

the price of heating oil went up because of the demand for natural gas. It struck a blow to many of the businesses in our State, let alone those people who I talked about before who live in our inner cities and who do not have the kind of furnaces we have, the windows, and all of the other items that are available to those who are a little bit more fortunate.

I am urging my colleagues in the Senate to arrange to work out some agreement where we can bring this energy issue to the floor and debate it. I am sure there are going to be controversial issues, but we have dealt with controversial issues before. Let's get it on the floor. Let's amend it. Let's debate it and get it over with so we can secure our economic future, secure our competitive position in the global marketplace, and, last but not least, secure our national security.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORZINE). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first I rise to compliment my colleague, the Senator from Ohio, on his presentation. I think it was a very useful one. I personally enjoyed it and learned from it. I thank my colleague for the effort that went into that presentation on our energy needs in this country. I thought he did an excellent job of presentation.

FARM POLICY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about farm policy. We have just now heard that the administration has endorsed Senator LUGAR's farm plan, which fundamentally, in my judgment, abandons family farms and the rural economy.

The farm plan that the administration is now supportive of is radical and it is ruinous. I don't know how to sugarcoat it. This is an absolute unmitigated disaster for the rural parts of the country.

The President is, in essence, backing a plan that eliminates farm programs—this at a time that our major competitors, the Europeans, are outspending us 10 to 1 in support for farm producers, and in terms of export support they are outdoing us 30 to 1.

It is no wonder that these are hard times in farm country. It is no wonder that when I go home to North Dakota—one of the most agricultural States in the Nation—farm producers tell me they wonder why they should stay in agriculture when there is virtually no financial return. There is enormous risk.

The plan the President has endorsed is an absolute abdication. It says we are going to eliminate AMTA payments immediately. It says we are going to eliminate in just a few years the marketing loan program. It says we are going to eliminate the sugar program, the dairy program, and the

peanut program. For all of that, it substitutes a voucher system that is woefully inadequate, and which will leave tens of thousands of farmers in a position of financial failure.

That is the plan this President has endorsed. That is the plan the President would impose on farm producers across this country.

I cannot say strongly enough what an absolute economic disaster that plan would be for virtually every farm State in the Nation.

What the President is calling for is abandoning of farmers in every part of America. What the President is saying is he doesn't like the previous farm policy. Very few of us do. His answer is a farm policy that signals retreat. His policy would say to our European adversaries and competitors: You take the agricultural markets. You become the dominant producer in the world.

That is a profoundly wrong policy for this country. I am certain the Europeans are taking great comfort today in the announcement by the White House that they back a policy which is a policy of unilateral surrender. I do not know how else to term it.

If this policy were ever to become the law, you would see mass bankruptcy all across the rural parts of this country.

One of the farm group leaders in my State was in my office. I described for him the plan that the administration had endorsed. He thought I was joking. He thought I was putting him on. He could not believe that this would be a farm policy endorsed by this or any administration. In fact, when I asked a group of farm leaders what would happen if we saw the kind of cuts that the President's plan would impose, he said it would mean the race to the auctioneer.

This is a serious matter. The irony is that at the very time this administration is arguing for a stimulus package for the economy, they are proposing a package for agriculture that is the opposite of a stimulus package. It is a package that would destroy many of the farm producers all across this country.

My State is perhaps the most agricultural State in the Nation. This farm policy now endorsed by the Bush administration would be a devastating blow to North Dakota.

A few months ago, the President came to North Dakota and said his administration would be farmer friendly. Now we see a complete abdication on that commitment. Now we see a total reversal with the President proposing a plan that would be an absolute calamity—an economic calamity—not only for North Dakota but for South Dakota, for Nebraska, for Minnesota, for Montana, for Iowa, and for every other farm State in this Nation.

This cannot be.

I hope over the weekend people will reflect on what has happened. I hope all across this country farm group leaders and farm producers will call

the White House, call their representatives, and call their Governors and urge them to tell the White House they have to reverse course. We cannot abandon rural America at a time when the rest of the national economy is already in trouble. We cannot say to America that we are going to provide stimulus to help the economy recover in the urban parts of the country but we are going to abandon the rural parts of our Nation. That cannot be, and it will not be.

I am saying to my colleagues that no stimulus package is going to pass here unless all of America is included—unless the rural parts of this country and the urban parts of the country are treated with respect.

