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**OA/ID Number:** 13739  
**Folder ID Number:** 13739-009

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**Folder Title:**  
Farm Bill Signing 11/28/90 [OA 7563]

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
<b>G</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NOVEMBER 27, 1990

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH:           CHRISS WINSTON *CW*  
FROM:                MARK LANGE *ML*  
SUBJECT:             FARM BILL SIGNING CEREMONY

Attached are brief remarks (5-7 minutes, cards) for a Farm Bill signing ceremony on the steps of the Rose Garden tomorrow, Wednesday, November 28, at 11:00 a.m. About 100 will attend.

Your remarks emphasize the importance of strong agriculture, outline highlights of the bill, and close with detailed kudos to those responsible for its passage.

(Lange/Cawley)  
November 27, 1990  
7:45 p.m.  
[FARM.DOC]

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: FARM BILL SIGNING  
THE ROSE GARDEN  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1990  
11:00 A.M.

[[ Secretary Yeutter, Senators Dole, Leahy and Lugar; <sup>msg. OK</sup> <sup>OK</sup> <sup>OK msg.</sup> <sup>OK</sup> Cochran  
<sup>Jackie</sup> ~~Congressmen Madigan and de la Garza~~; <sup>NO</sup> leaders from the agriculture  
community; professionals from the Department of Agriculture.

Welcome, all, to the White House. ~~check pg 3!~~

There's no question, here or anywhere in America, about  
**how crucial a strong agricultural sector is to the future of  
this country.** From the fields to the supermarkets, agriculture  
creates one out of every seven jobs in this country -- eight out  
of ten of them off the farm -- spreading the seeds of economic  
growth across this great nation. America grew to greatness on  
the strength of our agriculture -- and for that, I know that **all  
of us will always be proud of, and thankful for, America's  
farmers.** \\\

Our farmers are the best. Period. They out-produce every  
other nation in the world by far, and even out-produce some  
continents. They're world-champion providers.

We're in the Uruguay Round negotiations, making every effort  
to achieve substantial agriculture reform -- which will include  
major reductions in trade-distorting barriers. **We want to bring  
home a fair deal for American farmers.** ///

And here at home, the legislation I'm about to sign will help our farmers continue to be leaders in global agricultural trade.

We've been working closely with the leadership in Congress to get a farm bill that **keeps our farmers competitive, keeps our rural areas environmentally sound, and places a floor under farm income.**

I think this bill meets that standard. It's a market oriented bill that lets farmers make more of their own production decisions, based on the market rather than on government support prices. It also encourages the research so crucial to helping our farmers maintain their global lead in agriculture.

Because farmers have always been important stewards of the earth, this farm bill will help farmers protect water quality and wildlife habitat -- and its greater flexibility will boost crop rotation, in turn helping to control weeds, pests, and erosion.

And there's more in this legislation to protect our environment. In fact, this is the most environmentally progressive Farm Bill ever signed. It creates a wetlands reserve; improves the Conservation Reserve Program; and encourages urban forestry activities -- including funding for our America the Beautiful initiative, toward our goal of planting a billion trees across America.

For the sake of low-income Americans, I'm particularly pleased with the five-year continuation of the Food Stamp Program -- the foundation for food assistance, for Americans in need.

Congress and this administration worked closely together, to develop a program that is easier for recipients to use, and reauthorizes the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

So, to the members of Congress who worked so hard to get this bill passed -- to Senators Patrick Leahy and Richard Lugar, of the Senate Agriculture Committee; to Congressmen Kika de la Garza and Ed Madigan of the House Agriculture Committee, who couldn't be with us today -- to all involved, I say, "Well done."

And to Secretary Yeutter and the dedicated people at the Department of Agriculture who worked so tirelessly with Congress to get this farm bill written and passed -- you've given this administration a farm bill of which we can all be very proud.

And to all of you here today from the state A.S.C.S. offices, who will be working so hard to implement this bill in the coming years -- thank you for taking on a crucial task. You're helping assure a bright future for farming in America.

And now, let me sign this legislation into law.

# # #

Contact

[NAME] ← ~~NAME~~ DEP'T. PHONE

Kelly Shipp USDA 447-4623

Gary Blumenthal USDA 447-3631

Asst | Jules Katz USTR 395-5114

Brian W. Watson Wolf Leg. Affairs 486-6473

STEVE Wagman

Asst: Sam Mrazonback

FACTCHECK COPY

(Lange/Cawley)  
November 27, 1990  
2:15 p.m.  
[FARM.DOC]

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: FARM BILL SIGNING  
THE ROSE GARDEN  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1990  
[TIME] 11:00?

