

California Avocado Society 1987 Yearbook 71: 113-118

Foreign "Friends" and "Foes"

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Remarks at the annual meeting of the California Avocado Society, Mandalay Beach Resort, Oxnard, October 3, 1987.

Congressman Lagomarsino: Doctor Farrell, I know what I would say to your speech: Amen. Especially with regard to trade. In my opinion, to say it even stronger than you did, if either of the two trade bills now pending—the one passed by the House, or the one passed by the Senate—were to pass in substantially the form of either one of those, it's going to be very, very bad news. Very bad news, indeed. Unfortunately, I think what is likely to happen is that a bill will pass that the President cannot sign; he will veto it, and the people who have been pushing this thing knowing very well that it is a bad bill will have the best of both worlds. They will have their issue, and they will not have to face up to the consequences of what they would have caused if they can say, if this had been signed, we've come along and taken care of all the problems. The press will not tell them the truth, and we will be in a very big mess. Not as big as if the bill became law, though.

Our next speaker has the unenviable task, obviously, of following our last speaker; but I'm sure she is up to that challenge.

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Darling: Boy, this *is* a tough spot to be in.

That was an excellent paper, and I wish it had been at ten o'clock in the morning.... I appreciate being here. I figure all I've learned about root rot was something that the Congressman and I already knew a lot about, but find that you are talking about something different.... (Laughter.)

The trade legislation proved one of the myths that occur when we talk about international trade, the first myth being that legislation can fix it. I recall while I was still

on Sam Hayakawa's staff, we were discussing the meat import bill; and it was suggested that we reduce the gestation period of the cow, legislatively. Which just goes to show you can't fix it all by passing laws for it.

That is one of the main myths. The second myth is that the administration has no policy in trade. Its just that we don't have a protectionist policy, and I think if the Gebhardt amendment, some of those other things, were to pass, you'll find that California agriculture—particularly, the specialty crops—are in no markets. And I think that the involvement of the Society, as well as every association that has to do with specialty crops in California, needs to pay pretty close attention, because this is all going on without us, unless you get that conference cut down so you don't have half the House and three-quarters of the Senate trying to meet. It's very frightening. When I look at from what the President had suggested last July, what the Secretary of Agriculture in conjunction with the Trade Representative had proposed to the trading partners of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, this is pretty exciting stuff. When you suggest that the whole world wipe out subsidies and unnecessary restrictions in global trade within the next ten years or so, that certainly has gotten the attention of some of our trading partners. Some of those who didn't care to ever talk to us before, all of a sudden are. We find that we're getting retaliatory kinds of questions.

Now, the nice day that we said that the avocados from Mexico couldn't transit California, it was suggested that perhaps that was another trade barrier toward dealing with Mexico. Well, we don't let anything else transit from Mexico; it certainly didn't make biological sense to let avocados transit. So, that's just in keeping consistent from a scientific point of view, not just a trade policy. There was no trade effort that had to do with that; it was biologically slanted.

I think some of the other myths that go with trade come down to how it gets dealt with during all the negotiating. I would say for all of you to have the first Secretary of Agriculture from the State of California in the 125 years that the department has been in existence is the best benefit that you can have. There is probably no one who has ever headed up the Department of Agriculture who knows as much about California agriculture, of course. We also have Pat Boyles, the head of the Ag. Marketing Service, who was on Pete Wilson's staff; we have myself, who was on Sam Hayakawa's staff; so, putting us together there's at least a little knowledge of specialty crops of California, which is a little different from growing wheat, soy beans, some of the subsidized crops.

Now as you heard, I come from animal agriculture, and animal agriculture isn't subsidized either, so you might not think that an avocado and beef cattle have a whole lot in common, but I'll tell you they do when it comes to dealing with policy and issues on trade and issues on subsidies and where the money goes. The \$26 billion that was spent last year on agriculture won't be tolerated forever by the society at large. I don't know how we're going to deal with that, other than I do know that the CCC won't be funded one of these days, we'll run out of money...it just won't be tolerated. But that's where we stand, and yet the President has to hold his head, and Dick Lyng has a picture of it saying, yes, if that's what it's going to cost, I guess that's what that's going to cost—because after all we do represent the producer—the producer, first. All the way through the chain of course, we do represent the consumer at the other end; but the producer is what we're all about.

I think when we talk of "Foreign 'Friends' and 'Foes'," which was the title of this speech for Allen Tracy who isn't here—of course—I say your "foreign friend" is the Department of Agriculture. I say your "foreign foe" is the EPA (laughter) and the Department of Interior, because it's been mentioned during the course of the conversation today about pesticides. Well, the Department of Interior has a nice little law called "The Endangered Species Act." The Endangered Species Act also includes plants. Now, the EPA, in looking at chemicals, is talking about clustering areas of plant growth for endangered species. Now, I'm real confused about all this, other than I know that when it comes down to who it's going to hurt, it's plant agriculture. So I'm about to enter into that fray, and the Congressman promised to help me fight over there. They don't like me at the EPA. I think that's wonderful. (Laughter.) They say, here comes "the witch." It's a shame that it's an agency without accountability. They are good people over there; there's nothing wrong with the people. They don't have a constituency directly, but if the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency doesn't give you satisfaction, what do you do? Go to the President of the United States and say, "my goodness, they're about to take my alar away," or what have you? I'd like to see us do something about pulling back into accountability. We hang in there. We fight on the FIFRA things. Of course, all the fungicides we have been talking about come in there. I don't *hear* much from you all, but if there's any time you want me to go cause trouble, I'm *always* happy to do that. (Laughter.) Because of those who do stay and who don't stay, being from the State of Wyoming, we don't have a very good track record. We sent you Jim Watt, Anne Burford, and I've outlasted them all. We also have one of the finest Senators in the place, and that's Al Simpson; and I'm sure you've heard of this good man, and he could come from southern California, northern California just as easily as he comes from the Buffalo Bill area of Wyoming.

