies of milk. There has been no rush to increase milk production in the Northeast as has been stated here today. There are compensation procedures that are implemented by the New England Dairy Commission specifically to protect against increased production of fresh milk. No other region should feel threatened by our Northeast Dairy Compact for fluid milk produced and sold mainly at home.

There is no evidence that prices Northeast dairy farmers receive for their milk encourages overproduction of milk that spills over into other regions and affects dairy farmers in other areas. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD, a table from the Daily Market News showing USDA Commodity Credit Corporation purchases of surplus dairy products with the total and percentage by regions for the last three fiscal years.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

USDA COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION PURCHASES OF SURPLUS DAIRY PRODUCTS TOTAL, AND PERCENTAGE BY REGIONS FY 1996/97, FY 1997/98 AND FY 1998/99 TO DATE

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99 ¹
Total estimated milk volume (million)	390	1,412	2,090
Percentage:			
Midwest	56.8	9.6	9.5
West	43.2	90.2	90.5
East	0.0	0.2	0.0
U.S.	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹ October 1, 1998–September 3, 1999.

Notes: The eastern region from Maine to Florida has sold no surplus dairy products to USDA this fiscal year. All CCC purchases have been nonfat dry milk with 164 million pounds (90.5%) coming from the western states and 15 million pounds (9.5%) coming from the Midwest states for a total of more than 179 million pounds.

Sources: Dairy Market News, USDS-AMS, Vol. 65—Report 39 (Oct. 2, 1998) and Vol. 66—Report 35 (September 3, 1999).

Ms. SNOWE. An important point here, Mr. President, is that, despite what has been said on the Senate floor today, the Eastern region of the country from Maine to Florida—the very states that wish to compact—sold no surplus dairy products to the USDA this past fiscal year. All Commodity Credit Corporation purchases came from the Western and Midwest states.

And, despite what has been stated by the opposition, there are no added

costs to the federal nutrition program. There has been no adverse price impact on the WIC program—the Women’s Infants and Children’s program—or the Federal school lunch and breakfast programs. In fact, the advocates of these programs support the Compact and serve on its commission.

So, I ask for the support of my colleagues today for my dairy farmers in Maine and to vote against the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report because it does not include the reauthorization of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact as the State of Maine and every other New England state legislature, governor and its citizens have requested, and I thank the Chair.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to this legislation. It does not provide adequate relief to farmers across this country. It fails to address issues which will decide the fate of tens of thousands of family farms. It fails to give relief to an entire region with a significant farming community. The drought afflicting farmers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions is as severe a threat to their existence as low crop prices are to others. The farmers of my state wish they had crops to receive low prices for. Yet this bill fails to remotely begin to address their concerns. The entire relief package of \$8.7 billion is primarily focused on low crop prices in the South and to a much lesser degree the Midwest. Only \$1.2 billion or slightly over 10% is for “weather-related disaster relief”.

To put this in perspective, let me explain the extent of the drought damage. Despite recent rains, New Jersey is in the middle of its driest season in 33 years. From June to August the State received less than 2 inches of rain. Normally, we receive more than 8 inches during this period. Reservoir levels in Northern New Jersey dipped to 10% below normal—and despite the recent “rains”, farmers have not recovered. The impact of the drought on New Jersey agriculture is devastating. 400,000 acres on 7000 farms have sustained damage from 30%–100%. Damage estimates are \$80 million, and expected to reach \$100 million.

But let me be clear that New Jersey is not alone. Secretary Glickman estimates that the need for drought relief in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions is over \$2 billion. Governors of our States estimate the damage to be closer to \$2.5 billion. But even the limited amount of funds offered in the Agriculture Conference report isn’t designated for drought—the entire country including losses from Hurricane Floyd will compete for this funding.

Mr. President, my region of the country has a long tradition of helping out other regions in need. I recall my House colleagues referring to the Great Midwest Drought of 1988. Many considered this drought the worst in the Mid-

west since the Great Depression. That year, we passed an emergency relief bill which provided direct disaster payments to farmers in the amount of \$3.4 billion. I voted for this bill because it was the right thing to do. I realized that farmers in these states needed drought relief, and I gave my vote of support, because it was needed.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew, one of the most destructive storms of this century, ripped through Florida, inflicting \$30 billion in damage. I voted for the Emergency Supplemental bill which brought \$9 billion to Florida, to help the citizens of that state recover from the enormous damage to infrastructure, homes, businesses, and crops.

1993 was another horrible year for the Midwest, this time, hit by flooding. Many call it the Great Midwest Flood of 1993. Midwestern states were horribly damaged by the breaching waters of the Mississippi. I voted for this \$2.5 billion supplemental for farm disaster payments. Mr. President, New Jersey was not hit with severe flooding in 1993. In fact, New Jersey only received \$5.5 million in the bill. But I voted for this package nonetheless. Because farmers in the Midwest needed it, and it was right to provide them with adequate relief.

In January of 1994, the Northridge Earthquake rocked Southern California, causing in excess of \$30 billion. I voted for H.R. 3759 which provided \$4.7 billion in supplemental funding to assist Californians in their time of need. My point, Mr. President, is to illustrate that I have voted to assist the people of other regions of this country in their time of need, despite the fact that my state may not reap substantial benefit. I ask that my colleagues respect that New Jersey and other Northeast states have endured a prolonged drought that threatens our remaining agriculture.

Over the August recess, I visited farms and county fairs and spoke to New Jersey farmers about the effect of the drought on their livelihood. They understand weather and they accept the difficult life of a farmer but they cannot understand how Congress, which repeatedly sends billions to the South and Midwest, can ignore them in their time of need. I don’t have an answer for them but I can only imagine it is because Members do not realize the extent of the agriculture community in my State and our region.

So I would like to educate this body to the significant agriculture community in New Jersey and the Northeast. There is a reason why they call New Jersey the Garden State. The \$56 billion food and agriculture complex is New Jersey’s third largest industry, behind only pharmaceutical and tourism in economic benefit. Last year, New Jersey’s 9,400 farms generated over \$777 million in sales. Nearly 20% of the entire state of New Jersey is productive

farmland. That's one million acres of working farms in New Jersey. And in an era of increasing consolidation in the agriculture industry, virtually all of New Jersey's farms are family-owned. The average farm size in New Jersey is just over 100 acres. At \$8,370 an acre, our farmland is the most valuable in the nation.

Farmers in the Garden State produce more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables for consumption locally in New Jersey but also for export around the world. Nationally, New Jersey is one of the top ten producers of cranberries, blueberries, peaches, asparagus, bell peppers, spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, sweet corn, tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, escarole and eggplant. Mr. President, in addition to the fruit and vegetable farmers of my state, a small number of individuals from Warren, Salem, Sussex, Burlington, and Hunterdon counties are the backbone of agriculture in New Jersey. These are New Jersey's dairy farmers. The dairy industry is an important segment of our agricultural economy, supplying almost one-fifth of the fluid milk and dairy products used by over 7.5 million residents in New Jersey. The industry is comprised of 180 dairy farmers. Farmers who get up early to milk 7 days a week, 365 days a year, starting out long before dawn, before most of us are up.

However, this pales in comparison to what the dairy industry used to be. New Jersey has lost 42% of its dairy farms in the past decade. New Jersey dairy farmers produced 300 million pounds of fresh, locally produced milk in 1997, with a value of \$41.3 million.

If we do not re-authorize the New England Dairy Compact and allow for New Jersey's entrance the remaining 180 farmers will be gone in the next decade. New Jersey's state legislature has already approved entry into the compact. The loss of dairy farms—whether from inadequate relief from this summer's drought or from an inability to enter the Dairy Compact means more than just a loss of business in New Jersey. This is more than just a nostalgia about the decline of a time in America when agriculture was dominated by family farms, it is also about the practical reality of the loss of open space. It is about farms being sold to developers and turned into parking lots & strip malls. It is a story we know all too well in New Jersey. An average of 10,000 acres of rural/agricultural land is being developed piecemeal every year in New Jersey. In 1959, New Jersey had 1,460,000 acres of farmland; today we have but 800,000. In 1959, New Jersey had 15,800 farms. Today we have 9,400.