[[ Acknowledgments... Secretary Yeutter, Senator Dole...  
leaders from the agriculture community; professionals from the  
Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Stabilization and  
Conservation Service. Welcome, all, to the White House -- and to  
Washington.

You know, the way this town operates sort of reminds you of  
how they used to weigh pigs in my home state of Texas.

They'd put the pig on one side of the balance. Then, they'd  
look around until they found a rock that weighed the same as the  
pig. Then, they'd guess the weight of the rock. \\ \\ ]]

Well, there's no question at all about how crucial strong  
agriculture is to the future of America. From the fields to the  
supermarkets, agriculture creates one out of every six jobs in  
this country -- nine out of ten of them off the farm -- spreading  
the seeds of economic growth across this great nation. America  
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for, America's farmers. \\ \\

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fields, farms,  
restaurants,  
supermarkets

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Right now, we're looking to the trade negotiators in Geneva to bring about substantial agricultural trade reform among the GATT nations. And here at home, the legislation I'm about to sign will help our farmers continue to lead as they face growing global competition.

We've been working closely with the leadership in Congress to get a farm bill that **keeps our farmers competitive**, keeps our rural areas **environmentally sound**, and **places a floor under farm income.**

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Sam Brownback - ASST to Amb. Kad 2, USTR 395-5114

Ag: Suggestor Remains

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And now, let me sign this legislation into law.

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Statement

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

*Office of Cabinet Affairs  
Fax Transmission Cover*

TO:

Caroline Cauley

LOCATION:

FAX NUMBER:

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FROM:

*Claire A. Sechler*

Number of pages to follow:

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Office of Cabinet Affairs

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SENT BY: The White House

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2024566218;# 2

SENT BY: The TICKET CENTER

: 11-27-90 ; 4:40PM ; LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS→

CABINET AFFAIRS;# 1

**Claire:**

**For your briefing paper, following are the Members of Congress which are expected to attend the Farm Bill:**

**Senator George Mitchell (D-ME), Majority Leader (pending)**

**Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), Republican Leader**

**Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee**

**Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), Ranking Republican, Senate Agriculture Committee**

**Congressman Tom Foley (D-WA), Speaker of the House (pending)**

**Thanks,**

**Becky**



11/27/90

13:48

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY; USDA

NO. 813

P003/005

November 27, 1990  
1:40 p.m.

6-18

## FARM BILL SIGNING CEREMONY

### Corn

National Corn Growers Association  
Corn Refiners Association

### Cotton

National Cotton Council of America

### Dairy

National Milk Producers Federation  
Ice Cream Manufacturers Association  
National Cheese and Butter Institute  
Mid-America Dairymen Inc.

### Feedgrains

North American Export Grain Association  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Grain Trade Council  
American Feed Industry Association

### Livestock

National Cattlemen's Association  
American Meat Institute  
National Pork Producers

### Overall

American Farm Bureau  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Organization  
National Farmers Union  
The National Grange

### Poultry

National Broiler Council  
United Egg Producers

### Rice

The Rice Millers Association  
Rice Growers

### Soybeans

American Soybean Association  
National Oilseed Processors Association



11/27/90

13:49

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, USDA

NO. 613

P004/005

**Sugar****Sweetener Users Association  
American Sugar Alliance****Wheat****National Association of Wheat Growers  
American Bakers Association  
Independent Bakers Association****Other****United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable  
Farm Credit Council  
National Agricultural Chemicals Association  
National Forest Products Association  
The Fertilizer Institute****American Public Welfare Association (Bertini)  
Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (Bertini)  
Food Research Action Council (Bertini)  
Holland and Knight (Bertini)****10/20/ National Wildlife Federation (Moseley)****Sierra Club (Moseley)****National Association of Conservation Districts (Moseley)****National Association of State Conservation Agencies (Moseley)****American Association of State Universities & Land Grant Colleges (Hess)**



11/27/90

13:49

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, USDA

NO. 813

P005/005

USDA FOLKS

SECRETARY YEUTTER  
CROWDER  
GARDNER  
CAMPBELL  
SHIPP  
CENSKY  
BAILEY  
HESS  
SMITH  
BERTINI  
KISLAK

CONWAY  
COLLINS  
WEBBER  
LINDEN  
STEELE

MADSON  
VENEMAN  
SUMNER  
BJERKE  
MRS. YEUTTER  
BLUMENTHAL  
WITTMAYER

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(Lange/Cawley)  
November 27, 1990  
2:15 p.m.  
[FARM.DOC]

