

I strongly urge my colleagues to speedily approve this bill so it can be reconciled with the House bill and be completed as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I am pleased to join many of my colleagues today in support of S. 2251, the crop insurance reform bill. Senator GRAMS spoke most eloquently on the issue and of its importance. He has certainly led the issue, along with a good many other of our colleagues who brought us to this point of shaping the legislation and bringing it to the floor.

I thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Senator LUGAR, for recognizing the issue and the need for the legislation. While he didn't agree with all that is in S. 2251, he recognized its importance. He recognized the importance of building a compromise, as we were able to do in the committee.

At this time, I am proud to join not only the chairman but certainly my good friend, Senator ROBERTS, and Senator KERREY, who really led the issues that are found and embodied in S. 2251.

There is no question that reform of the Federal Crop Insurance Program was not only a necessity but it was an obligation. It was a promise that we in the Senate and the House made to America's production agriculture when we moved to the new agricultural policy embodied in the current farm bill, Freedom to Farm. We said not only would we free up individual farmers to produce for the market absent specific Federal programs but we would provide them with the necessary tools to compete. One of them would be a risk management tool—crop insurance—so they could use it against downturns in the market or certain environmental circumstances such as drought, frost, or floods that might impede their ability to produce or destroy the very crop they planted in the ground.

We also said we would look at the trade issue, and obviously the sanctions our Government had placed against certain potential markets across the world. We addressed that last year in the Senate. We will address it again this year. If we can pass the sanctions legislation and it becomes law, and if S. 2251 becomes law, then we will have completed a package that was promised a good number of years ago to our farmers and ranchers across this country.

The bill before us addresses several concerns farmers in my State and I have had about crop insurance. The bill provides increased subsidies for a greater buy-up of the crop insurance; funding for research and development of specialty crop insurance, which is critically important; removal of the noninsured assistance program, better

known as NAP, area trigger which was a true impediment in past Federal crop insurance programs; and several other items.

Let me explain the uniqueness of Idaho agriculture.

There are sometimes two or three crop components to our large Midwestern agricultural producing areas. Idaho's great agricultural economy is based on minor crops and nontraditional crops. We know about Idaho's potatoes. But we oftentimes don't know about Idaho's winter peas, or our trout, or our seed peas, or our lentils, or our sugar beets, or our barley, or our mint.

Many people don't recognize that I have one of the most diverse agricultural counties in the Nation that produces large quantities of seeds for sweet corn, carrots, onions, celery, and all of those kinds of things you would not expect a State such as Idaho to grow, but we do because of our unique environment and our ability to control moisture through irrigation, and, as a result, creating the ideal situation for the growing of some of these seed crops. These are all minor crops and high-value crops that are sensitive to certain environmental or market downturns.

Current Federal crop insurance does not always provide for them. This legislation not only provides for the research to move us in that area, but it removes the NAP area trigger that was very prohibitive.

That is why I have worked with Senator KERREY and Senator ROBERTS to include a provision to reform the Noninsured Assistance Program, or NAP, in this amendment. NAP is used by farmers who grow these "specialty" or "minor" crops across our Nation. This legislation removes the area trigger and makes it a much more workable proposition for farmers in my State.

I often hear from farmers who are frustrated that crop insurance does not exist for our many specialty crops. It is why my farmers don't use it at the rate other producers across the country do.

This legislation should move us in the direction of creating another risk management tool for Idaho's agricultural production. I hope we can accomplish that. This legislation specifically encourages the development of specialty crop produce and allows the risk management agency to partner with entities to develop new crop insurance products. The bill also inverts the subsidy formula to make higher levels of coverage more affordable to farmers. These changes will speed new products to the market and make crop insurance a real risk management tool. These changes will help farmers protect crops against the disasters that oftentimes hit.