As I said earlier this horrible drought has crippled the fruit and vegetable farmers in my state. Unfortunately, it has also had a devastating impact on New Jersey's already very tenuous dairy industry. It has compounded the

dire circumstances affecting dairy farmers from low prices. Erratic fluctuations in dairy prices is forcing many out of business. For example, in March dairy farmers across the country experienced a 37% drop in milk prices. When the price drops, the price family farms must pay to feed their cows, hire help, and pay utility costs stays the same. As prices decline and costs increase, farmers need a mechanism to ensure stable prices for milk or they will go out of business.

In addition to the erratic market, New Jersey's family farms face a threat from a pricing system introduced by the Department of Agriculture. This system, Option 1B, would almost surely be the death knell for New Jersey's dairy farmers. Option 1B, would reduce dairy farmer income in New Jersey by \$9 million a year.

New Jersey's membership in the Compact would set a floor on dairy prices and reimburse farmers in times of financial trouble. It would provide protection in the event of another drastic price drop. Compacts would also help maintain environment efficiency and open space by preserving the more than 100,000 acres of New Jersey farmland for agricultural use and preventing development.

Unfortunately, the Dairy Compact and Option 1A pricing provisions are not included in this Conference Report. This will force dairy farmers in my state out of business. Like real drought relief, the dairy provisions necessary to sustain farmers in our region are simply not present.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this conference report and send a message that we should implement farm policy for a nation of farmers, not to serve certain regions at the expense of others.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise in support of the FY2000 Agriculture appropriations bill. This important piece of legislation provides a total of \$60.3 billion. While a large portion of this funding goes toward food stamps and nutrition programs, this bill also contains funding for agriculture research, conservation, rural development and direct assistance for our farmers to get through these tough times.

Farmers across the board are facing difficult times. Prices are the lowest this decade and exports are decreasing while imports are increasing. For most commodities, the cost of production exceeds the revenue received. It doesn't take long to go out of business when your costs are more than what you can get for your end product.

The problem is price, not the farm bill or farmers. Because of the Asian flu and depression of other world markets, our farmers are suffering. Simple economics tells you when supply is above demand, prices will drop. Ag commodity prices will increase as our world markets come back, but we don't

expect that to happen this year or next. If we want our farmers to stay in business, we must help them in the short term until commodities can be sold on a world market.

Something must be done to help the American farmer through these tough times, which is why I support this bill's \$8.7 billion in farmer aid. The emergency aid includes \$5.54 billion in additional agriculture market transition payments, which represent a 100 percent increase in a producer's 1999 payment. This is a direct payment that our farmers could receive before Thanksgiving if the President signs the bill into law. This is the immediate assistance our farmers and farm groups ask for in hearings in the Agriculture Committee and elsewhere.

The conference report includes assistance for crop insurance premium write-downs to maintain the 1999 level, which is essential if we want farmers to keep using the program. I am also pleased to see assistance to certain specialty crop producers. These are just a few of the provisions that I supported in this bill.

The conference report also contains mandatory livestock price reporting legislation. I supported this price reporting legislation when it was voted out of the Agriculture Committee and I am pleased to see it is moving forward. There needs to be greater transparency within the livestock industry. Our producers need information on which to base their marketing decisions, and this legislation will provide that.

As others have noted, this conference report does not include sanctions reform language that passed by wide margin on the floor of the Senate. However, I understand legislation to exempt agricultural commodities from unilateral economic sanctions will come before the Senate before we adjourn, and it is something we ought to pass this year. In order to insure the long term survival of the Agriculture industry in the United States we must work on trade and sanctions reform to enable U.S. producers to compete on a level playing field with the rest of the world.

Mr. President, I hope the Senate adopts the conference report today and the President signs it into law so that the hard working farmers across the country can get the assistance we have promised them and that they so deserve.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I support the FY 2000 Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report because it provides important emergency assistance for America's farmers and will provide \$15 million in disaster assistance for the commercial fisheries failure in the Gulf of Maine. I believe that this funding is crucial to the survival of fishing industry in New England. It will allow our fishermen to use their fishing vessels as research platforms to do, among

other things, cooperative research activities in partnership with the New England Fisheries Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

I thank appropriations committee Chairman, Mr. STEVENS, and the Democratic ranking member, Mr. BYRD, for their support of New England fishermen and their assistance in obtaining the funding included in the Conference Report. I also thank Agriculture appropriations subcommittee chairman, Mr. COCHRAN, and Democratic ranking member, Mr. KOHL, and their staffs. Finally, I thank Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GREGG, and Ms. SNOWE for their support in including this provision in the conference report.

Last year, we were able to secure \$5 million in emergency assistance for cooperative activities to assist fishermen who were negatively affected by groundfish closures in the Gulf of Maine. These new funds will be used to help fishermen overcome drastically reduced trip limits. A trip limit of 30 pounds, about 2 cod, was imposed immediately after the fishery opened. This was raised to 100 pounds by Commerce Secretary Daley at the request of the New England Fisheries Management Council.

These trip limits have had a severely detrimental economic and social impact on many fishery-dependent communities in New England. Ongoing stock recovery requirements have required continued reductions in fishing and resulted in continuing hardship. The additional funding included in the Conference Report will be used to employ fishermen in cooperative research programs, fund on-vessel observer programs, and provide training and education for fishermen.

I thank my colleagues for recognizing that New England fishermen and their communities require disaster assistance until our fisheries have a chance to rebuild.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, during my service as a United States Senator representing the State of Washington, I have consistently reiterated one message to the growers and producers I represent. While I am not a farmer, and could not possibly pretend to understand the intricacies of the business, I will always do my best to understand farmers' needs and work on agriculture's behalf. But there is one message growers in the State of Washington have emphasized to me that I understand without question. When times are tough and the check book doesn't balance, families feel the pinch.

When times are tough, I have asked farmer after farmer, "why do you do this?" The job is terribly difficult, so much of what growers depend upon is unpredictable, and for two years in a row now, world markets have driven prices so low that fathers are telling their sons and daughters not to enter the family business.

But immediately after I question their dedication to their livelihood, I'm reminded of the golden, rolling wheat and barley fields of the Palouse. I remember my countless visits to Yakima and Wenatchee and seeing the lush, vibrant greens of the orchards, rising up out of the dust bowl that was once Central Washington. I think about the hearty breakfast I ate that morning and the apples and sandwiches packed away in my grandchildren's lunches. So much of what farmers do and what they produce is a part of our daily lives, that their existence in this country is paramount and deserves recognition.

Farmers are proud, tough, hard-working Americans. Apple growers in the State of Washington, for example, don't like to come to my office and ask for help. In the past few months, however, I have visited with many growers who are visibly despondent. Washington leads the nation in apple production, and over the past year, it's estimated that producers have lost at least \$200 million in the fresh market. From Tonasket to Wapato, the message from orchardists was clear—we need help.

Over the past two months, I have communicated to my colleagues and others the significance of identifying a mechanism to assist fruit and vegetable growers in the disaster assistance package. During debate on the Senate floor in early August, I was able to assist in securing \$50 million specifically for fruit and vegetable relief. In the conference report we're addressing today, potential relief for these very growers is incorporated in the \$1.2 billion available for crop loss assistance. While I am frustrated that the specific designation for fruits and vegetables was removed, I am particularly pleased that apples were mentioned specifically.

Apples are not the only commodity produced in Washington that could stand to benefit from the crop loss section of the package. Asparagus growers, hard hit by weather and a lack of labor have lost thousands of dollars in fresh product. Potato growers who have also been impacted by poor growing conditions can approach the U.S. Department of Agriculture for assistance. Many are surprised to learn that the State of Washington produces more than 230 food, feed and seed crops, and I hope that many of these commodities will receive the assistance they require.

Wheat growers in Washington will also benefit from the \$5.5 billion available for market loss in the disaster package. The nearly \$.60 cent per bushel payment to growers will most certainly ensure that the highly demanded soft white wheat our farmers produce will continue to flow to recovering Asian markets.

