

marketing orders administered by USDA. So, in fact, we do have price stabilization programs for the vast majority of agricultural commodities. That is why consumers enjoy stable supplies, high quality, and modest food prices.

Mr. President, I believe I have demonstrated how important farm programs are to consumers. Now let us take a hard look at how the elimination of farm programs would affect producers.

Who are these producers? They are good citizens. They are hardworking people. They get up early. They work late. They support their communities. They pay taxes. And, Mr. President, far from the media-generated image of wealthy folks, the average net farm income in North Dakota is \$20,000 a year. I know that is hard to believe when one sees portrayed over the media these images of wealthy farmers who are farming the mailbox.

Mr. President, that is not the way it is. I come from North Dakota. I go across the State of North Dakota, through cities and towns, visiting farmsteads. I get a chance to see what the condition is in rural America.

The hard reality is that the average farmer in my State is earning \$20,000 a year. They have strong families. Farming is a family business. They raise good children; children that grow up with a strong work ethic, a good education, and good values.

But those children rarely come back to farm because they do not see a future in it. They do not see a good opportunity. They do not see a secure and profitable profession. They see a struggle. They see a struggle to raise a good crop, a struggle to withstand low prices, a struggle to persevere through hail, drought, or flood.

They watch their parents struggle and they ask why.

Mr. President, I think we find farm families staying on the land not because it makes sense financially, because the rate of return for agriculture is as low as any industry one can find. I believe they stay with it because it is a way of life.

What will the cuts that some people are suggesting do to this way of life? In North Dakota, the effect would be dramatic. According to USDA statistics, in 1993, farm program payments represented 82 percent of net farm income—82 percent of net farm income represented by Federal farm program payments. Nationally, startling statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture provide a clear picture of what is happening on the farm. Let me quote:

*** recently, entry has fallen fastest for farms operated by those under 35.

They go on to say:

*** the most noticeable change in the 1992 census (of Agriculture) was among 35-to-44 year-old farmers. Farm exits for this age group increased ***

What does this tell us? It tells us that farming is not an economically at-

tractive business. It is high risk, not high income.

Again, according to USDA:

Approximately 90 percent of all farm operator households received some income from off-farm sources.

If farming were such a profitable business, far fewer households would have to search for alternative sources of income to meet their needs.

Finally, the difference between the Consumer Price Index and the prices received for farm commodities clearly portrays the pressure that farmers face.

Mr. President, this chart shows the farmers' financial squeeze. The Consumer Price Index rises much faster than farm prices. This chart shows from 1982 to 1993 the relationship between the Consumer Price Index, the prices that farmers pay for things, and farm prices, the prices that farmers get. This chart tells us a very clear story:

From 1982 to 1993, the red line shows farm prices. It has been relatively stable. The blue line shows what has happened to the Consumer Price Index. It has risen each and every year on a steady course. So the gap between what farmers pay and the prices they receive has steadily grown.

Farmers are being squeezed by low farm prices and rising costs. Further, agricultural program cuts will damage rural America in profound and irreversible ways. At a time when we need sustained economic growth in both rural and urban areas, the needs of rural America cannot be ignored. It would be flawed economic policy.

In conclusion, let me restate why we need to maintain our agriculture policy. First, agriculture programs are the foundation for our international competitiveness. Without them, we unilaterally disarm in the world trade battle. That would harm American farmers, eliminate American jobs and threaten America's economic security.

Second, agriculture programs are insurance policies for consumers. Without farm programs, consumers lose security over a basic human need: Food.

Finally, agriculture is a fundamentally different form of business. To work properly, it must maintain a reserve, but that reserve depresses prices for farmers and benefits consumers. Because of agriculture's differences, farm programs are essential.

We as a nation have maintained an agriculture policy for decades to protect producers and consumers. This is not blind generosity. This is not aimless policymaking. This is not luck. Those who seek to destroy the farm program must demonstrate why their way is right for America. The burden of proof is on them. I think the facts prove they are dead wrong.

Our agriculture policy works. We have proof that it works. We must not destroy a program that is proven to deliver an abundance of low-cost, high-quality food. We must not destroy a program that has made America the

world leader in agriculture. We must not destroy a program that has worked. We must not unilaterally disarm.

I thank the Chair, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. 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. DOLE. Mr. President, is leader's time reserved?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has been reserved.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WHITE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, the official State motto of Texas is just one word. And that word is "Friendship."

That word was also the motto of John White, one of the great sons of Texas, who passed away on Friday.

John was a Democrat through and through. But John knew that partisanship is not as important as friendship. He knew that partisanship is not as important as decency. And he knew that partisanship is not as important as patriotism.

Friendship. Decency. Patriotism. These were the hallmarks of John White's career in public service. It was a career that saw him serve for over a quarter of a century as Texas Agriculture Commissioner, as Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and as Chairman of the Democrat National Committee.

But John's influence extended far beyond the jobs he held. Former Congressman Jake Pickle said,

John was a small-town man who grew into national prominence because he had a lot of just plain common sense.

Almost from the day he arrived in Washington, Presidents, Senators, Congressmen, and countless others called upon John for counsel and for common sense.

And no matter how busy he was, John always answered the call.

Mr. President, I know that all Members of the Senate who had the privilege to know John, join with me in extending our sympathies to his wife, Nellie, and to his entire family.

TRIBUTE TO ROSE KENNEDY

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, along with all Members of the Senate—and all Americans—I join today in mourning the passing of a true American treasure, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Services for Mrs. Kennedy will be held tomorrow in Boston, and our thoughts and prayers are with Senator KENNEDY and his entire family.