

It is important to note that this crop insurance reform bill also improves the current risk management structure by providing better coverage for both production and revenue. It does so by making possible more affordable policies to protect farmers against price and income loss. The legislation also initiates a livestock pilot program to test the effectiveness of risk management tools to protect livestock producers.

This Member's constituents have made it clear that crop insurance is a necessary risk management tool. Unfortunately, it is often too expensive or offers too little protection to be of real value. This legislation takes these concerns into account and offers agricultural producers what they need—meaningful and more affordable crop insurance.

This Member is also pleased that this conference report includes funding for emergency payments to farmers. The 1996 Freedom to Farm Act was based on the premise of expanding international markets for the commodities produced by our nation's farmers. This clearly has not happened. Certainly, one of the root causes of the current low commodity prices was the drop in exports, especially to Asia as a result of the region's economic down-turn. Nobody could have predicted the Asian financial crisis or the contagion effect which is still being felt.

Also, because of the strength of our national economy relative to most other countries, the value of our currency compared to others now makes our exports less price-competitive in Asian markets than our competitor exporters like Canada, Australia, Brazil, or the nations of the European Union. Thus, there is not only a dramatically reduced agricultural export market in Asia, we are also getting a reduced portion of the remaining Asian import business.

Clearly, an emergency agriculture relief package is needed immediately. Producers are in desperate need of a quick infusion of cash to help them deal with low prices and increasing costs. However, as important as that relief is, it is only a temporary fix. A long-term approach is clearly needed. This conference report, which includes significant improvements in the crop insurance program, is an important component of that effort.

This Member urges his colleagues to vote for the conference report for H.R. 2559.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the conference report for H.R. 2559, the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. I believe that this legislation is paramount to providing much needed assistance to our nations farmers and ranchers.

In 1996, Congress passed the Freedom to Farm bill, which was designed to limit government's role in agriculture. This legislation addresses some of the short falls of Freedom to Farm by providing temporary economic relief to our farm community, as well as implementing crop insurance reform.

The reforms to the crop insurance program will strengthen the farm safety net by providing producers improved risk management tools to address the inherent risks associated with farming. I believe that these reforms are necessary, and that they will remove need for the type of emergency assistance Congress has provided agricultural producers over the past two years.

I am especially appreciative that this conference report contains the House crop insurance reform language calling for the implementation of livestock pilot programs. These pilot programs would provide livestock producers with the necessary risk management tools to cope with disasters, weather shifts, and other natural acts beyond their control without fear that the cost of doing the right thing will put them out of business.

I am also supportive of the anti-fraud provisions in the crop insurance legislation. These provisions direct the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Farm Service Agency to work together to reconcile producer information on an annual basis, to identify producers and insurers who are abusing the program.

As I stated earlier, I believe that this is sound legislation. I want to commend all the conferees and committee staff for their hard work and dedication, particularly Chairman COMBEST and Ranking Member STENHOLM.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate Congressman COMBEST of Texas for introducing the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. The conference report that we are voting on today will provide a badly needed overhaul of our crop insurance system.

All of us who represent and have grown up in rural areas know the importance of our nation's farmers. The weather over the past couple of years has not been very generous to Tennessee's farmers and now, more than ever, they need federal policy to help them these tough times.

Farming is not only a job that requires endless hours of hard work and planning. It also requires a substantial amount of courage to be a farmer. Our farmers take risks every year by putting their livelihood on the line in order to produce for their communities. They invest the money they have worked so hard to save in a crop or a number of crops with the hope that the rains will come and that a tornado and the insects will not.

But, as we all know, those conditions are never guaranteed. But my fellow Congressmen and I can guarantee them an affordable safety net. Providing our dwindling farming population with a cheaper and broader insurance program is the least we can do for the men and women who work to provide for each one of us in this House.

The provision in this conference report that makes catastrophic coverage available for all farmers for a simple fee is certainly appealing to Tennessee's farmers who have been hit by a recent wave of tornadoes and droughts over the past several years.

Tennessee's single crop and lower yield farmers are especially excited about the change in their actual production history formula. These farmers will now be able to insure more of their investments and feel more secure about their ability to support their families. Ladies and gentlemen these are only a few examples of the benefits of this legislation.

I call on each one of my fellow members of Congress to join me and support this conference report for America's courageous farmers.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The conference report was agreed to. A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2559 just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE FROM THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2000 OR FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2000 TO TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2000, AND RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT OF SENATE FROM THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2000 OR FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2000 OR SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2000 OR SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2000 TO MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2000 OR TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2000

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 336) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 336

Resolved by the House of Representatives (The Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Thursday, May 25, 2000, or Friday, May 26, 2000, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 2000, for morning-hour debate, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Thursday, May 25, 2000, Friday, May 26, 2000, Saturday, May 27, 2000, or Sunday, May 28, 2000, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, June 5, 2000, or Tuesday, June 6, 2000, as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or at such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reassemble whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

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The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.