

have incurred these losses through no fault of their own.

Congress also has not responded effectively to the crisis facing many farms because of the sustained low prices of most commodities. This is the second year in a row that substantial Federal assistance has been needed above and beyond our regular farm programs.

Now, while these additional funds have been absolutely critical, the very fact that we've needed them points out the underlying flaws in the 1996 farm bill. For all its positive features, that bill simply did not do enough to help our farmers and ranchers cope in crisis. It doesn't give the USDA the tools it needs to help farmers and ranchers thrive in the short and long term. It doesn't direct payments to where they're most needed. And it's providing payments to those who aren't even farming anymore.

The bottom line is this: We need to revise, revamp, and improve the 1996 farm bill. It is not providing adequate support that our farmers need to prosper. So once again, I urge Congress to work to fix the farm bill permanently so American farmers can have an adequate safety net, just as the Vice President and I have worked hard to reinvent Government and give Government more impact and more effective-

ness, even though we have the smallest Federal Government since 1962. We must take those kinds of steps, the necessary steps to rewrite this flawed farm legislation. The men and women who work every day to give us the world's most affordable and abundant food supply deserve nothing less.

So this is not a perfect piece of legislation, but I am signing it because our farmers are facing a true emergency and they can't wait. Their livelihoods, in some cases their very survival depend upon getting this bill signed and assistance delivered now.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that our farmers are the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed. We must strengthen and support our farms and farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history and will into the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-78. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

## Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000 *October 22, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1906, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

The Act provides \$14.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides \$8.6 billion in emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering through the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop and livestock losses from severe

drought and flooding. My Administration will work hard to ensure that these funds are distributed to farm families as soon as possible; however, because the Congress wrote some of the programs in a complex manner, farmers and ranchers need to understand that, for my Administration to implement them fairly, some of the assistance will take some time to provide. This is the second year in a row that substantial additional Federal assistance has been needed, on top of our regular farm programs, due to deficiencies in the 1996 Farm Bill—further evidence that the 1996 Act simply does not provide an adequate farm safety net.

I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act I have signed today is

provided through supplemental Farm Bill income support payments, and therefore is not targeted to producers most in need. These payments are made based on past production, which may have no relation to the crops grown or the market situation facing producers this year, and in some cases payments are made to individuals who are no longer farming. There is now, however, an urgent need for farm assistance, and so I have approved H.R. 1906. But I once again call on the Congress to work with my Administration to fix the 1996 Farm Bill permanently so American producers have the assurance of an adequate farm income safety net, while they continue their work to feed us all.

While the Act's funding for crop and livestock losses from natural disasters has been increased over the amount in the Senate bill, it still will not adequately meet the devastating farm losses in many parts of the country. In addition, H.R. 1906 cuts farm loans by 25 percent from last year, which is simply untenable as we head into a crop year when farmers and lenders alike are saying that they will need even more Federal financing help than last year. The Act also does not include emergency conservation funds to help farmers and rural communities affected by Hurricane Floyd to clear their fields and streams of debris and restore their small waterways. My Administration will work in the remaining days of this session of Congress to secure funding for these and other urgent, unmet needs. In addition, I have asked the Vice President to work with the Department of Agriculture to implement, within existing authorities, measures to improve the operation of various conservation programs.

The additional crop insurance subsidies provided in the Act will help producers afford higher coverage next year, but I call on the Congress to pass long-term crop insurance reform before adjourning this year, to improve this important component of the farm safety net.

The Congress has not provided the full amount of my requested increase for the WIC program, thereby failing to ensure that we can achieve the goal of full participation of 7.5 million women, infants, and children in this vital program. I also remain opposed to the provision that modifies the nonimmigrant farm worker program, known as the H-2A program, because it virtually eliminates the credibility of the recruitment process that protects legal U.S. farm

workers. The Act also makes significant cuts in a number of high-priority conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, and fails to fully fund implementation of the Clean Water Action Plan and important bioenergy and bioproducts research and development. In addition, the Act fails to fund the Farmland Protection Program, a valuable conservation program that has received bipartisan support in the past and would have prevented the conversion of farmland and the loss of a way of life in rural communities.

I am concerned that the Act frustrates initiatives to improve customer service in USDA county offices, for example by blocking the Secretary of Agriculture's new Support Services Bureau designed to modernize administrative functions, at a time when farmers and rural residents truly need upgraded assistance. Since the first days of my Administration, the Vice President and I have made improved customer service and greater administrative efficiency a top priority, which we will continue to pursue at the USDA.

I am concerned that, with the exception of the school breakfast pilot projects, H.R. 1906 prohibits the use of Food and Nutrition Service funds for research and evaluation of nutrition programs. The research needs of these important programs should continue to be addressed in the context of the programs' administration. I am asking the Secretary of Agriculture to look into this matter and to work with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on the most effective approach to address my concerns.

I am pleased that the Act provides significant rural development loans and grants to help our rural communities diversify economically and improve their quality of life. The Act also includes a significant portion of the increase I requested for my Food Safety Initiative to reduce food-borne illnesses. In addition, the Act establishes mandatory livestock price reporting for certain meat processors, which will expand information to livestock producers and particularly will help smaller producers improve their ability to get a fair price in the marketplace. However, I am concerned with the Act's preemption of State price reporting requirements, which is compounded by the lack of funding

in the Act to implement the new Federal requirements. My Administration will seek additional funding for these purposes.

There are a number of provisions in the Act that may raise Constitutional issues. These provisions will be treated in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution.

- Section 722 of the Act specifies that funds may not be used to provide to any non-Department of Agriculture employee questions or responses to questions resulting from the appropriations hearing process. To the extent that this provision would interfere with my duty to “take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed,” or impede my ability to act as the chief executive, it would violate the constitution, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Section 735 of the Act purports to constrain my ability to make a particular type of budget recommendation to the Con-

gress. This provision would interfere with my constitutional duty under the Recommendation Clause, and I will treat it as advisory.

- Finally, there are provisions in the Act that purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
October 22, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106–78.

## Remarks at the White House Conference on Philanthropy *October 22, 1999*

Thank you, and good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome all of you here. I thank all those who are here from our Government and all of you who have come from all over our country and all walks of life to this very, very important meeting.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Hillary for yet another wonderful idea—this was a good idea to have this conference—and all of you who have helped on any of these Millennium Projects. I think it’s done us a lot of good to take time out and think about the really big issues in our society and how we want them to play out in the years ahead. And particularly, I think this is an important issue at an important moment.

A long time ago, Alexis de Tocqueville said that charity in America was something more than simple compassion; it was a sign of good citizenship. He wrote, “Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare. They hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to one another.”

Today, this is a strong tradition, and the face of this tradition is changing. Philanthropy is, like

our country, now more diverse as new groups seize and share opportunity in the new economy. It is more democratic, as Americans of all income levels, believe it or not, give at roughly equal levels. It is younger, as the high-tech economy creates a new generation of philanthropists.

I’ve got to take a little time out. Last night, I had dinner with a lot of these high-tech gurus who made allowances for the fact that I am obviously technologically challenged. [Laughter] And we were talking about how we were all going to relate to each other and maximize the potential of the information age. And I started talking about this conference today, and I said, “We’ve got to get more people to give.” I said, “I would like it if Internet usage were as dense in America as telephone usage is, if we had 98 percent penetration, everybody had an E-mail address. I think we could have a dramatic impact on education and on poverty. I think we could skip a whole generation of development. And how are we going to get this done?”

So there is this guy standing there. He’s 27 years old, you know. He says, “Well, you know,