This proposal and this plan is an absolute unmitigated disaster for farm families.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. I asked a number of Senators from farm States today—I read an article in the newspaper. We are not a farm State. We grow alfalfa. Agriculture is a very minor part of Nevada's economic base.

I asked a number of people about this article in the newspaper. Some had not read it yet. I hope the Senator from North Dakota will continue speaking out on this issue because there are not many farm States remaining. We need some leadership because of what we read in the newspaper, which spins pretty well, that they are going to stop all these things that appear bad for farmers.

I have followed the lead of the Senators from the Dakotas and Iowa in what I think is good farm policy because I know it is the lifeblood of the State of North Dakota.

I hope you continue to speak out, just as you have. We need to hear that in the non-farm States. So I ask the Senator a question. I hope you will speak out on this more than just today. Will you?

Mr. CONRAD. You can count on that.

I say to my friend from the State of Nevada how much we appreciate the assistance he has provided on key farm issues over the years. This is a real jolt to the people I represent because agriculture is the dominant part of our economy. I think people in our State recognize very well the devastation a bill such as this would mean. And I tell you, these are hard times already in our State. Just as we have suffered an economic downturn in this country, we have been facing hard times in agriculture the last 4 years.

In fact, the Senator well remembers we have had to write four economic disaster bills for agriculture in the last 4 years. Every year we have had to write an economic disaster rescue package for our farmers. Without it, tens of thousands of farm families would have been forced off the land. That is the hard reality.

Now this administration endorses a plan that would prevent us from having

the kind of rescue packages we have passed in the last 4 years. They are saying to tens of thousands of farm families: What you do has no value, and you might as well give up and give in and get out.

Mr. REID. If the Senator will yield, I have one more question.

Wouldn't it also drive the family farmers further and further away from their farms, where we wind up in America having big corporations doing all the farming?

Mr. CONRAD. Unfortunately, that is the direction. If you will study this farm plan, what it would mean is basically the elimination of farm programs. I know there are people listening who say, gee, maybe that is a good idea. I would say to those people, you need to look at what is happening in other parts of the world that produce agricultural goods because that is not what they are doing.

I indicated our European friends provide over \$300 an acre of support per year. We provide \$38. So already they have an enormous advantage over our producers. And then, when you look at export support, they account for 84 percent of all the world's agricultural export support. We are less than 3 percent. They are outgunning us there 30 to 1.

This administration plan is to wave the white flag of surrender. To all those who seek our markets the old-fashioned way, by buying them, we just say, take them; you can become the dominant player in world agriculture.

That would be a profound mistake for this country. It has been one of the key sources of American strength, that we have been the dominant player in world agriculture.

This plan is a guarantee that the United States would be second class, second rate, and we would have dominance by the Europeans.

I pray that this plan never becomes the law and America never has to experience what this would mean to not just farmers but to the main streets in every city and town all across rural America.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. I appreciate the Senator yielding. I would like to ask a couple of questions, maybe with a comment.

We, of course, have a disagreement with a distinguished colleague of ours who offers a farm bill that really is not much of a farm bill at all and certainly offers no hope to family farmers. But isn't the origin of this idea coming from people who really think the current farm program, which has nearly bankrupted the rest of the family farmers who are still around—they have believed this current farm program has been just dandy, that it works just swell? Isn't the origin of this idea from people who really think the current farm program has worked for family farmers?

Mr. CONRAD. I say to my colleague, it is one of the ironies of this plan. This plan is presented by the architects of the plan under which we are operating now, which has proved itself to be a disaster. That is why we have had to write four economic disaster bills for farmers in the last 4 years. Now they come along with the same chapter, second verse, and this is disaster No. 5. Four years of economic disasters for agriculture, and now they come with a new plan, a plan that is even worse than the plan they imposed on this country in the last farm bill. I do not know what could be more clear.

As I reported to the rest of our colleagues, the President came to our State and said he was going to be farmer friendly. This is a total reversal. I had a group of farmers from our State in my office this week. I gave them the outline of this plan. They were stunned. They were shocked. They could not believe this was a serious plan. When I told them not only was this being proposed by one of our colleagues but that the White House was poised to endorse it, they were nonplussed.

Mr. DORGAN. If the Senator will yield for another question, there is the old saying: There is no education in the second kick of a mule. My expectation is, most of our colleagues will understand that this, as a follow-on to the Freedom to Farm bill, is not progress but in fact it retards the opportunity for family farmers in this country to make a living.

