

Mr. President, that is not what we heard this year. We heard from every commodity group that they were willing to do their fair share in moving us toward that balanced budget, and in so recognizing, they would get greater flexibility in the marketplace to move their cropping programs toward the market with the kind of flexibility and planning, instead of being stuck, if you will, or found in lockstep to farm policy, afraid to lose and therefore afraid of stepping outside that.

We have provided a safety net, and that marketing loan will provide that. The loan will allow farmers a reasonable time period to market their crops. These loans will be stabilized in the market cycle and continue to protect consumers as well as the producer. It will avoid the kind of unnecessary market gyrations.

In crafting these sound programs, the Senate and the House committees worked hard and worked long, together, to solve this issue and to bring us to balance in a very diverse segment of America's economy. And that is American agriculture.

In my State of Idaho, in Florida, in Louisiana, in Colorado, in Montana, and in the Dakotas, sugar, sugar beet and cane raising remains a very important commodity crop. Inside the legislation that was vetoed by the President was, again, a new compromise, a new program, a reduction in the program. Listening to the consumer's side, we made the kind of changes that bring us to the marketplace in a variety of these areas, that allow the producer to say, "I am farming now to the market and not to the farm."

Planning flexibility, as I have already mentioned, could clearly be jeopardized. Traditional nonprogram crops like fruits and vegetables, in my State of Idaho, potatoes, could be thrown in jeopardy if we do not deal with this program and deal with it now.

When we saw in the Freedom to Farm Act limited flexibility, it was the Senate that spoke up and said we want flexibility so farmers can move to the marketplace in lieu of what we want to solve with a balanced budget. At the same time, we want to make sure that we protect a variety of these program crops.

Here we are, not at the 11th hour, not at the 12th hour, but well beyond that, into 1996, with a farm bill that expired on September 30, 1995, with a policy that was cautiously and carefully crafted between both the House and the Senate, put in the Budget Reconciliation Act, sent to the President, and the President vetoed it. Now, the Secretary of Agriculture—and I appreciate the Secretary's problem—is terribly frustrated by a need to conduct farm policy at the same time no law is in place as a result of that Presidential veto.

So I come to the floor tonight in behalf of our Speaker, Leader DOLE, myself, Chairman LUGAR, Chairman COCHRAN, Senator GRASSLEY, and others.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 2491

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that Title I, the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1995, of H.R. 2491, the 7-year Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995, as vetoed by the President, be introduced as a freestanding bill; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be advanced to the third reading and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, all without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object, and I will object.

I would like to comment on the offering by the Senator from Idaho under the reservation, which, as I indicated, will result in an objection to this request.

The Senator from Idaho proposes that we strip from the budget reconciliation bill the cobbled version of the Freedom to Farm Act and bring it to the floor as a separate bill and deem it passed with this action. That is, in my judgment, not a good way to legislate farm policy. It follows last year's circumstances, rather than doing what has traditionally been done with 5-year farm bills. Instead of the development of a bipartisan approach in the Agriculture Committees of the House and Senate, and a markup in which there was bipartisan participation, there was a partisan writing of a farm proposal. It was brought to the committee with this statement, "Here is the proposal. We can have a few votes if you want, but we are all going to vote the same way. This is what we are reporting out." That is what was done last year. This tends, in my judgment, to follow in the same steps.

I am not ascribing any improper motives. The Senator has every right to do this, and I understand the purpose of it. But I am constrained to object, and I intend to offer a unanimous consent request on my time.

Mr. President, at this point I object to the unanimous consent request.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, before the Chair puts the consideration, I would like to explain to the Senate that this would allow the Senate to once again pass the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1995, thereby giving the House their opportunity to once again enact the farm bill. Farmers of this country, as I have already explained, need this legislation now. The President has vetoed it. It is very clear he has vetoed this policy.

I certainly do not agree with my colleague that this has been cobbled up. We have been 5 months in the making of this legislation, in creating these differences. I think we are moving toward planting in the Southern parts of

our country. As I mentioned in my earlier comments, farmers are now sitting down with their bankers to put the farm policy together, or their farming programs together, for the year. And we certainly need legislation at this time.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1523

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise to propound a unanimous consent request, and I shall explain the request.

I introduced earlier today a bill that is now deemed S. 1523 which provides for a 1-year extension of the current farm program. The bill provides for enormous planting flexibility for farmers who operate under this program to allow them to plant what they want on base acres and not having the Government tell them what to plant, when to plant it or where to plant it. So there is substantial flexibility. And third, it would provide for the forgiveness of the advanced deficiency payment for those farmers that suffered crop losses last year.

I will ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of this because I agree with the Senator from Idaho that farmers deserve an answer. They deserve certainty. They deserve to know under what farm program will they be planting in just a matter of weeks in some parts of the country as they begin their spring's work.

I do not believe this is necessarily the best choice. It is not necessarily the best choice. But the piece of legislation that the President vetoed was a budget reconciliation bill which included a farm bill that I described as a cobbled product. The President vetoed a reconciliation bill which took with it a bad farm bill.

Now, why did that occur? Because this is the first time in history that rather than debate a 5-year farm bill on its own merits in this Chamber and the House, the majority party decided to stick the farm bill in the reconciliation bill which by last July people knew was going to be vetoed.

Now, that does not talk about the merits of the farm bill itself. The merits of this farm bill would be to say, "Disconnect the price support programs from need. If market prices are high, ignore that. Still give the farmers the payment. And if after 7 years market prices are low, ignore that. There will be no farm program."

I do not think and did not think this was a good approach. I believe the President thinks it is not a good approach for those who care about having a network of family farms in our country in the long term. That is why we did not support this approach.

It should never have been put in the reconciliation bill in the first place. It was never done previously. Doing so produced the jeopardy that now exists for farmers in January of 1996 in not knowing what the farm program will be for spring planting.

