

REMARKS OF
SENATOR BOB DOLE
NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S ASSN.
YOUNG CATTLEMEN'S CONF.
JUNE 10, 1992

INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU. IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE ABLE TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH YOUR GROUP THIS MORNING, AND I'M GLAD TO SEE A NUMBER OF FELLOW KANSANS IN THE GROUP.

--STEVE MANGAN, TRIBUNE; 1992 CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

--JOE SCOTT, SUBLETTE; MANAGER, SUBLETTE FEEDERS

--TOM BRINK, ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO; MARKET ANALYST, CATTLE FAX
(NATIVE KANSAN AND ATTENDED K-STATE)

LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

AS MANY OF YOU ARE WELL AWARE, THE CHANCES OF CONGRESS TAKING FINAL ACTION ON ANY AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION THIS YEAR ARE BECOMING SLIMMER WITH EVERY PASSING WEEK. DEPENDING UPON YOUR POINT OF VIEW, THAT SHOULD BE A PRETTY POSITIVE OUTLOOK.

HOWEVER, THAT'S NOT TO SAY THAT THERE AREN'T THINGS THAT WE COULD DO THAT MIGHT POSITIVELY IMPACT AMERICAN AGRICULTURE. THE OPPORTUNITY TO RATIFY A GOOD GATT AGREEMENT COMES TO MIND, AS WELL AS A PROGRESSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PACKAGE THAT DOESN'T REST ON THE EMPTY POLITICAL RHETORIC OF CLASS WARFARE, BUT FOCUSES INSTEAD ON POLICIES THAT PROMOTE INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH -
- GROWTH THAT BENEFITS EVERYBODY.

REALISTICALLY, EITHER ONE OF THOSE OBJECTIVES WOULD BE A LOFTY GOAL EVEN IN A NON-ELECTION YEAR, BUT SOME ISSUES -- SUCH AS THOSE I JUST MENTIONED -- ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO SIMPLY DISMISS.

GATT

REGARDING THE GATT, I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE RUMBLINGS OF PROGRESS THAT IS REPORTEDLY OCCURRING IN GENEVA -- ALTHOUGH WATCHING FOR GATT DEVELOPMENTS IS A LOT LIKE WATCHING PAINT DRY.

IT DOES SEEM TO ME THAT THE "DUNKEL TEXT" PROVIDES A FAIRLY BALANCED STARTING POINT, BUT WE'VE GOT TO SEE A LOT MORE HEADWAY IN TERMS OF MARKET ACCESS AND BREAKING DOWN EXPORT SUBSIDIES BEFORE THE DOCUMENT WINS ANY FRIENDS IN THE SENATE. THE BEEF INDUSTRY CAN BOAST OF A NUMBER OF SUCCESS STORIES IN OPENING UP FOREIGN MARKETS IN RECENT YEARS, BUT OUR COMPETITORS' CONTINUED

USE OF TARIFFS, FLAWED SCIENCE AND BOGUS PUBLIC-HEALTH SCARE TACTICS TO KEEP THE U.S. OUT OF THEIR MARKET IS COSTING EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.

THE LATEST MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT BUSH AND JACQUES DELORS ONLY SEEMED TO HIGHLIGHT THOSE DIFFERENCES THAT REMAIN, BUT I AM PLEASED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS PLACED SO MUCH PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THESE TALKS THAT ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.

I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THESE NEGOTIATIONS TAKING PLACE AT THE PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL DURING AN ELECTION YEAR -- AND YOU HEAR A LOT OF MIXED SIGNALS FROM VARIOUS CABINET-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. BUT I THINK THAT THE RECENT DECISION TO RETALIATE AGAINST THE EC IN THE SECTION 301 SOYBEAN CASE IS AN INDICATION THAT PRESIDENT BUSH IS HOLDING THE LINE AND THAT HE ALSO HAD HIS EAR OPEN AND HEARD MY RECENT ADVISE -- "NO AGREEMENT IS STILL BETTER THAN A BAD AGREEMENT."