While the disaster package contained in the Fiscal Year 2000 Agriculture Ap-

ropriations bill is most certainly the highlight of the legislation, there are other important, annual funding priorities included. As a member of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, I have worked to ensure that the research demanded and deserved as a result of the passage of the Farm Bill is provided for the Pacific Northwest. From research for hops to disease eradication in cherries, this bill provides funding necessary to ensure the longevity of the essential public-private investment in our nation's food production.

Language and funding in this bill directed at the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act are also essential. Programs related to export enhancement and market development received the favorable attention growers in my state demanded. And the land grant universities are secure in knowing that the formula funds necessary for continued excellence in education are available.

With all that said, there are many in this body who know I was not pleased with the removal of Senator ASHCROFT's sanctions relief amendment in the conference report. Sanction relief is essential for the long-term prosperity of agriculture in America. While I received a commitment that the Senate would take up this issue before the adjournment of this session, I cannot over-emphasize the absolute importance and sincere necessity in addressing this issue. Food and medicine sanctions do not cripple regimes or dismantle communist governments. Instead, they hurt our family farmers and keep food out of the mouths of those who cannot provide for themselves. I initially refused to sign the conference report over this issue, and sincerely hope the Senate will address this matter in the very near future.

I am also not pleased with the manner in which this bill was dealt with in the waning hours of conference. Conferees were literally locked out of decisions related to the sanctions issue, dairy, and items included in the disaster package. This "top-down" philosophy is not what should drive the passage of appropriations bills.

All in all, Mr. President, what we have before us today is a good bill. Its contents include year-long negotiations on a variety of issues related to the essential functions administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While some issues have caused me to struggle with my support or opposition to the legislation, the benefits of its passage are overwhelming. It is my hope that the President will give his blessing to the bill so that our struggling farm economy can receive the charge it needs to rejuvenate our agriculture communities.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I give due credit to the conferees for their

hard work to complete action on the Agriculture Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2000 which supports the nation's farming economy and federal programs through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This year's agriculture appropriations bill is also intended to provide needed government aid to farmers and their families who have suffered critical losses due to severe drought and difficult market conditions. However, with much regret, I must vote against this legislation.

I have several concerns with this final conference agreement.

First, it contains \$253 million in earmarks and set-asides for towns, universities, research institutes, and a myriad of other entities that were included in this bill without consideration in the normal merit-based review process. This is \$82 million more than was included in the Senate version of the bill. Clearly, the House had to get its turn at the trough.

For example, \$1.75 million is provided for manure handling and distribution in five states, including Mississippi, Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and Arizona. Why these five states have a monopoly on manure problems in our nation is not adequately explained in this report, nor is a rationale provided as to why an earmark of \$200,000 is provided for sunflower research in Fargo, North Dakota. Unless weather conditions are anticipated to change dramatically, it is difficult to fathom why spending thousands of dollars on sunflower research in a state known for severe weather conditions is more critical than other farming emergencies.

No other clear explanations are provided for earmarking \$750,000 for the U.S. Plant Stress & Water Conservation Lab in Lubbock, Texas, as well as \$1,000,000 for peanut quality research in Athens, GA; \$500,000 for fish diseases in Auburn, AL; and, \$64,000 for urban pests in Georgia. These may very well be meritorious projects, but I must question again why these specific projects and localities are singled out for direct earmarked funding rather than undergoing a competitive review.

In addition to direct earmarked funding, the conferees have included very blatant directive language which singles out specific projects in various states for special consideration for grant funding, loans or technical assistance from USDA. With these actions, even the limited funding made available to USDA for competitive grant and loan assistance is not fairly distributed since the conferees have included such directives to steer the agency away from considering many other meritorious projects that are equally in need around the country.

Another problem with this spending bill is the inclusion of language which provides for an exception for a single producer from the state of Nevada from pending federal milk marketing orders

to be implemented by the USDA. This provision will exclude a single dairy producer in Clark County, Nevada from the proposed new Arizona/Las Vegas Marketing area when USDA's rules take effect, thereby preventing this single producer from competing fairly with the rest of the milk industry.

As many of my colleagues are aware, there are few issues which cause as much controversy and divisiveness as proposed milk marketing restructuring proposals. Yet, without any debate, language was included in the Senate bill, without notice or debate, to protect this single dairy producer while the rest of the nation will be forced to comply. Retaining this provision in the conference report is a serious infraction of our obligation to treat all interests fairly and to abide by the Senate's rules which preclude legislation on appropriations bills except when approved by a super-majority.

Mr. President, finally, I am concerned that this legislation contains \$1.2 billion more than the Senate bill in emergency aid for farmers. The House bill contained no such funding at all.

Late last year, the Congress provided \$5.9 billion in emergency disaster assistance for farmers as part of the FY 1999 Omnibus Appropriations bill. Earlier this year, we provided another \$574 million in the emergency supplemental appropriations bill. I opposed both of those bills, in part because the bills contained excessive amounts of pork-barrel spending but also because of the use of the "emergency" designation for large amounts of non-emergency purposes, some of which was included in the farmer aid package.

While I understand and sympathize with the plight of America's farmers who face economic hardship due to a wide variety of natural disasters, I cannot support the designation of the entire \$8.7 billion in assistance to farmers as an emergency.

The Congress has certain rules that apply to its budget process. One of those rules states that, once a Senate-House conference convenes, negotiations are limited to only the funding and legislative provisions that exist in either bill. Adding funding that is outside the "scope" of the conference is not in order, nor is the inclusion of legislative provisions that were not in either the Senate- or House-passed bills.

Once again, the appropriators have deviated from the established process in agreeing on the provisions in this conference report by adding another \$1.2 billion in emergency funding to the bill—funding that was considered by neither the House nor the Senate—just the appropriators. That \$1.2 billion for crop disaster loss payments that was added to the emergency farm aid package may very well be needed by some of our nation's farmers. But its inclusion at the last minute defeats the entire concept of fiscal responsibility, which

is premised on the full Congress debating budget priorities, not just the appropriators.

There were other last-minute add-ons in the conference which were not included in the Senate or House bill, including: \$2 million for water and waste forgiveness loans; \$15 million for Norton Sound Fisheries failure in Alaska; \$56 million for administrative costs associated with managing emergency assistance programs; and, an entirely new title to the bill, Title IX, which contains 25 pages of legislation to establish a new mandatory price reporting system for various livestock. While this legislation originated in the Senate, it was never called up for debate or a vote.

This last provision was never offered as an amendment on the Senate floor during consideration of the Agriculture Appropriations bill, probably because it would have been ruled out of order since it is legislation that is not supposed to be included on an appropriations bill. Instead, it was simply inserted into the appropriations bill, behind closed doors, without debate.

American taxpayers have to give up their hard-earned tax dollars to pay for these last-minute tactics by the Appropriations Committees. Clearly, Congress appears to favor spending that benefits the special interests of a few, rather than spend the taxpayers' dollars responsibly and enact laws and policies that reflect the best interests of all Americans.

Let me state again that I support federal assistance for farmers and others in need, but only when decisions to spend tax dollars for such aid are considered fairly and truly help those in need. But when we continue the shameful and provincial practice of padding appropriations bills with excessive amounts of dubious emergency spending and special-interest pork-barrel projects, we are short-changing the taxpayers as well as our agricultural industry. This bill may help some farmers and producers who are truly in dire need of federal assistance, but we are harming those in the agriculture industry who are trying to follow established guidelines to qualify for other types of non-emergency assistance.

This bill designates \$8.7 billion as emergency spending for FY 2000—money that can only come from the non-Social Security surplus. The Defense Appropriations bill contains another \$7.2 billion in emergency spending, which I will also oppose. Together, we are spending almost \$16 billion in emergency spending, but, Mr. President, the non-Social Security surplus is only estimated to be \$14 billion. That means, pure and simple, that if we approve these two bills with their emergency funding, we will once again be dipping into the Social Security surplus to pay for the continued operations of the federal government.

