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 transpired, 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 presented 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

welfare program, whether it be the Freedom to Farm Act or whether it be current policy.

Mr. President, we need action. This President needs to act. He needs to come to the table to work with us on a balanced budget and in so doing to be able to craft and move or resolve the issue that we are currently involved in that has brought real stalemate to the agricultural communities of our country.

That is why I propounded these two very important unanimous consent requests this afternoon, to see if it would not move our President off center and allow flexibility, both for the Senate and for our Secretary, to get on with the business of telling American agriculture what they can expect in the coming crop year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President. Actually the words ''safety net'' came from President Ronald Reagan who described a series of programs that represented the safety net, an important one of which is Social Security. I do not expect anyone here would make the case that Social Security is welfare or that Ronald Reagan meant that Social Security was welfare. That is a program workers pay into and at some point get some returns when they reach retirement.

So to use the words ''safety net,'' using the term of President Reagan, was to refer to the opportunity to try to provide some help for people who need some help through a series of programs, some of which might be welfare but many of which were not, including Social Security which is not a welfare program and the farm program which was never a welfare program.

EXTENDING THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would propose one additional unanimous-consent request and am constrained, I guess, not to offer the third. I felt that as long as we were offering unanimous consent requests, the most logical-unanimous consent request is to come here and say, well, let us at least now understand that Friday we have a CR that needs extension or we will have a shutdown.

The shutdown, it seems to me, is an example of what we have been through a couple of times, of poking taxpayers in the eye by saying, ''You pay for a couple hundred thousand people that will be prevented from coming to work, and we insist you pay for them,'' and then dangle Federal workers in front of this debate and say, ''By the way, you're the pawns we're going to use.''

If we have not been cured of Government shutdowns and the chaos that comes by using CR's as some kind of a line in the sand here where everybody else pays but nobody else suffers, if we have not cured ourselves of that apparently there is no cure for what ails us.

My urge is to offer a CR that says, let us extend the CR that expires on Friday at a minimum of 2 weeks, but I shall not do that. I will not do that in deference to the leadership. I think if one were to do this sort of thing, one would want to notify the leadership.

So my urge is to want to do this, and maybe sometime I will, as long as someone else comes out wanting to offer unanimous-consent requests. But I will not do that in deference to the leadership today.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. DORGAN. I will offer one additional unanimous-consent request. It does deal specifically with something that I know the Senator from Idaho cares about because he raised it a few minutes ago. He was concerned I did not include it in my legislation. That is some forgiveness of the advanced crops deficiency payments for 1995.

My legislation on page 3, which I introduced earlier today, and is at the desk, provides for the forgiveness of certain advanced deficiency payments for those crop producers who suffered a loss.

The Senator from Idaho raised that. I know he cares about it and I care about it. If we cannot pass the entire bill, let us at least pass that entire provision that both of us care about and both of us think should be passed. The forgiveness of the advanced deficiency payments is critically important to a lot of family farm producers out there. We do not need a large debate about that. Let us go ahead and do this.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of a bill to provide for forgiveness of 1995 advance crop deficiency payments, as I described, and that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). Is there objection?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have to object this evening. Maybe this is the kind of legislation that we could include in the CR this coming Friday. I think the Senator from North Dakota and I both know well that we are going to have to deal with a continuing resolution come Friday; that we are not going to shut the Government down anymore; that the President does not want to shut the Government down anymore.

At least out of all of this budget discussion that has gone on for the last good number of weeks, both the executive branch and the legislative branch have come to that conclusion, and I agree that that is the proper conclusion.

The Senator brings up an important point, that is why I brought it up, because it was not in his original unanimous consent, and I had hoped that we be thorough in dealing with this issue. I am glad the Senator has brought it up. It is a question of great concern. It is a repayment of nearly $2 billion of advance deficiency payments.

I hope that we can resolve this issue, but it is not a separate issue to be resolved tonight. I think the Senator has brought it to the floor with just intention, and because he has raised the issue to the level of visibility that he does tonight, I hope that maybe that is something we will consider as we deal with final resolution toward the end of the week of a continuing resolution, but I do object at this time.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I know it is technical, but I did include that in my first unanimous-consent request. It was something I mentioned in connection with three provisions in the UC that I offered. But I observe, this is not a rider that needs a horse. This is a provision that does not need to wait for Friday. It does not need to wait for next July. It does not need to wait for something else that is moving. It can be done any time.

The reason I offer it is, I would like to see an extension of the current farm bill for a year with the provisions I suggested. If that is not possible, I would like to see us decide to tell farmers what is possible. It ought to be possible for us to deal with the forgiveness of advance deficiency payments. It does not, as I said, need something else coming along to jump on. This is not a cargo looking for a train. This is an idea we ought to advance.

I encourage us, if we cannot do it tonight, let us do it tomorrow. If we cannot do it tomorrow, let us do it the next day.

The one thing I suggest to the Senator from Idaho, when we talk about continuing appropriations and shutdowns—I am delighted there will not be any more shutdowns, and I pray there will not be, because I do not think it serves anyone's interest. Nobody wins. The way we are able to avoid that is the way we are able to convince everybody in this Capitol Building on all sides that they cannot use this as leverage any longer; they cannot threaten someone over a CR—''If you don't have this, we won't enact a CR''—and that is what results in a shutdown.

Let me say, I understand the objection. I expected the objection. My hope is that perhaps tomorrow—I do not know if anybody will be doing unanimous-consent requests tomorrow, but if we do, I have a number of good ideas. This is one of them, and I would like this idea to sort of lead the parade here. We should do the things that both of us would agree on, that both of us think are important for our farmers, that both of us believe would represent good policy. If that is the case, let both of us do it together, either now or tomorrow morning.

I guess since there is an objection now, maybe we can talk about it again tomorrow. Again, I understand exactly what has happened. This, one way or another, needs to get resolved.

The Senator from Nebraska was on the floor, the Senator from Iowa, the