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: FARM BILL SIGNING  
THE ROSE GARDEN  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1990  
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They'd put the pig on one side of the balance. Then, they'd  
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Well, there's no question at all about how crucial strong  
agriculture is to the future of America. From the fields to the  
supermarkets, agriculture creates one out of every <sup>7</sup> six jobs in  
this country -- <sup>4 of 5 = 8 of 10</sup> nine out of ten of them off the farm -- spreading  
the seeds of economic growth across this great nation. America  
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for, America's farmers. \\ \\ farm/field/restaurants/supermarkets

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Right now, we're looking to the trade negotiators in Geneva to bring about substantial agricultural trade reform among the GATT nations. And here at home, the legislation I'm about to sign will help our farmers continue to lead as they face growing global competition.

We've been working closely with the leadership in Congress to get a farm bill that **keeps our farmers competitive**, keeps our rural areas **environmentally sound**, and **places a floor under farm income.**

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And to all of you who will be working so hard to implement this bill in the coming years -- thank you for taking on a crucial task. You're helping assure a bright future for farming in America.

And now, let me sign this legislation into law.

# # #



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

DATE:

11/26/90

90 OCT 26 PM 6: 27

TO:

Chris Winston

FROM:

ROBERT E. GRADY  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY AND SCIENCE

A lot of this  
material might be  
very useful to whomever  
is writing the speech  
for the farm bill  
signing.

  
Bob G.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of Budget  
and Program  
Analysis

Washington,  
D.C.  
20250

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TO: RON PETERSON

FROM: W. SCOTT SFELE

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EXT.: \_\_\_\_\_

①

USDA's Original Signing  
Statement of 10/29/90

### FARM BILL SIGNING STATEMENT

I'm pleased to be able to sign this piece of legislation, The Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, into law today. Because agriculture is important to all of us, it's critical that we have a farm bill that keeps our farmers competitive, environmentally sound, and places a floor under farm income. I think this bill meets that standard. It's a market oriented bill that permits farmers to make more of their own production decisions based on the market rather than on government support prices.

America's farmers are the best. Period. They out-produce every other nation in the world, by far. They even out-produce entire continents. Although our farmers account for only three-tenths of one percent of the world's agricultural labor force, the United States produces 10 percent of the world's food grains, one-quarter of the world's feed grains and beef, and almost a third of the world's poultry. America's farmers are world champion producers, and this legislation will help them to continue to lead as they face increasing global competition. It will improve their international competitiveness by continuing a market-oriented approach, and giving them greater production flexibility to meet changing market conditions.

While American agriculture has never been more productive, demands on agriculture have never been greater. Farmers have always been stewards of the environment, and now they are called upon to be leaders in the effort for a cleaner environment. This bill will help farmers protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and its greater flexibility will boost crop rotation, which will in turn help control weeds, pests, and erosion.

1988 Census for 1991  
 Comm Bureau  
 ag = 3.2 M workers  
 of 105.6 total workforce = 3  
 15.1 B total →  
 16.1 ÷ 105.6 = 6.99%  
 3.2 / 15.1 = 20% = 80% left  
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 6.2 cat & drink  
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-2-

And there is more in this legislation to protect our environment: the creation of wetlands reserve; improvement of the Conservation Reserve Program; and encouraging urban forestry activities.

I am particularly pleased with the 5-year continuation of the Food Stamp Program. It is the foundation for food assistance for low income Americans. Congress and the Administration worked together to develop a program that is easier for its recipients to use and reauthorizes the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Research is also essential to help our farmers maintain their global lead in agriculture. We're grateful that the bill endorses the expansion of agriculture research under my National Research Initiative.

America's farmers and agricultural industry are responsible for much of the economic well-being of our nation. Agriculture is America's largest enterprise. Our food and fiber system accounts for 16 percent of the total gross national product. Agriculture is the nation's largest employer. There are about 20 million people working in some phase of agriculture -- from the fields to the supermarkets. That is about one out of every six jobs in America, and 90 percent of these jobs are off-the-farm, helping to expand wealth across our nation. America grew to greatness on a bedrock of agriculture; and for that, we'll always be proud of, and thankful for, our farmers.

Farmers have experienced the burden huge federal deficits place on their ability to borrow money, limiting their ability to grow with the marketplace and survive slow times. Part of the success of this farm bill is how the budget conferees found a way to

Yankee Speech

-3-

cut the deficit while creating new opportunities for farmers to earn income through increased flexibility and competitiveness in the marketplace.