Already this year, the Senate has approved appropriations bills or conference agreements containing almost \$10.5 billion in wasteful and unnecessary spending. Surely, among these billions of dollars, there are at least a few programs that we could all agree are lower priority than desperately needed aid for America's farmers. Surely, in the voluminous lists of billions of dollars of pork projects, there are a few that the Congress would be willing to give up to ensure that we not once again dip into the Social Security Trust Fund—a Fund financed by the payroll taxes of American workers who are counting on their money being available to help them through their retirement years.

This bill demonstrates that the Congress cares more about taking care of special interests than it does about American families. It is the taxpayers who have to shoulder the burden to pay for the pork-barrel spending in this appropriations conference report and the others that will follow, and I will not vote to place that burden on American families.

The full list I have compiled of the objectionable provisions in this final conference report will be available on my Senate webpage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I yield such time as may be consumed to the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Thank you, Mr. President.

First, I would like to say that the senior Senator from Mississippi has one of the toughest jobs on Capitol Hill, along with the senior Senator from Indiana. Chairing the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and the Agriculture Committee in the Congress are just incredibly difficult tasks. The diversity of agriculture and the needs of agriculture are historic in this Chamber.

Trying to come up with a proper mix of how to solve the needs and the difficulties in farm country is complex. It is difficult.

I understand coalitions have to be put together to pass bills. In this case, a coalition was put together to pass a bill that, in my mind, did not represent the interests of my area of the country, particularly my State of Pennsylvania. I understand that. I appreciate the difficulty in doing it.

I understand that Pennsylvania has a very difficult time participating for one reason. We are a very diverse State agriculturally. We have a tremendous amount of richness in our agriculture. It is our No. 1 industry. Pennsylvania's No. 1 industry is agriculture. Most people don't know that. Most people don't know that the State of Pennsylvania,

the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has the largest rural population of any State in the country. We take agriculture very seriously. Obviously, our rural population depends heavily upon agribusiness for survival.

We have been hit this year with an absolutely historic drought that has devastated our farm community. Throw on top of that, sort of adding insult to injury, a big chunk of our State was hit very hard by Hurricane Floyd. Not only did we have drought on top of drought and the crops burned up, but they had floods. We have a situation where in almost every county of our State crop losses are in the area of at least 30 percent, and in many areas and many counties it is 100 percent.

I looked at the bill we have before us in the Senate and the one that came out of conference. I was hoping we could focus more of the \$8 billion that is in this bill on the area of the country that was affected most dramatically by weather this year. In my mind, it has not. I am not just speaking for Pennsylvania. I am talking about all of the Northeastern States that were affected—the Mid-Atlantic States—by drought. The big chunk of this bill is for AMTA payments, which are payments to farmers who are program farmers.

Before we pass this bill, we are going to give \$5.5 billion out to farmers who were previous to the Freedom to Farm bill in Government programs. The problem in Pennsylvania is we have a very small percentage of those farmers because of our diversity. We have very few program crops. We have a lot of specialty crops, livestock, and dairy. As a result, a very small percentage of our farmers participate in the AMTA payments. A very small percentage of, frankly, most of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern farmers participate in the AMTA program.

When you look at the \$8 billion-plus that is in this bill and you see \$5.5 billion of it going to AMTA, almost none of that is going to the area that is most affected by the drought. It is going to the area that is having bumper crops.

The reason we are providing "disaster" help, the disaster in most of the country is they have too much harvest-time. As a result, prices are low. So we are going to give them money because they have too many crops to sell at too low a price.

I can tell you my farmers in Pennsylvania wish they had something to sell. So I am a little frustrated when you look at where the bulk of the money is going. It is going to areas that are hardly hit by a disaster, and certainly no weather disaster. It is a disaster of richness, if you will, because of the tremendous amount of harvest that has occurred in that area, and, obviously, the world situation and the like. When you look at what is specifically targeted for my area of the country, the

"drought relief" is \$1.2 billion. Not all of it goes to drought relief. A lot of it is going to hurricane disaster relief.

I can tell you my Governor told us that just the preliminary numbers in Pennsylvania are approaching \$1 billion in losses for drought. So \$1.2 billion for drought and hurricane relief doesn't even begin to touch on what the problem is in Pennsylvania.

I know some have said we can do a supplemental appropriations bill in the spring to see what the problem is. My farmers can't wait until spring. They have to survive the winter. While some folks are getting double AMTA payments, \$11.2 billion worth of money, my farmers are going to be told to wait until the spring.

Our area of the country has come to the table time after time after time after time as the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, and other areas of the country have suffered drought, pestilence, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes—I can go on and on—a disaster a year in those areas. We understand that. Our taxpayers and farmers have come to the table and been willing to put up money. We are a big country, and we will pitch in together to help.

When it comes to our farmers being hit with the worst drought in a century, the answer is: Wait until the spring. We may pass a supplemental if you need it.

That doesn't cut mustard. I understand we had a vote here yesterday on cloture and a group from the Northeast cast our votes on cloture. We were defeated. We will be defeated today. This bill will pass and will become law. I understand the need for getting assistance to farmers. I have to speak up and say what is in this bill is not enough to take care of the needs of the farmers in my State.

A couple of other things happened that were disconcerting. We had \$134 million in specialty crop money that came out of this bill. We grow a lot of fruits and vegetables in Pennsylvania, specialty crops, important crops. We had \$134 million for that. When it came from conference, the money was out and "specialty crop" was defined as only tobacco and peanuts. We don't grow a lot of tobacco and peanuts in Pennsylvania or New Jersey or a lot of other areas hit by the drought.

Again, that money was designated to help some of our farmers who are not the farmers who have been at the Government trough for years and years and years with program crops, but folks making it on their own, not coming to Washington asking for money. The one time we ask for money, the answer is no. I think that is a very sad commentary. We took the money for specialty crops, for fruits and vegetables—again, people who have never gotten Government subsidies—and we give them to two programs that are still getting Government support—tobacco and peanuts.

That is a misguided policy. I understand the dynamics of trying to pass a bill. I understand the power and the influence of the peanut lobby, the sugar lobby, and the tobacco lobby. I understand now we have the honey program back in place, and the mohair program is back. I understand all that.

I keep looking at what it does to those who have been paying the bills for a long time for agriculture in the northeastern part of the country. What I see is a neglect of a bunch of farmers who work just as hard as folks in other areas of the country who don't ask the Government to help very much. We hardly ever ask the Government to help in our agriculture. The one time we get hit with the drought of the century, the answer is: We will give you a little here, and wait until next year, and maybe we can give you some more. By the way, some of the other stuff we were going to give you, we will not.

I thank the chairman for the money for crop insurance. That is something I very much wanted. The \$400 million to help try to get farmers into the crop insurance business is very important. We need more farmers covered with risk management tools. Crop insurance is important. I urge the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Senator LUGAR, to take that up quickly and move forward on crop insurance to put the money to good use.

I have to oppose this bill, reluctantly. I understand the difficult job the Senator from Mississippi had in trying to craft this to pass the Senate and get it signed by the President, but for me it doesn't do enough for my area of the country.

I will have to vote "no" on the bill.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. SPECTER, for his comments about the work that went into crafting this bill and the challenges we faced along the way. We appreciate very much his assistance. He is a member of the legislative committee on agriculture and has provided valuable advice, counsel, and assistance in the crafting of this bill. We thank him for that.

As I understand the status of time, we have about 20 minutes remaining on the Republican side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 26 minutes remaining and 19½ minutes on the Democratic side.

Mr. COCHRAN. I yield such time as he may consume to the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. GRAMS.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to first commend my colleagues for their overwhelming cloture vote last night that permits the Senate to move closer to passing this very important Agriculture appropriations conference report. I especially commend my colleagues for stopping an intended filibuster that was designed to apply pressure to extend the life of the Northeast Dairy Compact. I look for-

ward to the day when we can talk about the Northeast Dairy Compact in the past tense with its detrimental effects on Midwest dairy farmers; that time will be ended.