I once farmed and ranched. I remember one day standing at the window of my farm and ranch home watching a hailstorm wipe out 200 acres of the most beautiful barley crop I had ever raised. But I was fearful that year that

we were going to have hailstorms, and this was a unique crop. This was a seed crop, and a high-volume crop because it was a new, hydrosized barley. I had it insured. While I was rather fearful of the destruction of crop, as I watched it, I also knew I had protected my investment. I had done the right thing. It was a tool that was available in the market at that time, and it was affordable.

That was 25 years ago. Today, that tool doesn't exist at the level of affordability that it did in those days. As a result, farmers have walked away from crop insurance and have oftentimes during disastrous circumstances simply turned toward Washington to say to those of us who serve here: Help us.

What we are saying today with this legislation on the floor of the Senate is: Agriculture, help yourself. We are providing you with the ultimate of risk management tools, so you should not have to rely on a Federal Government to bail you out of a circumstance that is beyond your control. We give you the option, and we want you to use the option, providing for yourself as a stand-alone, private entrepreneurial entity of this economy.

This bill, however, provides a provision that concerns me, and it concerns the cattle producers of my State. The provision is federally-subsidized revenue insurance for livestock production. This could disrupt markets by masking market signals and create dependency on subsidies that could stimulate overproduction and create perverse incentives for producers who are striving to make sound, market-oriented management decisions.

The livestock industry of our Nation has never turned to the Federal Government to help them. They have received in situations of drought sometimes feed assistance, but there has been no program in the past that simply provided a level of stability to their income as has been true of other commodities produced by the agricultural sector. They are inherently worried about a Federal program that might create or cause market incentives that are not true to the livestock or beef industry market.

The beef industry is recovering now from a market downturn of the past few years. Relative to other segments of agriculture, the beef industry works unobstructed by Government pricing and direct payments to producers and other controls. This allows beef producers to make decisions about their own enterprises without having to worry about what Congress will do about the program or to the program. Cattle ranchers tell me they like it that way although it is sometimes very tough. I would like to see the beef industry continue down the path toward an open market approach, unstifled by any form of government involvement in their situation.

I hope in conference with the House we might work out this livestock provision in a way that will not create a preferred market incentive.

In my view, S. 2251 does the most for specialty crops and minor crop insurance of any proposal I have seen to date. Once again, I want to thank Senator ROBERTS, Senator KERREY, Senator LUGAR, and others who have directed a tremendous amount of their energy to resolving the issue of Federal crop insurance by presenting the legislation now before the Senate. I hope we will have a sizable vote on it tomorrow and that we can move it to conference with the House to work out our differences and put it on the President's desk at the earliest possible date.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ICAO NOISE STANDARDS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I don't think there has been anyone in this body who has been more critical of the administration for the things that have taken place, for what has happened to our defense industry, for what has happened in many other problem areas that have come up, but I have to rise today to actually compliment the administration for an action that they took on March 14 of this year when they filed an article 84 action with the International Civil Aviation Organization, usually referred to as ICAO.

ICAO was put together as an organization where all of the nations that with aviation and commercial aviation would agree to certain standards so there is some degree of uniformity. They got together and determined we would have a noise standard that was classified as chapter 3.

The European Union, and I hate to say this, has demonstrated much arrogance. I guess they think that all of a sudden they have gone from a small fish in the pond to the big fish in the pond and they have totally disregarded agreements they have made. They signed an agreement, a trade agreement, an ICAO agreement with all of the other countries saying that by a certain date they would have to have chapter 3 noise level.

Then, not too long ago, they unilaterally decided they were going to abrogate that treaty and unilaterally say that they are going to not allow chapter 3 noise level unless it is done through new airplanes or re-engining, so a muffling system that takes it to the same noise level would not comply.

This means we in the United States are discriminated against. I think everyone is aware the big competition worldwide now is Boeing aircraft in the United States and Airbus in Europe. As a result of this, it gives a tremendous advantage to Airbus over Boeing. They would be financially discriminating against the U.S. in a way that would cost the United States and depreciate the value of the inventory of many of our Boeing aircraft.

The "hush" industry is a huge industry in the United States. They have been able to use this technology to

bring down the noise level of existing aircraft to chapter 3 standards, and it shouldn't make any difference how we get to this level.