I say to Senator CONRAD, one of the things I want to ask is: Our country now is trying to find out how we provide a lift to the American economy because we had a very soft economy prior to these terrible terrorist acts that occurred on September 11. The economy was very soft and troubled going into that point. But, in fact, the farm economy, the economy in which family farmers live, has been soft and troubled and collapsing for 4, 5 years. So when you talk about giving a lift to the American economy, family farmers out there on the land have been working through a virtual depression for 4, 5 years now.

It is interesting; we are talking about two things in Congress: One is a stimulus plan to try to lift the economy, and the second is security. In both cases, it seems to me, these proposals fail.

Stimulus. This isn't going to be a stimulus. This is going to be a lode-stone. It is going to weigh down further family farmers.

The family farmers have been foot soldiers for this country's economy for a long while. They produce the best food, at the lowest price, for consumers around the world. We are lucky to have them and ought to be proud of them, but they are being bled by an economy that says our food has no value, even as half a billion people around the world are desperately hungry.

But the point I want to make is, the Senator talked about Europe. Europe

understands food. Europe understands it from another point, which is the other thing we are working on: Security. Part of the issue of food is security.

Introduce bioterrorism agents into the food supply and you have really big trouble. How do you do that? Perhaps as a national newscast talked about recently, in a feedlot containing 200,000 cattle. That is why a broad network of family farms, disbursed across our country, represents security of America's food supply.

So there is a significant security interest here that the Europeans have understood for a long while that we ought to start understanding.

Finally, I make the point that the Senator talks about the bill introduction that the President says he now supports. That bill is a bill that offers 5 feet of rope to somebody drowning in 10 feet of water. Thanks for the gesture, but it is really insignificant and does not matter very much.

What we have to do with the leadership of Senator CONRAD, myself, and others who care about the future of family farmers, is to take what the House of Representatives passed—which is better than this, I might say, and better than current law—and then add to it higher loan rates for wheat, higher loan rates for barley, and a series of other things that really make it a bill that is friendly to family farms.

I am talking now about families who produce America's food supply. I was not going to speak to this, but I heard Senator CONRAD make some comments. He is right on the mark; assertive, strong, but right on the mark on these issues. I am proud to work with him on these matters.

This is life or death for the economic and financial future of many families who have invested their hopes and dreams on a farmstead somewhere in the Dakotas or up and down the heartland of the country.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from North Dakota.

In response to the remarks of the Senator, we are working on a stimulus package in the Senate to lift the economy because we know this economy is in a weak condition. It has been further weakened by the events of September 11. It needs a stimulus. It is extraordinary that in the middle of that, when, as the Senator from North Dakota described, agriculture has been in a recession for 4 years, you would say to the rural parts of the country, yes, we are going to have a stimulus package to lift the economy but not in the rural areas; you are going to be left out; you are going to be left behind; you don't count. That is profoundly wrong.

On top of that, as the Senator described, the second key issue with which we are dealing is the question of security. The Europeans have made a commitment to grow the food within their own borders because they have been hungry twice. They know what it

is to be without adequate foodstuffs. Can you imagine what it would be like in this current crisis if we were dependent on imported food for our own population's needs? How much more serious would the current crisis be if we did not have a strong agricultural base in America? How much more vulnerable would we be if every day's food supply or some substantial part of it had to be brought in from other countries?

This is serious business. This administration's endorsement of a radical and ruinous farm plan must be resisted, must be defeated. We must do better.

I hope very much that before this year is out, we will have passed a farm program that will make a difference in the lives of the tens of thousands of farm families who are the backbone of the strength of America. Those are the people who are the builders. Those are the people who are right at the heart of making this country strong and great.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, before my colleague from North Dakota leaves the floor, there is something worth pointing out. I don't claim to have great knowledge about the farm bill. I am from a consuming State. We have our farmers in Connecticut, not to the extent they do in the Midwest—obviously the Farm Belt of the country—but they play a very important role. As consumers, of course, it is very much in our interest that we encourage domestic production of agricultural products.

Many of us were told the other day something that maybe I had known before, but in the context of September 11 and the events that occurred since then, it surprised me I hadn't thought about it. I must mention it here and ask my friend for a response.

I was stunned to learn, once again, that less than 1 percent of all the food that we import is inspected. Again, we were talking about all the other problems we face, but I was sort of taken aback by the fact that such a tiny percentage of the produce or products we as Americans consume that comes from offshore—and many do, particularly in cold-weather months, particularly we import an awful lot of food from overseas—we are not talking about stopping that, but it seems to me in the context of what the Senator is talking about, a farm bill, it is in all of our interests, whether you are from a farm State or not—putting that issue aside but with that issue in mind—we would not be doing everything we could to encourage domestic production of our food supplies.

