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March, 1976Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed S. 1617 -- Agricultural pest control. This bill clarifies and extends the Secretary of Agriculture's authority to control and eradicate plant pests and animal diseases.

Under present law, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to control and eradicate insect pests and plant diseases within the several States. The Secretary is further authorized to assist Mexican authorities in controlling and eradicating four specific plant pests. Finally, the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with the Governments of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, British Honduras, Panama, Columbia, and Canada in activities to control and eradicate any communicable disease of animals whenever such action is necessary to protect the livestock, poultry and related industries of the United States.

S. 1617 will broaden the scope of the Federal Government's role in controlling and eradicating insect pests and plant and animal diseases, by specifically authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture:

- (1) to add detection measures to his eradication and control activities and make such activities applicable to all plant pests both in the several States and Western Hemisphere countries;
- (2) to issue phytosanitary inspection certificates for the export of domestic plants and plant products including any transiting the United States; and,
- (3) to make "vectors" (communicable animal disease carriers) subject to Agriculture's animal disease control and eradication program in Central America, and add the Bahama Islands, the Greater Antilles, and the Lesser Antilles, and international organizations or associations to the list of nations and groups that can participate under this program.

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