Now, the onus is on the trade negotiators in Geneva to achieve substantial ag reform among the GATT nations.

So, to our farmers, for their unselfish cooperation in helping this bill to pass, I say again: "Thank you."

To the members of Congress who worked so hard to get this bill passed -- Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee; Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee Kika de la Garza; and their Republican counterparts, Senator Richard Lugar and Congressman Ed Madigan -- to them I say: "Well done."

To Secretary Yeutter, and the dedicated and tireless people at the Department of Agriculture who care so much about America's farmers and farm industries, and who worked so tirelessly to help craft this farm bill: "You've given this Administration a farm bill of which we can all be very proud."

To the American people, who trust their government to work together to forward the common interest of all Americans, I'm proud to report to you today: "Your faith is well-founded. The system did, indeed work."

Now, before I put pen to paper to sign this legislation into law, I ask God to bless this farm bill; may He bless the members of our government who put this bill together and who are charged with governing this great land; and, above all, may God bless the United States of America.

\* \* \*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
(Orlando, Florida)

For Immediate Release

January 8, 1990

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU

Orlando Convention Center  
Orlando, Florida

10:47 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you, Dean. (Applause.) Well, my thanks to my friend, Dean Kleckner, Farm Bureau President, for that warm introduction. We're grateful for his leadership on that National Economic Commission, and the tremendous support of you, the members of the Farm Bureau. My thanks, too, to Bob Delano out here, former Farm Bureau President, whose leadership and counsel have been so helpful to me. I'm happy to have my distinguished -- our distinguished Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter here at my side, doing a superb job for us. (Applause.) And I know you'll hear tomorrow from Ambassador Carla Hills. You talk about two people who understand the need to open up foreign markets to U.S. agricultural products -- these two are tough and they are the tops -- and we're grateful to both of them. (Applause.) My friend, Bob Martinez, Governor Martinez, it's always a pleasure to see you and visit your beautiful state.

And, of course, I'm very proud of the next two -- great to see Senator Connie Mack here -- a new Senator making a national impression, I'll tell you. And next to him, or right near him -- second from the end -- my close friend, and a long-time supporter, Bill McCollum. Two outstanding voices for Florida in our Nation's Capital. I wish we had a lot more like them, I'll tell you. (Applause.)

I just returned from a little fishing and hunting over the holidays in Texas and Alabama, and I heard a story about the time that Mark Twain spent three weeks fishing in Maine after the fishing season had closed. On the way home, aboard the train, he told the man seated next to him about all the fish he'd caught. Finally, Mark Twain asked, "By the way, who are you, sir?" "I'm the State Game Warden," replied the man. "Who are you?" And after a long pause, Twain said, "Well, to be perfectly truthful, I'm the biggest damn liar in the whole United States." (Laughter.)

I won't bore you with my fishing stories because I could reminisce with you all day long on this subject. It's a pleasure to be here because, for 71 years now, the American Farm Bureau has helped American farmers -- over three million member families -- to become the best in the world. And farming is a proud and noble part of our history. In fact, Thomas Jefferson himself wrote that "Agriculture is the most useful of the occupations of man."

Today, nearly two centuries later, I'm here to give my first major address of the new decade. And I'm proud to begin this decade by talking to you about the future of farming in this country. But as we look forward, it's also important to reflect upon the past and what farmers have gone through, both good and bad.

You -- America's farmers -- deserve the credit for the rebound in U.S. farming. And I salute you again. I salute the board of directors up here -- all farmers -- who are leading this

MORE

outstanding organization. You've been through the worst droughts and national disasters of the 1980s, and you've survived tough economic times. But you've worked with your minds and your hands to beat adversity with a kind of can-do commitment that's been the hallmark of American farming for generations.

Right here in Florida we're seeing some of that can-do attitude as you face -- Florida farmers -- as you face the terrible loss of the citrus and winter vegetable crop. On the way down on Air Force One, Bob Martinez gave me the details of Florida's losses. But let me tell you -- I'm sure you've heard this from Clayton -- you will not be facing this alone. Clayton and I have talked, and I've asked the Secretary to personally oversee our efforts to provide assistance and I know you can count on the USDA to be in there fighting with you. (Applause.)

