

mean the Federal Government is reneging on its commitment.

Mr. President, my colleagues and I have been making this case with anyone who will listen, and I am pleased that our arguments have not fallen entirely on deaf ears. The final version of the fiscal year 1996 congressional budget resolution concedes that selling WAPA is not necessary to meet deficit reduction objectives.

And our case keeps getting stronger. Since this scheme was first proposed, further evidence of its flaws have come to light.

First there is the issue of river management. This year, South Dakota experienced much more rain than normal, causing flooding throughout the State and resulting in record levels of water accumulating behind the dams on the Missouri River. These high water levels caused considerable property damage and threaten to cause additional damage as water is released from the dams. Managing the water levels and releases on the river is a monumentally difficult and complicated task, where often competing economic and environmental issues must be balanced to minimize damage to property and land, and to maximize national benefits. Selling WAPA would complicate this already contentious process by increasing pressure to generate electricity at the expense of other objectives, so that the new owners of the system could maximize their profits.

Second, it is my understanding that much of the thousands of miles of transmission lines that make up the WAPA system cross private lands. The rights-of-way held by the Federal Government for this purpose in many cases would revert to the private landowners if the WAPA system is sold into private ownership. Therefore, the sale could result in the need for the new owners to renegotiate many of the rights-of-way with private landowners, some of whom might be reluctant to do so.

This added complication could diminish the value of the system to potential buyers, leading to less revenue than the Federal Government expects.

And third, there is the problem of potential cherry-picking. The WAPA system is expansive, covering 14 States, and includes many different components. As these components are broken up for sale, what is to prevent some buyers from purchasing only the best and most profitable parts, leaving behind the older, less valuable parts, and thus preventing the Federal Government—and the taxpayers—from getting the full value from the system?

In conclusion, Mr. President, the sale of WAPA is a bad deal for its current customers, and it is a bad deal for the American taxpayers. Beyond that are some very real practical problems with the execution of the sale of WAPA. These issues alone should be enough to sink the deal.

No one will win if WAPA is sold, except perhaps a few select private inter-

ests who could exploit first the Federal Government, and later their customers to maximize profit.

Since I have been in Congress, I have seen a lot of proposals that did not make sense for South Dakota. Selling WAPA is one of the worst. I urge my colleagues to join with me in this battle and do the right thing by the energy consumers of South Dakota and other Western States, and the right thing for the taxpayers of the Nation.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1995 FARM BILL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the 1995 farm bill got off to a good start recently when the Senate Agriculture Committee drafted significant parts of the legislation, including the research, farm credit, rural development and trade sections. Taken as a whole, I am optimistic these first four provisions will benefit rural America by helping beginning farmers get started and putting renewed focus on the production of value-added agricultural products.

While progress was indeed made and such a good beginning is encouraging, I walked out of the committee room after voting feeling a bit like a farmer watching his fields in early spring. It is always nice when your crop gets off to a good start, but experience suggests we should not get overly confident until it has been harvested and sold at a fair price.

There is still a long and difficult path to travel before we can declare any sort of victory for the American farmer.

My highest priority in the coming months will be to tackle those parts of the farm bill that will have the most immediate impact on the income of family farms and ranches. I have talked to hundreds of producers across South Dakota in the last few months about the importance of this farm bill. They all tell me the same, very simple thing: "Go back to Washington and write a farm bill that will allow us to get a fair price for the food we produce."

They ask for nothing more—and nothing less.

I have been very pleased by the bipartisan nature in which we were able to work out the fine details of these first provisions, and hope this cooperation will continue as we take up the issues that are most important to farm and ranch families across South Dakota. Make no mistake—increasing net farm income will not come without a fight, but those of us in Congress who have been waiting for years to draft a farm bill that puts the farming family above the farming corporations are ready and eager for the debate.

To this point, the Senate Agriculture Committee has taken action on four sections of the farm bill:

The research provisions include my proposal to require that USDA allocate 40 percent of competitive research dollars to applied research that will have a tangible, positive impact on the daily

lives of producers and the economic health of our rural communities. I also fought for a provision that requires USDA to include full-time farmers as members of their research advisory board. Many of the decisions made by the Secretary of Agriculture are based in part on the advice of this board. It simply does not make sense to have it packed with bureaucrats.

The farm credit provisions improve the guarantee program by increasing the protection afforded to banks if they lend to a beginning farmer or refinance the loan of an existing direct USDA borrower. Also, the direct loan program is reformed to increase its focus on beginning farmers and on those in need of only temporary assistance.

The trade title sets workable, concrete goals for trade expansion, increases the percentage of our exports that must be used for high-value and value-added products, and creates new procedures that will help enforce recently signed international trade agreements.

Finally, the rural development title in the committee-approved bill will give States the flexibility they need to pursue innovative projects to revitalize our small communities by allocating a portion of the funds for State-specific projects.

There are many reasons to be optimistic about the progress achieved to date. These first few provisions address important issues facing our future—beginning farmers, meaningful applied research, expanded trade and new markets. We now need to reenforce the point that if we do not do something about declining farm income in the present, there may not be a future.

We also need to remember that no one gets the prize for a good start. My sights are now set on continuing this initial momentum on through to the finish line. Our goal is a farm bill that will improve net farm income, simplify farm programs and bolster our rural economies. The stakes of this race are nothing less than the future of rural America.

THE DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last year Congress reauthorized and improved several important nutrition programs under the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act. The legislation strengthened access to good nutrition for some of our Nation's most vulnerable children. I was pleased to be a cosponsor of the bill.

As part of that legislation, Congress directed the Department of Agriculture to bring schools into compliance with specified "dietary guidelines" by the 1996-97 school year rather than the 1998-99 school year, as originally stipulated by USDA. These guidelines establish a 30-percent limit on daily dietary fat, and a 10-percent limit on saturated fat.