

## Radio Remarks on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

Today, as provided for in the agriculture appropriations bill I signed last week, I am designating \$8.8 billion in emergency assistance to our Nation's farmers and ranchers. This assistance will hasten payments to farmers who are recovering from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

This is only a one-year temporary fix for the overall problems facing our farmers. They are the lifeblood of our land. Again I call on the

Congress to enact a permanent fix to the severe shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 6:20 p.m. on October 28 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

## Statement on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

I am pleased today to designate \$8.8 billion in emergency assistance for our Nation's farmers and ranchers, to help them recover from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

While this assistance will not adequately address all of the needs in our farm-based communities, I have taken this step in order to hasten payments to farmers and ranchers who simply cannot wait for the legislative improvements we have sought. I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act is not targeted to producers most in need.

As with last year's disaster assistance, these funds provide only a one-year, temporary fix for the overall problems with the farm safety net. That is why I call on the Congress to enact a permanent fix to the shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill. A major step toward that goal can be achieved this year through crop insurance reform legislation if the Congress will act.

I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Glickman for his work on behalf of American agriculture. I know he and his staff are hard at work right now setting the process in place so that most of the payments will be available within just a few weeks.

## Remarks on Medical Records Privacy and an Exchange With Reporters

October 29, 1999

*The President.* Thank you, Secretary Shalala. I would like to thank you for all the work that you and so many people in your Department have done on this issue. I thank the representatives of the various groups who are here with me today for their concern for, and commitment to, the issue of medical records privacy. These health care and consumer advocates support what we are trying to do to protect the sanctity

of medical records. I believe the American people will support us as well.

Every American has a right to know that his or her medical records are protected at all times from falling into the wrong hands. And yet, more and more of our medical records are stored electronically, and as they have been stored electronically the threats to our privacy have substantially increased. So has the sense