It was a little over four years ago -- seems like just yesterday -- but a little over four years ago that the 1985 Farm Bill became law. Admittedly, the cost has been high, but it has worked. Since then, the news has been good. Surpluses have declined dramatically, and most of our good land has been brought back into production. Net farm income reached a record level last year, and the share of income that came from market sales continued to grow. The farm credit situation has greatly improved, bringing more financial stability to rural America.

As we face the future, the outlook is even better. Through sound fiscal policies and wise management of our resources, common-sense attitudes -- and, God willing, good weather -- we can succeed. Together, we will keep rural America strong and American agriculture thriving in the 1990s. (Applause.)

But to do that -- and Dean Kleckner alluded to this in his introductory remarks -- to do that, our first priority must be to keep the American economy growing. That means fiscal and monetary policies that make sense. Today, one of the best things we can do for farmers is to keep the interest rates low, and that is exactly what we intend to do. (Applause.)

This year, we will work with Congress on the 1990 Farm Bill. Getting a good farm bill through Congress is like milking a bull. (Laughter.) But I can tell you that to be competitive, we must have market-oriented farm policies that allow producers more flexibility to decide what crops to grow -- (applause) -- and that because American farmers then can do what Americans do best: compete.

At the same time, we've got to maintain a safety net to protect farmers from conditions beyond their control. But market-oriented farm policies are only a part of the agricultural picture. It is absolutely essential that we expand markets and enhance productivity. We've got to assure the public that America's food is safest in the world, and we've got to protect our precious environment.

America's farmers -- I know this -- America's farmers understand the importance of a clean environment. Many of you here today come from farms that have been handed down from parents and grandparents. You know that to protect the land is to protect not just your livelihood, but your heritage.

We must recognize that productive agriculture and a sound environment can be compatible -- especially in terms of water quality. The administration has initiated a concentrated five-year effort to work with the nation's farmers to protect our groundwater from contamination by fertilizers and pesticides. We'll spend close to a third of a billion dollars on research and support for farmers to stop contamination of our land and water. We must keep your good land in business -- without unreasonable burdens -- but we must also keep it good land. I am counting on your leadership as we work to expand farm productivity while safeguarding our precious environment.

We must also make sure that all Americans are confident in the safety of our food supply. My administration is working hard to develop legislation to protect the food supply without overwhelming the agricultural industry.

But in the coming decade, the American farmer must have a level playing field in the international trade arena, too. And the way to fight trade barriers is through negotiation, not reciprocal protectionism. I know that many Farm Bureau leaders serve on the Agricultural Trade Policy Advisory Committee, and how important this issue is to you. Our administration has just made a bold proposal in the Uruguay round that would phase out export subsidies in five years and other trade-distorting practices in 10 years. But any agreement we sign -- and I can guarantee you this -- any agreement that we sign will be an agreement that is also good for American agriculture. You see, our goal is simple: open markets and free trade. (Applause.)

And it's beginning to work. International markets are improving. The value of U.S. agricultural exports has increased for the third year in a row. And sales to developing nations -- the dynamic markets of the future -- were up 13 percent last year.

We also support expanding our ties with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to open even more markets. Earlier this winter, Secretary Clayton Yeutter led a presidential delegation to Poland to determine how American know-how can help Poland shift from that controlled economy to a market economy. It was a wonderful mission, and we're forging new partnerships between our agricultural industries and Eastern Europe's emerging economies. But in today's global economy, America must also become more competitive through increased production, new uses for our products, and expanded markets at home. And so this administration supports greater research into biotechnology for improved productivity and we're encouraging alternative uses of farm products like ethanol and other new fuels and fuel additives.

Just a few months ago, we proposed the expansion of the producer tax credit for alternative fuels to include ETBE. This will mean more markets for growers and cleaner air for all Americans.

But for us to reap the full benefits of a competitive economy we must cut the capital gains tax rate. (Applause.) With our capital gains tax proposal, we can help keep American agriculture dynamic and prosperous. And with continued economic growth, we can keep rural America going strong. Passage of our capital gains proposal, which would apply to the sale of farmland, will be one of my top priorities in this legislative year. Your support has been instrumental in the fight for the capital gains cut. And the fight isn't over yet. And I am sick and tired of the demagogues who call this a tax cut for the rich. It means jobs, it means savings, and it is good for all Americans. (Applause.)

And so the Farm Bill, our international trade negotiations, and a capital gains tax cut will be high on my agenda for this great nation. Because what's good for agriculture is good for America. (Applause.)