FOOD SAFETY

ANOTHER ISSUE THAT CONGRESS CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH -- AND ONE WHICH COULD STAND TO DIRECTLY IMPACT THE WAY MANY OF YOUR DO BUSINESS -- IS FOOD SAFETY.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE PRIMARY STUMBLING BLOCK CONTINUES TO BE THE DETERMINATION BY SOME MEMBERS TO LEGISLATE ON THE BASIS OF FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN, RATHER THAN ON SCIENCE AND COMMON SENSE.

I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT SOME OF THE RIGID PROPOSALS FLOATING AROUND WOULD HAVE -- NOT JUST UPON FARMERS, RANCHERS AND THE FOOD INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE -- BUT ALSO UPON THE AVERAGE AMERICAN WHO DEPENDS UPON AND EXPECTS A SAFE, DIVERSE, AND AFFORDABLE FOOD SUPPLY.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A RESPONSIBLE PIECE OF LEGISLATION PENDING IN THE HOUSE, BUT WE STILL FACE AN UPHILL BATTLE -- AND THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF ALL OF YOU INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION WILL BE VITAL TO ENSURE THAT COMMON SENSE PREVAILS.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS HAVE A BUSY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

AND COMMON SENSE NEEDS TO BE A CENTRAL THEME IN ANY ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED THIS YEAR -- AND, I ASSURE YOU, THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF "GREEN" LEGISLATION.

SPEAKING OF ONE AREA HIGH ON YOUR ISSUE LIST, THE DEBATE OVER A NATIONAL WETLANDS POLICY IS STILL WAITING IN THE WINGS, AND YOU CAN BET THAT THE LAND-USE REGULATORS ARE UP AND READY FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

CLOSELY RELATED TO THE DEBATE OVER WETLANDS DELINEATION AND CONSERVATION IS THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT. I DON'T NEED TO RUN DOWN A LIST OF THE PROVISIONS BEING DISCUSSED WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY IMPACT THE CATTLE INDUSTRY, BUT MANY OF THEM REPRESENT SOMETHING THAT WE'LL BE SEEING MORE OF IN THE FUTURE -- MANDATORY CONTROLS. IN THE PAST, MOST CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS AND REGULATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE TIED TO PARTICIPATION IN COMMODITY PROGRAMS, FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE AND THE LIKE. BUT, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE MISPERCEPTIONS CAST ABOUT BY THOSE IN THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY -- WHO RELY UPON ADVERSARIAL TACTICS TO KEEP THE MEDIA HANGING ON THEIR EVERY WORD -- WE'RE SEEING AGRICULTURE GROUPS LOSING A LOT OF THEIR CLOUT TO URBAN, CONSUMER-ORIENTED GROUPS WHO, UNFORTUNATELY, HAVE BEEN SPOON-FED A VERY DISTORTED VIEW OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.

STILL, AGRICULTURE DOES HOLD A FEW "TRUMP" CARDS -- WITH THE WHITE HOUSE WORKING FOR SOME NEEDED REVISIONS TO THE WETLANDS MANUAL AND WITH SOME FAIRLY BALANCED ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION PENDING IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE -- BUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY SEEMS TO STILL HOLD ALL THE "JOKERS" WHO WANT TO TELL YOU HOW TO FARM AND USE YOUR LAND.

NEED FOR A BALANCE

ALL IN ALL, I THINK IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT WHETHER THE SUBJECT IS WETLANDS, CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR OR PESTICIDE REGULATION, WE NEED TO BRING A SENSE OF BALANCE TO THE DEBATE AND LET THE WORLD KNOW WHAT FARMERS AND RANCHERS -- AS PIONEER ENVIRONMENTALISTS -- ARE DOING ON A DAILY BASIS TO PRESERVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES WITHOUT THE HEAVY-HANDED PRESENCE OF FEDERAL MANDATES.

THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY HAS DONE A LOT TO THAT END, BUT AGRICULTURE AS A COMMUNITY WILL HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE PROACTIVE AND MORE VISIBLE AS THESE KINDS OF ISSUES ARE REPEATEDLY CAST BEFORE THE PUBLIC EYE. AND TO THAT END, I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE LEADERS IN THIS ROOM AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS WE TACKLE THESE ISSUES IN THE FUTURE.

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