After hearing all the rhetoric about how compacts are necessary to save small family dairy farms, I think it is very important to highlight some information my office recently received. According to the USDA, NASS data regarding 1998 dairy herd size averages, Vermont dairy farm herd sizes averaged 85 head and New York farms averaged 81 head. In the Midwest, Minnesota dairy farms averaged 57 head and Wisconsin farms averaged 59 head. Again, Vermont dairy farms averaged in size almost 50 percent larger than Minnesota dairy farms. So much for the idea that the Northeast is competing against corporate farms in the Upper Midwest.

I cannot stress this point enough: The Northeast Dairy Compact is heavily subsidizing large-scale dairy operations while those small farmers in the region do not receive enough to seriously impact their bottom line.

We have always known that compacts are bad for consumers, especially low-income consumers. But now we have additional data from the USDA showing they help large-scale dairy farming operations rather than helping what we hear a lot about, the small farm proponents they claim to help.

Dairy compacts are an economic zero sum game in which there are many losers—most importantly, again, the consumer, and especially low-income consumers. Dairy farmers in the noncompact regions become losers. We hear the rhetoric that somehow the compact is only there for the Northeast and it doesn't have any effect on any other dairy farms across the country. That is completely false. It does have dramatic effects and impacts upon prices of farmers in other areas, especially in the Upper Midwest.

The real winners in this zero sum game, again, are the large dairy producers located in the Northeast that receive literally tens of thousands of dollars in subsidies for their already profitable businesses, not the small dairy farmer who supporters say were the focus of this idea to begin with.

The average 6-month subsidy for large Northeast dairy farms is projected to be \$78,400—\$78,400 in 6 months. Dairy farmers in Minnesota would relish that kind of an income if it were spread across the whole year. But Minnesota farmers wisely have rejected this effort that distorts the system and harms their fellow farmers in other States.

Compact supporters have chosen a strategy of pitting one region of the country against another, offering the cartel-like protection of a compact to other States to prod them into joining the economic warfare. They say: In

order to strengthen our position, let's encourage others to set up compacts, let's try to expand these "cartels," and then we can encourage more votes—and then, again, pitting one region of the country against another, encouraging economic warfare. Then they can carve up the market, they can receive fixed prices for the milk they produce, and they claim this policy does not discriminate against other regions of the country.

Higher prices promote higher production. It doesn't take a scientist to figure this out. That is, production is expanded beyond the compact region's fluid needs, the excess production then goes into nonfluid dairy products or nondrinkable milk products, and this depresses the nonfluid prices nationwide.

The overproduction in the Northeast generated by the compact—the cartel, the fixed prices, encouraging overproduction—then is spilt over into other regions of the country, which then depresses those prices. When they say it has no effect on other dairy farms around the country, that is completely false. It does. Where does the excess milk go? Again, the prices encourage overproduction, the overproduction then is spread out across the country, and that depresses the prices for dairy farmers in the Upper Midwest.

It is very disappointing to me that colleagues would describe themselves as free marketers, who understand the basic principles of economics would sign on to this protectionist economic power grab. For farmers who raise corn, soybeans, wheat, potatoes, and other commodities, it seems we are willing in this Congress to try to work for their best interests. There is no difference if you raise corn in Iowa or Illinois or Minnesota or Pennsylvania; the markets treat that corn the same. It is on a competitive basis. The farmers compete on their productivity. But when it comes to milk, it is completely different. If you are in one part of the country, you get more money for your milk than in other parts. Now in the Northeast we want to set up a cartel that has price fixing, that encourages overproduction, which then spills over to the rest of the country.

Why do we support one part of a national agricultural policy but then distort another part of that policy, and that is dealing with dairy? Why should dairy farmers be treated differently than any other farmer? Why should we take dairy markets from one region of the country and give them to another region of the country? That is exactly, again, what the cartel does. Because the milk produced in the Northeast that is not consumed in fluid form is spilled over into the Midwest as powdered milk, cheese, and butter. So they are now competing for those markets and we are then giving them those

markets, or at least a share of them. Should large producers in the Northeast be able to thrive at the expense of small farm families in the Midwest?

Our farm families in the Midwest are among the most productive in the country. Yet their fate now depends not on their competitiveness, not on their ability to produce in a competitive manner but on the raw deal presented to them by subsidized dairy farmers in the Northeast.

I am always frustrated by the claim from our pro-compact spokespersons, and repeated again in a recent Christian Science Monitor article, that compacts are necessary to guarantee customers and consumers "an ample supply of fresh, locally produced milk." I am satisfied this rhetoric is designed to scare consumers into believing if they do not support these compacts they will then go to the grocery store and encounter empty milk cases because they cannot get "fresh, locally produced milk."

The well-known truth is, with the modernization of refrigeration and transportation, we could basically eliminate the entire milk marketing orders in this country. That is why they were established to begin with, because there was not the refrigeration, there was not the transportation to ensure an adequate supply of milk in other parts of the country. So it has distorted the entire dairy process.

But now, with new types of refrigeration and transportation, milk can be shipped all over the country and can go to any consumer from anywhere, fresh, just as, say, oranges from Florida, lettuce from California, red meat from down in Texas. But our country's dairy supply is more than adequate to produce fluid milk; that is, the class I milk, as they call it. That milk can be supplied to any part of the continental United States. There is no shortage of fluid milk production in America. It should be built on a competitive basis, not protectionist, not a compact region, not guaranteeing some farmers protection at the expense of other farmers.

The country produces three times as much milk as it consumes as a beverage. "The milk may not be locally produced," is what you have heard—some of the jargon now, "fresh, locally produced"—but it will be fresh. To tell consumers they will not get fresh, locally-produced milk, again, is an intentional deception designed to lead people into thinking if there are no compacts, the grocers' milk supply will dry up or deliveries might be sporadic or frequently interrupted, which is simply not true. The perception that somehow Midwest milk is not as good as anything produced locally is also an affront to the hard-working dairy farmers in my State.

A compact spokesman in the Christian Science Monitor article also

claims that locally produced milk will be cheaper to deliver than the milk bought and brought in from outside the area. Not if you live in a compact region, it will not be cheaper. Compacts are designed to protect inefficient producers in one region against the more efficient producers in another—specifically, the efficient farmers in the Upper Midwest. When people argue that when dairy products are no longer produced within a region prices to consumers go up within the area, do not believe it. If that were true, why would they need compacts at all?

If milk produced locally would be cheaper, why do they need a compact at all? The reason they need it is to drive up their prices. Dairy compacts create a minimum price for milk, and they are designed to keep cheaper milk out of the region, not in the region. Again, we don't do this with any other farm product. We do not set a floor or a minimum price for corn from one region to another. We don't pit the Northeast against the Midwest against the Southeast against the South; we do not do that. But in dairy we do.

Dairy compacts create a minimum price for milk, and they are designed to keep cheaper milk out of a region, not into the region. So, again, why do they need compacts at all if their arguments are true?

Upper Midwest producers can sell class I fluid milk in New England for less than the \$16.94 per hundredweight floor price of the compact. But the floor price in New England effectively keeps the cheaper milk out of the market. Indeed, after the Northeast Compact was enacted in 1997, the price of milk rose—this is the price of milk in New England—from \$2.54 all the way up to a high of \$3.21 a gallon. Milk prices there initially jumped about 20 cents a gallon. In fact, there were some grocers who put up signs along the dairy case that said: Don't blame me for the higher prices in milk. Blame the compact. That was because consumers were complaining about the jump in the price of milk in the New England area.

So it does drive up the price. They always quote a study that was done. They said the first 6 months the compact went into effect, it had basically no effect. I would like them to take the last 6 months because the compact had not even geared up in those first 6 months, so it had very little chance to distort the market. But now, take a poll, now take a survey, do the report now, and I will bet the 6 months in the last 6 months would be much different than what they are quoting today.

I believe compacts are clearly bad for America. I urge my colleagues to reject their extension and insist they not, again, be slipped into another appropriations bill in the dead of night.

To wrap up about the dairy bill—I also wanted to talk about the Agriculture appropriations conference we

are considering. I am pleased again it contains the \$8.7 billion in emergency appropriations. I urge the USDA to work to get the assistance to our Nation's farmers without delay.