Let me talk just a little about some of the challenge facing all America. Like people everywhere in this great country, you work hard, you sacrifice to make good lives for yourselves and your children. Every one of us dreams of excellence in education, economic opportunity for all citizens, and a clean and healthy environment and safe, drug-free streets, schools, and workplaces. Together we are working to build a better America.

But much remains to be done, and you're in the forefront. Rural America cares about education. You know, some say improving our schools is something for federal money and Washington bureaucrats to handle. And I know you don't believe that. Whether it's a

classroom on a rolling prairie in Nebraska or a busy New York street, improving education is a national challenge.

Last September, I met with the nation's governors at the education summit in Virginia to begin promoting educational restructuring in every state and determining national goals to attain excellence. The administration has sent the Educational Excellence Act to the Congress, and we want, and America needs, action on it soon. (Applause.)

Rural America is also battling the ravages of violence and drugs. Every citizen has the right to a safe home, the right to freedom from fear. Early in my administration, we sent the comprehensive Violent Crime Control Act to the Congress. We proposed measures to improve enforcement and prosecution, and strengthen current laws to put the drug dealers behind bars and keep them there. This critical crime legislation has been sitting on Capitol Hill for months. Brave citizens everywhere are standing up to crime. And it's a time for Congress to act quickly and responsibly because the war on drugs and crime will not wait. (Applause.) And I might say parenthetically, thank God we've got Bill McCollum in a key role in the House and Connie Mack -- Senator. I again want to mention that the support that we are getting for them and others like them for this approach I've outlined.

Let me just add a little more on our relationship with Capitol Hill. When I took office -- Inaugural Address -- I put my hand out to the Congress, to the Democratic majority, and reminded us all that the American people did not send us to Washington to bicker. As I've said, we sent proposals to Congress on clean air, combating crime, capital gains. Responsible proposals. Carefully thought-out. Based on principles. Finally, rural America -- let me just finish. Now a year has passed. A new year has become. And it's time -- it is past time -- for Congress to tend to some of the unfinished business.

Let me say to Congress as it comes back in a couple of weeks now: The hand of cooperation is once again extended. And I would only add -- America wants it done right. America wants it done responsibly. And America wants it done now. (Applause.)

We are always willing to listen to ideas and alternatives. But we are not willing to compromise on fundamental principles.

Finally, rural America does believe in liberty and democracy. Freedom-loving people everywhere are following the news reports from behind what used to be called the Iron Curtain. In fact, I read that the first thing to sell out in West Berlin on the day the Wall came down wasn't TVs or denim jeans. It was fresh fruit. In Romania, citizens knew freedom had arrived because, for the first time in many years, they saw food on the grocery store shelves. We reap what we sow, says the Bible, and what a bountiful harvest we are witnessing. It is a harvest of joy and opportunity that we will continue to support and encourage every step of the way.

And let me add -- this harvest is not just happening in Eastern Europe. Let's help the countries to our south so that this hemisphere will be the first totally democratic hemisphere in the entire world. (Applause.)

I know I don't have to tell you this, but let me just tell you from the bottom of a grateful heart that I am mighty proud of our courageous fighting men who have helped Panama. And the joy shown by the people of Panama says it all right there in the streets of Panama City. (Applause.) And so as I conclude my comments to the Farm Bureau, I can tell you I am optimistic about the coming decade, for I believe in the wisdom of our policies; I believe in the providence of the Almighty; and most importantly, I believe in the tough resiliency and the moral strength of the American people.

Throughout our history, farmers -- many in this room -- have weathered disaster. And each time, like steel forged in a white-hot furnace, you are stronger with each testing by fire.

In the "Dirty '30s" swirling clouds of dust ruined hundreds of farmsteads on the Great Plains. Many of the Dust Bowl farmers stayed on the land, and today, their descendants have invented conservation techniques to catch and preserve the winter snows and the spring rains to carry their crops through the hot plains summer. A triumph of human courage and ingenuity. In the 1970s, an unheard-of disease, the Southern Corn Leaf Blight, swept through the fields of the Midwest. In a few days, the tall, green, tasseled corn was devastated as if someone had taken a blowtorch to it. Over that winter, scientists and farmers developed resistant corn varieties in time for the next spring planting. A national food disaster was stopped dead in its tracks. A triumph of faith, science and inventiveness.

And today, at the daybreak of the new decade, I want rural America to share in the promise and prosperity of our great nation. And in the months and years to come, as we approach the horizon of the new century, may we all share in the opportunity and optimism of a world at peace.

Thank you and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very, very much. (Applause.)

END

11:11 A.M. EST