Mr. President, for purposes of trying to provide some certainty, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 1523, a bill I introduced earlier today providing for a 1-year extension of the current farm programs for increased planting flexibility and providing for the forgiveness of the advanced deficiency payment for those who suffered crop loss; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I will object. I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I think the Senator and I speak to the same concern, but there is one thing that has gone on this year that it is important the record reflect—the very extensive hearings, well over 6 months of hearings now on every title of the farm bill. But because we were in a uniquely different situation, and that is we had to deal with the cost and the cost impacts of farm policy, we brought those provisions of what would be a new farm bill to the floor in the budget reconciliation to gain those kinds of savings, to gain the \$15 billion in savings that was necessary.

What the Senator proposes in this extension under the current law would also wreak some peril. There is no question about it. Farmers are being required to repay nearly \$2 billion in 1995 advanced deficiency payments, and I think only in the freedom to farm package do we resolve that issue.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield—

Mr. CRAIG. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. My unanimous consent request specifically includes, as my bill does, the forgiveness of the advanced deficiency payment.

Yes, it does. On page 3.

Mr. CRAIG. Obviously, the Senator does not have page 3 for me. He has a message that is less than legible, and I would like to see the full impact of this.

I must advise the Senator and my friend here that this is not a way to pass substantive legislation. We are dealing with an entire farm package here and it is critically necessary.

I do object. And I do object by the nature of the way this has been presented.

What I am offering and what has been objected to, Mr. President, is a full and complete package that has already been debated on the floor, well disseminated and understood by American agriculture, and I think largely accepted in their recognition of needing to participate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. CRAIG. In light of the objections, and that which has just tran-

spired, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of a bill I now send to the desk which would suspend further implementation of the Permanent Agricultural Law of 1949, that the bill be read for a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, without any intervening action or debate.

I now send that legislation to the desk on behalf of myself, Senator DOLE, Senator LUGAR, and Senator COCHRAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DORGAN. Reserving the right to object. The procedure the Senator from Idaho has just used was one he described about 2 minutes ago as a procedure that is unworthy on the floor of the Senate. That is bringing a bill that has had no hearings and which I have not received. So I do not quite understand the consistency here. But, nonetheless, repealing the underlying farm legislation, the Permanent Farm Act of 1949 makes no sense under any conditions given the circumstance we are in now.

We find ourselves in late January with no farm policy except an underlying permanent law. The reason I assume that some want to get rid of the permanent law—and they would get rid of the permanent law in the Freedom to Farm Act—is because they believe in the long term there ought not be a farm program, there ought not be a safety net for family farmers.

That is the reason this provision existed in the Freedom to Farm Act. It is one of the reasons I opposed the Freedom to Farm Act. I think there ought to be a farm program to provide some basic safety net for a family out there that is struggling with a few acres. Farm families are trying to make a living with twin risks: one, planting a seed that you do not know whether it will grow, and, second, if it grows you do not know whether you will get a price. Those risks are impossible for family farmers to overcome in circumstances where international grain prices dip and stay down.

The proposal being offered is a recipe for deciding we do not need family farms, what we need are agrifactories. So I cannot support that. I am here because I care about family farms, care about their future, and want them to have a decent opportunity to succeed.

I do not impugn the motives of anyone, and especially the Senator from Idaho. I am sure he wants the same thing for family farmers but probably finds a different way to achieve that. But I cannot support anyone who believes we ought not be left with some basic safety net for farm families out there who are struggling against those twin risks. So I am constrained to object to the unanimous-consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, before the Chair rules, let me explain why I pre-

sented this legislation. It is detailed in the sense of the titles of the law of 1949 that it would repeal. Obviously, in hearing from the Secretary of Agriculture, he, by the action of his own President in vetoing the Budget Reconciliation Act that laid farm policy out in it, is in a tremendous quandary at this moment. He has to implement a very cumbersome and costly law, the provisions of the 1949 Agricultural Adjustment Act. It does not fit modern-day agriculture.

I am sure the Senator from North Dakota and I are extremely concerned about family farms. We have worked together on that issue on the Agriculture Committee of the Senate in an effort to resolve those problems. I do not impugn his intention nor do I believe he impugns mine. But clearly we need policy. Policy has been created. Policy has been passed by this Congress. And policy has been vetoed by this President, the very kind of policy that would have created the certainty, that would have avoided the kind of frustrations that the Senator and I are involved in right now.

So by action here tonight I have attempted to say that which has been worked on should be freestanding legislation, that we ought to have a right to vote up or down on it, and that I hope then that the President would sign it. It certainly offers the kind of budgetary savings that he has offered in the cuts in discretionary spending and at the same time it allows the flexibility to avoid the downsizing of purely a budget-driven farm policy.

It allows the flexibility of a market-driven farm policy that protects American agriculture, that certainly protects the family farm, but also recognizes that they too are businesses that have to compete like everybody else in the small business sector of our society. It does provide a safety net, but it does set together a plan, a 7-year plan that allows them to create and move into the market away from simply farming to the program.

If there is one thing I heard from Idaho agriculture and that I heard from Midwestern agriculture, it is "Give us the flexibility so we don't find ourselves totally constrained to a farm program that may not be all that profitable."

I laughed a bit this afternoon when there were my colleagues coming to the floor talking about the freedom to farm as a welfare program. When we talk about welfare, one of the phrases that has always gotten used is that we provide a safety net to the recipient. Yet the record shows that the words "safety net" were oftentimes used by my colleagues as they decried the idea of a welfare program.

Offering stability, offering baseline, and at the same time offering movement into the market is not welfare. And nobody that is a producer and a hard worker out there that I know in my State that is a farmer or rancher is going to argue they are a recipient of a