I am also encouraged by conference report language urging the President to be more aggressive in strengthening trade negotiating authority to help American farmers and also in expressing Congress' goals for the upcoming negotiations. The conference report is not perfect but it will give our farmers the help to make it through another year. But it will be imperative that Congress continues to address reforms in our trade sanctions, EPA regulations, crop insurance, and also in the Tax Code for farmers to have an environment in which they can truly thrive. I am also glad conferees added additional assistance to farmers who suffered through these natural disasters.

I urge the USDA, when it is distributing the aid, to remember farmers in the northwestern part of my State of Minnesota have been prevented from planting due to flooding. In fact, some farmers in the northwestern part of Minnesota have not had crops now for 7 years because of varying disasters: Flood, drought, disease, et cetera. In northwestern Minnesota this year, crop agents and FSA crop acreage reports show that 70 to 75 percent of the entire area's tillable acres were prevented from being planted in 1999. Only 10 percent of the normal intended acreage of annual crops will be harvested this year at all. Rainfall amounted to over 200 percent of normal in the critical planting months of April, May, and June.

I know there have been many farmers across the Nation affected by drought this year, just the opposite of the problems we have had. But I do expect USDA to provide sufficient and equitable relief to farmers in northwestern Minnesota who have been shortchanged in the past by some of these relief bills. I now hope Congress will turn to enacting long-term solutions that will make such emergency packages as this one unnecessary.

Mr. President, I look forward to working with my colleagues to fulfill our responsibilities to the American farmer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Who yields time? The Senator from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to ask the manager of the bill a question relative to fiscal provisions within this bill. The context of these questions is when we commenced this session of Congress, the Congressional Budget Office estimated the non-Social Security surplus for fiscal year 2000 would be approximately \$21 billion. Thus far, we have committed \$7 billion

of that to the 1999 supplemental appropriations bills through the designation of various items as emergencies.

This bill has additional items designated as emergencies totaling \$8.7 billion. The effect of this, plus prior action, would be to reduce the estimated non-Social Security surplus to \$5.3 billion.

We also have in the offing other emergency provisions which will total approximately \$15 billion and thus eliminate the non-Social Security surplus and place us in a position of having to do what we have all committed not to do, which is to dip into the Social Security surplus by in excess of \$10 billion.

In that context, I want to ask the manager a short list of questions, and I say to my good friend, the Senator from Mississippi, I commend him for the work he has done this year and in previous years on behalf of American agriculture. I know the frugality with which he approaches his task. He has been faced, as has happened in the past, with an unusual set of circumstances affecting American agriculture and thus the necessity for emergency spending.

What is the level of emergency spending included in this conference committee report?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the amount included in the conference committee report that is attributable to emergencies is \$8.7 billion which is for disaster assistance and economic assistance for farmers.

Mr. GRAHAM. How much has been designated for emergency spending in the Senate bill which this body passed?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, when we passed the bill in the Senate, there was \$7.6 billion approved by the Senate as emergency spending for agriculture.

Mr. GRAHAM. And how much had been approved by the House in its original version of the Agriculture appropriations bill?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the House bill contained no funds for disaster assistance or economic assistance designated as emergencies.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Senator. The emergency spending items which were included in the fiscal year 2000 conference report, what is their degree of adherence to the statutory criteria for emergency spending, which are that spending must be necessary, sudden, urgent, unforeseen, and not permanent in character?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is my understanding there is no statutory test for defining or deciding what is and is not an emergency. Even for OMB, it is a matter of policy, as we understand it, and that is an executive branch agency under the jurisdiction of the President of the United States.

In the Senate, an emergency is whatever the Senate decides is an emer-

gency. A majority of the Senate can designate an event or an appropriation as being for an emergency purpose, and that is how we judge whether it is an emergency—whether a majority of the Senate approves it as such.

Mr. GRAHAM. To the extent those criteria of emergency being necessary—sudden, urgent, unforeseen, and not permanent—if those were the criteria, what proportion of the \$8.7 billion of emergency spending would meet those standards?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I say again, we have no set of criteria. There is no statute that provides any criteria or test against which a finding of emergency need be made. So it would be presumptuous on my part to try to answer what part or if all of the emergency spending in the bill would stand the test of the criteria the Senator has identified. All five of the ones you have listed are subjected to—there is no analytical test, in other words, with which one can do this. I do not think there is any substitute for good judgment and common sense myself, and I think that is what the Senate relies upon.

Mr. GRAHAM. In the fiscal year 2000 budget, how much is budgeted for emergencies that potentially will occur in the fiscal year that began on October 1?

Mr. COCHRAN. The Appropriations Committee allocations that were made to each subcommittee do not contain a designation for emergencies as such. And as far as I know, the budget resolution did not contain any specific section with an authorization or a designation of funds in the budget for emergencies.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I can editorialize a moment on that question, it seems to me this would be analogous to a family which, for instance, in its budget had said: We will estimate the cost of medical care for our family will be \$250. At the end of the year, they found, in fact, it was \$1,000. They had to make certain end-of-the-year adjustments in order to fill that \$750 missing element in their budget. When they began to write the budget for the next year, one would think prudence would say: Let's include \$1,000 as our medical expenses, not a number which has been proven to be inadequate.

I suggest somewhat the same analogy would be applicable here. If we have shown there is \$8.7 billion of emergency spending and we have appropriated zero for those emergencies, for the future it would be prudent to begin to incorporate into our ongoing budget some funds to respond to these emergencies. We do not know the characteristics, we do not know the geographic location, we do not know when the emergency will occur, but we are pretty sure there is going to be some kind of emergency somewhere in American agriculture that will warrant a response.

Prudence would indicate we ought to have a fund from which to meet those

needs so that every year we are not in the position of having passed an emergency appropriation which, as we know, has the effect of vitiating all of the normal budgetary rules, including budgetary rules that require we offset spending with either reductions in spending elsewhere or with additional revenue. The effect of this is to go directly to the budget surplus.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I think his point is illustrated by the fact we have seen legislation introduced to reform and improve the Crop Insurance Program to get at that kind of problem. If farmers find crop insurance both affordable and effective to compensate them for losses of this kind, they would buy crop insurance. We have a flawed program now. We are trying to get the legislative committee to act on legislation on that subject.

Senator LINCOLN from Arkansas and I have cosponsored a bill that we think is needed in order to make that kind of program effective and more attractive in the South. We think the current program does not represent a reasonable or thoughtful investment of a farmer's funds—at least that is the attitude of most southern farmers with whom we have talked on this subject.

One other point on this and that is, there is a Federal Emergency Management Agency appropriation that is made every year. That is a subject in the budget resolution, and we have in the VA-HUD appropriations bill funds to appropriate to that agency to respond to the needs of people confronted with disaster. It is not that the budget is silent on the subject of disasters. There is the Crop Insurance Program that is subsidized by the Government, and there is the FEMA program that is funded in the budget each year.

Mr. GRAHAM. The other two questions relative to the budget relate to advance funding. Is there any advance funding in this conference report, i.e., funds that were normal fiscal year 2000 expenditures which are delayed to a future fiscal year?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, as far as the regular appropriations bill for fiscal year 2000 funds are concerned, there is no advance funding. In the disaster assistance package, there is \$30 million for advance funding of fisheries disaster assistance.

Mr. GRAHAM. Finally, relative to the payment adjustments, is there any change in this conference report relative to the timing of payments made to vendors that are beneficiaries which will have the effect of moving fiscal year 2000 costs into future years?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, there is none that this Senator knows about.

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you very much. Mr. HARKIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, how much time is left on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Nine minutes 22 seconds.

Mr. HARKIN. How much? Nine minutes and how much?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Nine minutes 15 seconds.

Mr. HARKIN. I will yield myself 4 minutes and hurry.

I want to say a few words about both parts of the bill before us. The first part is the regular fiscal year 2000 Ag appropriations bill. I commend and thank the chairman, Senator COCHRAN, and thank our ranking member, Senator KOHL, for their hard work and conscientious effort to craft this bill under difficult spending constraints.

There are important provisions in the bill providing funding for agriculture programs, agricultural research, food safety, nutrition, conservation, rural economic development, and in other areas. There are a number of items in this bill that are especially important to my State of Iowa, which I will not list here. I just want to say the regular fiscal year 2000 bill is basically a good bill under the circumstances.