I don't know if he had any comments he wanted to make in that regard. It struck me that this would be an important point to raise at this time.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank my colleague from Connecticut for raising the issue. We were in a briefing the other day. Representatives from the administra-

tion were alerting us to a vulnerability of this country. They were making the point the Senator has made, that we are only inspecting about 1 percent of the foodstuffs that come into this country. That represents a vulnerability for America.

I say to my colleagues, if this farm plan were to pass, the vulnerability of America would increase geometrically. This is the most radical farm plan ever endorsed by any administration in my memory. I am 53 years old. I have followed farm policy very closely all of my life, being from a farm State. It is breathtaking what this administration has said we should put in place.

It is absolutely the wrong plan at the wrong time, and we must reject it.

I thank my colleague very much for his input.

Mr. DODD. I thank my colleague. I have found in my years of service with the distinguished Senator from North Dakota, every time he proposes something in the area of agriculture, I follow. I have found myself to have a good record on farm policy because of his leadership. I thank him for his comments today. He not only speaks for his own State and region of the country; he speaks for all Americans who care about this most critical issue.

BEST PHARMACEUTICALS FOR CHILDREN ACT

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, earlier today this body passed, by unanimous vote, the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act. This is a bill I authored a number of years ago with my good friend from Ohio, Senator MIKE DEWINE. He is presently occupied at a Judiciary Committee hearing, and he will come to the floor and offer his own statement. I ask unanimous consent that whatever time he seeks, the Chair would provide him with an opportunity to be heard on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Ohio. He has been a great partner in numerous efforts we have made together on behalf of children. S. 838 is something for which both of us are tremendously proud, the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act.

Let me briefly describe the bill, why it is a bit different than the bill we passed 3 years ago, and why it is important.

This bill would reauthorize the pediatric testing incentive legislation we passed in 1997 as part of the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act. This important program has gone a long way toward ensuring that doctors and parents have the most up-to-date and critical information on medications for our children. It has been an important achievement.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, about 20 percent—I think a little less—of the drugs on the market have been tested and labeled specifically for their safety and effectiveness for children. Children are simply not smaller versions of adults, as I hope most people are aware.

The bodies of infants, toddlers, and adolescents are very different and react very differently to drugs than adults do. The absence of pediatric labeling poses some very significant risks for children. Without adequate information about how a drug works in children of different ages and sizes, they are more likely to be either underdosed or overdosed or to experience dangerous side effects.

Mr. President, again, years ago—in fact, in fairly recent history—there were a lot of products out there for adults and children, but for many years there were just the basics, and parents, over the years, would take the old family aspirin and the children's dosage was to cut it into quarters or halves and take it. It was pretty safe. Nobody suffered terribly. Trying to calculate a child's dosage of traditional medicines in times past was not that difficult. There were some hazards. But we have seen a wonderful explosion of new products.

I note the Senator from New Jersey is presiding. Both in his State and mine, we have literally thousands of constituents who have dedicated their lives to the research and development of products to make us all healthier, live better lives, and live longer.

In the process, however, only about 20 percent, as I mentioned—a little less—have actually been tested and designed to serve children's needs. Despite the fact that children represent in excess of one-quarter of the population of this country—25 percent—only a tiny fraction of the products on the shelves to be prescribed by doctors are actually labeled and designed to meet their needs. It seems sort of staggering to me that we have waited so long to do this. We have labels on the food that children can eat. We now have labels on the music to which they listen. We have labels that will tell you what movies you ought not to let your child go to. But when it comes to pharmaceutical products, we have very little of that.

With that as a background, Senator DEWINE and I, in 1997, as part of the Food and Drug Administration modernization bill, crafted this legislation as a way to see if we could not induce—there was a debate on whether we should mandate it and say you have to do it whether you like it or not, which is one approach, or should we say we will give you a chance to prove to us you can do it by providing 6 months of exclusivity in the marketplace. There was a debate about that.

I had my own doubts about whether or not this was going to work very well. I must say the success of this legislation has been beyond anyone's wildest imagination. If I can, I will share some of the comments made about the success of the 1997 act, which would go out of existence, by the way.

Why did we need to pass this legislation, and why am I so appreciative of