But we don't last very long. It has something to do with our candor and something to do with our willingness to engage in battle; and I must say that all the battles I've been in the Congressional committees over the years, this is the *first* time I've been introduced—and so nicely—by a Congressman. (Laughter.)

Because so much of what I was going to say has been said ever so eloquently by Dr. Farrell and what we've heard before, I would just ask if any of you have any questions, anything you'd like to talk about, on all the nice things we do for you in the federal government, and so forth. I'm willing to take questions on just about anything. Yes sir...

Q. What is your political assessment of the possibility of the country waking up to the fact that we are going to have change the EPA law?

A. I wish I knew. I think it's going to have to think about, there needs to be an organizational change in the government. I think the EPA should be pulled back into a cabinet department. They were with Agriculture at one point, and of some of the nice things that President Nixon did, he put them into independent status in 1972. I think that's an error just because of accountability, if nothing else. I would hope that the next bunch that come in will look toward reorganization from that aspect. But, at the same time, as every year we re-look at the FIFRA, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, we don't ever seem to get down to a realistic coping with what it's all about. Last year, and I think this year again, there's a coalition between chemical companies and environmentalists. Well, that's just dandy! Where is the coalition that

has to do with production agriculture? And the Farm Bureau is about the only one that keeps submitting the same remarks, but I'd sure like to see production agriculture on its own get a little more forceful. We're about to lose it. I would certainly like to get rid of pesticides for five days—and let the public start eating half bugs (laughter); but that's not going to happen, of course.

Q. Why should we expect to see a major change and shift in policies when 98% of the population is the recipient of the cheap food policy, when only 2% of us produce it?

A. Is that true? Last year, it was 3%. You know, we still like to think that there are more people employed by agriculture than any other field, because of counting in supermarket personnel, and so forth. I don't know how to answer that. I look at what I do in my job as a regulator—I know that sounds "dirty," but somebody's got to try to keep the food supply safe and wholesome. I don't know what to tell where the political power comes in, other than people still have to eat. We are so rich in this country, and we have too much electricity. I don't think we really have any concept of real hunger. I don't know. I look at all that we have done...I think we need consumer demand so much and are afraid to ask a few more cents for it. And it's not just avocados that have been in trouble. My goodness, the lamb people are thrilled to be up to 30 cents a pound this year....I think we tend to not carry our enthusiasm for what it is we do forward; I think we talk to each other too much, that we kind of.... People don't like to see me come to my supermarket, either; I have a good time. I think, through the food marketing institutes. I think, through the trade associations. I don't think the percentage on the land is going to increase greatly. We've had a lot go out this past year, and you look at something like a government program—the dairy buy-out. Now, this has been *wonderful*. A lot of people got out of the dairy business who didn't like being in the dairy business, and in so doing sold the high producing cows to the fellow next door, buying his low producers, selling those—getting full value, and going out of business. Well, I'm proud to say that milk production only went up one percent last month. (Laughter.) Government programs don't necessarily solve the problem. Twenty-six billion dollars doesn't, either.

Q. We've seen the proposed map of the counties now on the Endangered Species Pesticide Act. There are many errors coming from Washington. It's very checkerboard situation. What are the chances of getting that thing into a better frame or getting it postponed so that the potential imposition of prevention of use of pesticides in very large areas affected by native species is side-tracked until decent provisions get adopted?

A. Well, I hope that we are effective at that. We only found out this from the Department by accident, which I think has to tell you something. Now, we've been running to the Hill with our maps—and our maps aren't the new maps either, I don't think—comparing maps. ...I think the pressure to slow it down will have to come from the Congress. But, oh definitely, because there's just a wipe-out of California, Florida—the whole plant production area is hit terrible, and we have to do something about this.

Q. What can we do?

A. We're going to keep meeting. We're stirring up the Hill. We're seeing if we can't have a hearing or two. I mean, my goodness—this is proper hearing function.

Q. What is this Endangered Species Act?

A. We all have to comply with it. What happens is, while you're complying with one department's law, you're forced into breaking another department's law, and you also have your own law to carry out; and I have to carry out that law. Well, usually if I'm doing something wrong, I'm agreeing with the Endangered Species and I'm offending the FIFRA. It's just awful, and I think we do need full hearing—I don't think Congress intended for us to be forced into breaking all these laws. Or get caught.

Q. I understand that we're still selling a lot of grain to Russia.

A. Sure.

Q. Could you get them interested in avocados? (Laughter.)

A. Let's got for it, right? Why not? Have you tried?

Q. Nyet.

A. Nyet. Now, Dick Lyng's been in Japan trying to sell them rice; I'm sure he wouldn't mind at all trying to go to Russia and sell them avocados. It's like you've got the TAP program this year, on targeted export assistance. I think anything the Department can do to help access the markets, we're certainly standing there willing and ready to do that. My goodness, why not? Send the stuff over, get them excited, but don't teach them how to raise all the trees. (Laughter.) Thank you for having us out here.