

engine that runs our rural communities, and it is an essential component of a stable and productive America.

Despite these challenges, I am hopeful for our Nation's producers and believe that several factors, including our farmers' own persistence and dedication, will contribute to their future successes in the industry. While we continue to struggle with budgetary constraints, I do believe that we will be successful in ensuring that money is allocated for small and medium-sized producers. We must make certain that our Nation's family farms, which comprise the majority of producers, have sufficient access to agriculture funds. The adoption of an amendment to this year's Budget Resolution, which I supported, would alter payment limitations and cap excessive compensation to large farms. This money would instead be channeled toward worthwhile and essential conservation and development programs, which are beneficial to producers in South Dakota and across the Nation.

I also believe that fair trade is necessary to ensure our farmers get a fair deal and a fair price for their product. Too often, the market price a farmer receives for his or her product doesn't reflect the financial and personal investment that a producer makes during the growing season and throughout the year. I am confident that new opportunities, like the recently announced trade with China involving quality South Dakota wheat, will open new doors and foster additional opportunities. I also believe that increasing awareness of the negative impacts of some trade agreements, including the Free Trade Agreement with Australia, will aid us in developing a firm base to oppose such measures and encourage more productive trading possibilities.

Lastly, I am confident that Country of Origin Labeling, COOL, will greatly benefit our agriculture economy, in addition to increasing consumer confidence and choice. While opponents of the COOL labeling provision were successful in delaying implementation of the law for 2 years, American consumers and producers remain incredibly supportive of mandatory labeling. Every consumer public opinion survey confirms that consumers would pay a modestly higher price for beef if they were certain it was American beef. I contacted the United States Department of Agriculture, USDA, in December, requesting clarification of the department's interpretation of the language delaying implementation of COOL. While I strongly oppose this delay, I also believe the department needs to clarify the rulemaking process. The USDA's response to my inquiries was vague and unclear, which I find unsatisfactory. I intend to seek clarification of the rule pertaining to the delay while also actively working on opportunities to speed up implementation of this law. Along with my colleague Senator TOM DASCHLE, I am pleased to have worked so extensively

on this initiative, and I am confident in the future of this quality provision.

America's farmers produce quality products, which are recognized the world-over. It is essential that we function as a united team to promote these products in today's ever-changing agricultural environment, and ensure that family farmers in South Dakota and across the nation are recognized and adequately compensated for their substantial contributions.●

RECOGNIZING EMILY NEUMEIER AND CHRISTINE BANKS

● Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate two exceptional high school students from my home State of Florida. Just this March, Emily Neumeier of Tampa and Christine Banks of St. Petersburg were selected from a competitive pool of 800 participants as winners in a nationwide "If I Were President Competition . . ." These two young scholars were among 50 award-winners who each received a \$1,000 scholarship from the contest sponsor Freedom's Answer—a student-run, nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that increases civic participation among youth. I would like to commend the contest organizers, entry evaluators, participants and winners for involving youth in politics and contributing to the well-being of American democracy. Again, I would like to recognize Emily and Christine for a job well done and wish them all the best in the future. Maybe one of them will even be President one day.●

HONORING DONNA PETERSON AND SALLY STOLL

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise here today to publicly honor and recognize Donna Peterson and Sally Stoll for receiving the 2003 Presidential Award for excellence in Mathematics and Science teaching, the Nation's highest commendation for work in the classroom. Donna Peterson won the math award for sharing her innovative teaching approaches with the students at Belle Fourche High School. Sally Stoll won the science award for her knowledge and passion on the subject and the ability to inspire her student's at Vermillion High School.

The National Science Foundation, NSF, administers the awards program for the White House. NSF is an independent Federal agency that supports research and education across all fields of science. Since 1983, the White House and NSF have sought nominations of exemplary math and science teachers from every State. In addition to honoring their achievement, the goal of the awards is to expand the definition of excellent science and mathematics teaching exemplified by Donna Peterson and Sally Stoll.

These two teachers have provided us with excellent examples of quality teaching. They have a passion for their

subjects and dedication to their students. They know how to bring out the very best in every student, in every kind of school. The national award-winning teachers overwhelmingly agree that students frequently respond best to lessons that relate to recognizable phenomena from their own lives, or that allow for hands-on learning. They have observed that an engaging teaching style prompts students to pose their own questions, test their own theories, and arrive at their own solutions, with the teacher serving as a facilitator and guide.

Research indicates that nothing is so important in raising student achievement as a good teacher; not top notch equipment, not Internet access, not family income level. Those things are helpful, we know, but it's the teachers themselves that are the "make or break" link between students and educational success.

United States student performance in mathematics and science has been lagging, and many schools are experiencing shortages of math and science teachers. Donna and Sally are constantly searching for meaningful ways to spark the learning process. In doing so, they will have continued to inspire their students in such a way that it will have enriched them for the rest of their lives. If you are lucky, you'll have a chance to experience at least one such teacher in your lifetime.

I congratulate Donna Peterson and Sally Stoll on this tremendous honor. Their dedication to the teaching field in South Dakota serves as a model for all educators to emulate. It is with great honor that I share their impressive accomplishments with my colleagues.●

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CENTER FOR FIRESAFETY STUDIES

● Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the Center for Firesafety Studies at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts as it celebrates its 25th Anniversary.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute was founded in 1865 to support the new industrial economy that was developing in Central Massachusetts in the 19th century. Its founders believed in merging theory and practice as part of the ongoing effort to deal with changing needs of our society. Over the years, the university has earned international respect for its innovations in engineering education and its responsiveness to a changing world.

In the 1960s, fire safety in America was a priority in Congress. The Fire Research and Safety Act in 1968 called for a national study of the issue, which resulted in the landmark report known as America Burning. Among its findings, America Burning emphasized that, "Appallingly, the richest and most technologically advanced nation in the world leads all the major industrialized countries in per capita deaths and property loss from fire."