There is a matter that deserves special mention; and that is, in the Senate we had an overwhelming vote of 70–28 to remove sanctions on food and medicine. The Senate conferees also voted in the conference to hold the Senate position, but the House conferees adjourned before we could even vote on sanctions reform. So after all these years of hearing all the talk about removing embargoes on food and medicine, the Republican leadership in the House walked away before we had a chance to reform it. So we still have embargoes on food, embargoes to keep our farmers from selling food to foreign customers.

I also want to mention a provision that was stuck in this bill on the H2A program. That program allows bringing in foreign agricultural workers if the employer cannot find domestic workers. The provision in this bill will significantly shorten the time during which an employer has to look for U.S. workers before bringing in foreign workers.

I recognize that it can be hard to find U.S. workers for agricultural jobs in some instances, but I do not think that Congress ought to be changing the law to make it easier to cut U.S. workers out of those jobs and give them to foreign workers.

I now will turn to the emergency assistance package, which totals about \$8.7 billion. My colleagues and I have been working since last May to get this Congress to pass a farm assistance package. We had to fight for too long this summer even to get a recognition here in Congress that there is a farm crisis. Then we had to fight to get this Congress to take any action. And finally, we had to fight for a package that would be adequate to deal with

the severe economic hardship in rural America.

So, we have come a long way since last spring. This emergency package will provide a good deal of assistance to help farm families survive this crisis. I am disappointed, however, that the bill uses the same payment mechanism as the failed Freedom to Farm bill and that it does not contain an adequate amount of assistance to respond to the droughts and other natural disasters around the country.

The emergency package has far too little in it for livestock producers—particularly for pork producers who have lost \$4 billion in equity over the past 22 months. And it contains no money for emergency conservation work and repairing flood damage. Nor is there any economic development assistance for rural communities that are suffering because of the downturn in agriculture.

On balance, I am supporting the emergency package because it will get some money out to farm families who are struggling to remain in business.

As I have said, it is like throwing a leaking life raft to a drowning person. That is how I feel. I am standing on the shore. Someone is drowning. All I have is a leaking life raft. Do I throw it to them or not? Of course, I do, in the hopes that shortly we will get something better. But right now our farmers are drowning. They are sinking. So this emergency bill will help for a little bit, but it is not a long-term solution to the problem.

The fact that Congress is passing a stopgap emergency package for the second year in a row demonstrates that our current farm policy is not working. We must reform the failed Freedom to Farm bill before next year.

Unless we reform Freedom to Farm, all the signs indicate farmers are going to need another emergency package next year, too. Frankly, you can only go to the well so many times.

We cannot continue to have a farm policy in this country that lurches from one crisis to the next. It is time to address the root problem: the lack of a farm income safety net in the Freedom to Farm bill. The Freedom to Farm bill has to be changed to restore farm income protections that were eliminated when the bill was enacted.

Freedom to Farm is a bankrupt farm policy and it is bankrupting America's farm families.

As we have said repeatedly, this bill uses a payment mechanism that has nothing to do with what farmers planted this year. The Freedom to Fail bill is already a proven failure. So why on Earth would we want to go right back to the Freedom to Fail bill to try to remedy its shortcomings? This bill includes \$5.5 billion in Freedom to Farm type payments. They would be paid out based on base acres and yields set some 20 years ago. The payments would have

nothing to do with this year's planting. In fact, they can go to people who planted nothing.

Using the so-called "three-entity rule," an individual could get \$80,000 of these payments and not have planted anything. Add that to the \$80,000 in regular AMTA payments, which they also could get without planting anything. This bill then also doubles the payment limit for marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments to \$150,000. Now in practice, that is \$300,000 through the use of the three-entity rule. The total that potentially could be paid to one individual then is \$460,000.

This bill does not treat oilseeds fairly. There is a very complicated and confusing program for providing direct payments to oilseed producers. It is going to take a long time to get this program sorted out and to get the payments out to producers of soybeans and other oilseeds—and the payments are not going to be fairly distributed among producers. Here is the real irony of this emergency assistance package. With the AMTA type payments, if you did not plant anything this year you can still get as much as an extra \$80,000 under this package.

I have some examples under the payment scheme we have in this emergency package. All of these farmers have 500 acres of land, half planted to corn and half planted to soybeans. Yet the payments range anywhere from \$19,941 down to \$2,040—three neighbors right in a row, farming 500 acres—half in corn and half in soybeans. Or you can have a farmer who decides to go to Palm Beach. He has 500 acres. He did not plant anything. He is going to get \$17,901 even though he never did anything. Yet for farmers in the State represented by my friend from North Carolina, who have had disaster losses—or farmers in Iowa, the Dakotas, Minnesota, the Northeast and East who have had drought or other disaster losses—they are going to get pennies on the dollar. Farmers who worked hard, planted a crop, have hardly anything to show for it. But here is a hypothetical example of a farmer who planted nothing, who has 500 acres, and he is going to get \$17,900. That is not right.

Let me run through these examples in a little more detail. I ask unanimous consent that a table summarizing the examples be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the table was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Farmer	Smith	Jones	Brown	Palm Beach
Total acres	500	500	500	500
Corn base acres	500	250	0	500
Corn planted	250	250	250	0
Soybeans planted	250	250	250	0
Payment	19,941	10,990	2,040	17,901

Mr. HARKIN. For the first farmer, Smith, all 500 acres are corn base.

Those are the acres on which the direct AMTA-type payments are made. Again, 250 acres planted to corn and 250 acres planted to soybeans. That farmer will receive an additional AMTA type corn payment of \$17,901 and a soybean payment of \$2040, for a total of \$19,941. Keep in mind this farmer is receiving both a corn payment and a soybean payment on the very same acre on some of the land.

The second farmer, Jones, has 500 acres, but this farmer has only 250 acres of corn base. Again, 250 acres in corn and 250 acres in soybeans. This farmer will receive \$8950 in AMTA type corn payments and \$2040 in soybean payments, for a total of \$10,990.

Another farmer, Brown, has 500 acres, but no corn base, with half the land in soybeans and half in corn. This farmer will receive \$2040, because that is all that would be paid on the soybeans.

In summary, 500 acres of land, half planted to corn, half planted to soybeans, and you have a range of payments from \$2040 all the way up to \$19,941. All because the AMTA payments are based on what was planted 20 years ago or more, not on what farmers are planting now.

And here is the real kicker, a landowner who chooses to plant nothing can receive a payment. So the owner of that 500 acres could still receive the \$17,901 without planting a seed. I call this the Palm Beach Farmer example.

Mr. President, there is a lot wrong with this bill, but there is an overriding need to get assistance out to farmers. Frankly, I have little confidence that we would get anything better if this bill were sent back to conference. I have amendments that I am still prepared to offer. But we couldn't even get the House conferees to come back to the table. They were forbidden by their leadership to do so.

This bill could have been much better, and I deeply regret that we were foreclosed from improving it. So I will vote for this conference report, with some reluctance, simply because so much is at stake for farm families and rural communities in my state of Iowa and across our Nation.

As I said, it amounts to throwing a leaking liferaft to a drowning person. Let's throw the liferaft out; but let us change the bill next year so we are not back once again trying to pass emergency farm assistance.

I yield the floor.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, first, I thank my friend, the Senator from Mississippi, and the Senator from Wisconsin for all their hard work on this very difficult bill. I intend to support this bill.

Let me talk briefly about what this Agriculture Appropriations bill does for North Carolina and what it will not be able to do for North Carolina. In North Carolina, we talk about things in terms of before and after Hurricane Floyd, unfortunately.

Before Hurricane Floyd, our farmers were struggling, having very difficult times, financially and otherwise. Their crop prices were at the lowest levels they have been in many years. And they needed help; they desperately needed help. One of the things this bill does is provide some of that help in the way of direct market assistance for some of the problems they had before Hurricane Floyd.