The administration has taken this into consideration when on March 14 they passed an article 84 against the European Union with ICAO. I think it is very significant. I know it will be a long and drawn out process, but I hope and I admonish the administration not to use the fact that it will be a long and drawn out process to go sideways or to cave in on this very critical issue to American workers and American manufacturers.

I can assure the administration that we will be working with them very closely to correct this action to be able to use any method that can be used that is on the market today in order to reach the chapter 3 noise standards.

I yield the floor.

CROP INSURANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I come to the floor to stand in support of S. 2251, the crop insurance reform bill. I thank all of my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee for the tremendous work they did in getting this bill to the floor. First and foremost, thanks goes to the chairman of the committee, Senator LUGAR, for his willingness to bring this issue up in a timely fashion, so we could get this legislation out of committee and to the floor to get some meaningful support for our Nation's farmers, particularly those farmers who are not participating in the current Crop Insurance Program.

Congress is reaching out to farmers, encouraging them to participate in the Crop Insurance Program to give them the kind of risk management tools they need to deal with the uncertainties of weather conditions, prices, et cetera, experienced in the past several years in agriculture.

I thank the chairman for his good-faith adherence to moving this bill in a prompt fashion. I thank in particular also Senator PAT ROBERTS of Kansas and Senator BOB KERREY of Nebraska for their incredible work with me as one of two Senators from the Northeastern part of the United States on the Agriculture Committee. They reached out to see what we could do in crafting a piece of legislation which would broaden the base of the Crop Insurance Program to include many areas of the country that have not participated in the old Crop Insurance Program, basically because it wasn't tailored to meet the needs of many regions of the country, particularly the Northeast.

Believe it or not, agriculture is the No. 1 industry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most people don't realize that, but we also have the largest rural population of any State in the country. Agriculture is very important

to the way of life for the millions in Pennsylvania who do not live in Pittsburgh or Philadelphia, who live in between those two cities in the great rural areas of our commonwealth.

We have the third lowest participation rate in crop insurance in the country. We are anywhere from single digits to reaching a high of about 20 percent participation of our farmers. It is a very small rate of participation. We need to encourage our very diversified farmers to get into this program to provide a safety net for them in the event of drought, floods, or other problems they may encounter in producing their crops.

There is an opportunity for them now with this bill. With about a third of the money in this bill devoted to specialty crops, it is a real opportunity for our fruit growers and for our vegetable growers—truck farmers, we call them—folks who produce potatoes up in the great northwestern part of our commonwealth, and a variety of other producers, as well as nursery men and women. Those are the folks who now cannot get any kind of help or support. We have provisions included for them in pilot programs. There is a real opportunity for risk management tools that many farmers in our States have not had the opportunity to enjoy.

Special thanks, again, go to Senator ROBERTS and Senator KERREY. They come from the bread basket, Nebraska and Kansas. Frankly, they understand very well the issues of agriculture. To their credit, they understood that if we were going to move forward with agriculture policy under Freedom to Farm, we would have to make sure that all areas of the country had the kind of tools necessary to be able to farm successfully. This legislation will go a long way in providing government aid to an area of the farming country that has been left behind in the past.

I heard Senator ROBERTS and I thank him for his kind comments. Senator ROBERTS talked about the battle we had on the floor of the Senate last year with respect to the agricultural supplemental.

There was a record drought, a 100-year drought in Pennsylvania, which caused about \$1 billion in crop losses. It was a frustration to me in that there was a very small part of that bill which was designated to help farmers who had suffered as a result of that nonprogram crop, former program crop farmers. We have a very small percentage of those in Pennsylvania.

As a result, a lot of the help in that bill was in the form of AMTA payments. A very small percentage of our farmers in Pennsylvania receive any AMTA payments. As a result, the bill was of minimal help to our farmers. We tried to include some things for dairy and livestock and some things for specialty crops, and we were successful—I thank the Senator from Mississippi for including that—but it highlighted the concern that many of us in the Northeast have with the direction of farm