We have about \$328 million in this conference report for North Carolina's tobacco farmers. I have to say, for those around the country who are not familiar with North Carolina's farming operations, an awful lot of our farmers are tobacco farmers. They may farm a lot of other crops, but tobacco is often the staple that allows them to farm those other crops. This money was desperately needed. And they needed it now. They needed it even before Hurricane Floyd hit. Having visited with our farmers, including our tobacco farmers, all over the State of North Carolina, we are very pleased and very proud that we were able to get them the assistance which they deserved and which they needed.

Sadly, though, I have to also talk about the situation after Floyd. This bill provides \$1.2 billion for disaster relief. I have to say, I think this is way short of what we are going to need in North Carolina. We have a real emergency, I think by anybody's standards, in the agricultural farming community in North Carolina as a result of Hurricane Floyd.

I have been all over North Carolina and have spent a lot of time in eastern North Carolina, visiting our farms that have been devastated by Hurricane Floyd. The reality is, this is a loss from which it is going to take many years to recover.

Of this \$1.2 billion, some reasonably sized chunk of that money will go to farmers in North Carolina. It will not ultimately be enough. But it is critically important that we get some of that money to them, and get it to them quickly. I urge the Secretary of Agriculture to do as much as he can to get as much of this money as is possible disbursed in the immediate future because these farmers need help. They already needed help before Hurricane Floyd. And they need help now more than ever. They need it immediately.

What this photograph I have represents is what I saw all over eastern North Carolina as a result of Hurricane Floyd and in the wake of Hurricane Floyd. We can see almost the entire farm—except for the farmhouse—is under water. This property, which has been involved in farming for many years, is now under water. And the crop losses have been completely devastating.

This scene is repeated over and over and over, all over eastern North Carolina. We are told the best estimates

are, at this point, that there is somewhere between \$800 million and \$1 billion in agricultural losses in North Carolina. Obviously, the money in this bill is not going to be adequate since it is for the entire country. It is not going to be adequate to deal with the loss in North Carolina alone which approaches \$1 billion. We are going to have to do more.

I want the people of North Carolina, and particularly our farmers in North Carolina, to know that we fully recognize they need help. They need help quickly. They do not need loans. They were already up to their necks in debt and up to their necks in loans before the hurricane hit. They need help. They need direct disaster relief, and they need it immediately.

I point out, both for my farmers in North Carolina and to my colleagues, that the money that was recently put in the VA-HUD conference report, the approximately \$2.48 billion for FEMA, will not help with the farming problem in North Carolina because that money is not designated and indeed cannot be used specifically for agriculture.

We are going to have to have some direct appropriation through some vehicle in this Congress—this session—to help our farmers because if we do not they are going out of business. They are the heart and soul of North Carolina and to our economy in North Carolina, and particularly to our rural economy in North Carolina. We have to be there for them. They have been there for us. We have to step to the plate and provide them with the support they need.

Finally, I express my disappointment with the lack of any dairy legislation in this conference report.

I supported dairy legislation. I continue to support it. We recognize the plight of dairy farmers in North Carolina. We understand the difficulties and problems they have. We will continue to search and aggressively pursue ways to solve the problems with which they are confronted.

Again, I thank the distinguished managers of this measure.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COCHRAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, may I inquire how much time remains for debate on the conference report under the order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten minutes 53 seconds remain. All time is majority time.

Mr. COCHRAN. The Democrats have used all time allocated to them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired on their side.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I will yield back time if no other Senator seeks recognition because I don't need to talk anymore.

I have talked enough about the bill, trying to explain that we have attempted to identify not only the emergency needs that exist by reason of the collapse of prices for commodities for agricultural producers but also the disaster assistance that is needed now to compensate those who have suffered drought-related and other weather-related disasters on the farm.

We have in the conference report a statement by managers indicating that we realize it may be difficult or impossible to ascertain the exact dollar amount of losses attributable to disaster during this crop year. For that reason, we call upon the Department of Agriculture, the Secretary, to monitor the situation and submit to the Congress, if it is justified, a supplemental budget request for any additional funds.

We are confident the Senate and the House, as well, will carefully consider any supplemental request for such funds. We think this is a generous response to the needs in agriculture, but we know it is not enough to satisfy every single need of every individual in agriculture. I don't know that anybody could design a program that would do that. I don't recall there ever being a more generous disaster assistance program approved by this Congress than this one—\$8.7 billion in emergency assistance. We hope that will be helpful. That is only a part of this legislation, however.

There is \$60 billion of funding for all the fiscal year 2000 programs that will be administered by the Department of Agriculture and also funds for the operation of the Food and Drug Administration and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This bill is within its allocation under the Budget Act. It is consistent with the budget resolution adopted by this Congress. We are hopeful the Senate will express its support by voting overwhelmingly for the conference report.

I am aware of no other Senator who has requested time to speak on the bill. I know we have 5 minutes remaining on the bill. To await the arrival of any Senator who does want to speak, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, all time has been used on the conference report on the Agriculture appropriations bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 323 Leg.]
YEAS—74

Abraham	Domenici	Kohl
Akaka	Dorgan	Landrieu
Allard	Durbin	Levin
Ashcroft	Edwards	Lincoln
Baucus	Enzi	Lott
Bayh	Feinstein	Lugar
Bennett	Fitzgerald	Mack
Bingaman	Frist	McConnell
Bond	Gorton	Murkowski
Boxer	Gramm	Murray
Breaux	Grams	Reid
Brownback	Grassley	Robb
Bryan	Hagel	Roberts
Bunning	Harkin	Rockefeller
Burns	Hatch	Sessions
Byrd	Helms	Shelby
Campbell	Hollings	Smith (OR)
Cleland	Hutchinson	Stevens
Cochran	Hutchison	Thomas
Conrad	Inhofe	Thompson
Coverdell	Inouye	Thurmond
Craig	Johnson	Warner
Crapo	Kennedy	Wellstone
Daschle	Kerrey	Wyden
DeWine	Kerry	

NAYS—26

Biden	Lautenberg	Santorum
Chafee	Leahy	Sarbanes
Collins	Lieberman	Schumer
Dodd	McCain	Smith (NH)
Feingold	Mikulski	Snowe
Graham	Moynihan	Specter
Gregg	Nickles	Torricelli
Jeffords	Reed	Voinovich
Kyl	Roth	

The conference report was agreed to. Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. COVERDELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY

MOTION TO RESUME EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now move that the Senate resume executive session in order to resume consideration of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty as provided in the previous unanimous consent, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered. Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent both leaders be al-

lowed to use leader time prior to the time we have this vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LOTT. I object at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes prior to the vote.

Mr. LOTT. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I note we do have some approximately 3 hours of time remaining on the treaty itself. We intend to yield back 54 minutes of our time so there will be an exact equal amount of time available to both sides. I believe that would be the appropriate time to have debate on this treaty, on its merits or on how to proceed.

Therefore, with great respect, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 324 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Abraham	Frist	Murkowski
Allard	Gorton	Nickles
Ashcroft	Gramm	Roberts
Bennett	Grams	Roth
Bond	Grassley	Santorum
Brownback	Gregg	Sessions
Bunning	Hagel	Shelby
Burns	Hatch	Smith (NH)
Campbell	Helms	Smith (OR)
Chafee	Hutchinson	Snowe
Cochran	Hutchison	Specter
Collins	Inhofe	Stevens
Coverdell	Jeffords	Thomas
Craig	Kyl	Thompson
Crapo	Lott	Thurmond
DeWine	Lugar	Voinovich
Domenici	Mack	Warner
Enzi	McCain	
Fitzgerald	McConnell	

NAYS—45

Akaka	Edwards	Levin
Baucus	Feingold	Lieberman
Bayh	Feinstein	Lincoln
Biden	Graham	Mikulski
Bingaman	Harkin	Moynihan
Boxer	Hollings	Murray
Breaux	Inouye	Reed
Bryan	Johnson	Reid
Byrd	Kennedy	Robb
Cleland	Kerrey	Rockefeller
Conrad	Kerry	Sarbanes
Daschle	Kohl	Schumer
Dodd	Landrieu	Torricelli
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Wellstone
Durbin	Leahy	Wyden

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. ASHCROFT. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.