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APRIL 9, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary  
 (Dallas, Texas)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
 TO BE DELIVERED AT THE  
 TEXAS GRAIN AND FEED ASSOCIATION CONVENTION  
 THE CIVIC CENTER  
 EL PASO, TEXAS

APRIL 10, 1976

It is an honor for me to address this great convention of the Texas Grain and Feed Association. Coming to Texas is always a special treat for me, and it's especially satisfying in the springtime.

Your countryside is alive and humming with farm machinery of every description. Spring is a time of new birth, a time of optimism, and this year there's a lot to be optimistic about.

As the state which produces more cattle and grain sorghum than any other, Texas has played a major part in one of the most successful farming years in America's history.

In fact, the last three years have been the highest net farm income years in history, and that's not a bad record. I don't think it is mere coincidence that these three very successful years have been years when the government left you alone and let your produce without a lot of bureaucratic interference. I can promise you that is the kind of successful farm policy I intend to pursue in the next four years.

Today we no longer have heavy farm surpluses hanging over the market, costing the government a million dollars a day just for storage. Instead of piling it up, we're selling grain in record volume. The Nation's grain reserves are now in the hands of farmers and the private trade. This system is working very well, and I commend you for it.

During the past year, your very fine industry has been affected because a few grain inspection agencies have not properly carried out their responsibilities. It is absolutely essential that we maintain the confidence of our export grain customers, who buy such a large percentage of America's farm production.

But we must not -- we cannot -- do it by turning over more of your business to a government bureaucracy in Washington. I strongly oppose the so-called "Humphrey-Clark" Bill which would federalize the U.S. grain inspection system. I favor instead an approach which provides for more careful federal supervision of grading and weighing our grain for export. However, I do not believe that it is appropriate or necessary to extend this limited federal participation to interior points.

Private concerns have for years operated country elevators and weighing and inspection services all across our great nation. The abuses which have been exposed do not implicate these internal operations at all, and I see no reason to replace private interests with government controls.

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Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture has recently proposed broad sweeping regulations aimed at eliminating conflicts of interest and insuring a more efficient portside grain inspection system.

I have urged Secretary Butz to devote the best and most comprehensive efforts of his department to insure that the grain of American farmers sold abroad is properly certificated and that the integrity of our export efforts is restored to its proper position.

Abuses of the past have impaired our trade credibility and short-changed the American farmer. We are working hard and fast to correct these deficiencies, and I hope that the Congress does not overreact by federalizing the entire system.

In any event, I propose to put an end to corruption in the grain inspection business, and the sooner the better. Furthermore, I am -- and will continue to be -- firmly opposed to putting your grain in the control of some government board or international reserve.

I am firmly opposed to subsidized imports. I don't want American farmers having to compete with the national treasuries of foreign governments.

I am just as firmly in favor of the farm policies which yielded a \$21.6 billion Agricultural export market last year -- and will be more than \$22 billion this year.

I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export an estimated 48 million metric tons of feed grain -- an all-time record -- in the current marketing year. That's 12 million more than we exported last year, and about 7 million more than we exported in the previous record year of 1973-74.

I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export between 1.5 and 1.6 billion bushels of corn during this marketing year. I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export between 250 and 300 million bushels of grain sorghum this year -- a record amount.

These policies are the ones this Administration has followed for the past twenty months. And they are the policies we will continue to follow for the next four years, to keep Agriculture strong and keep it growing in America.

As you know, our domestic feed grain usage has not been expanding as rapidly as our export demands in recent years. But even domestically, where a short corn crop during the 1974-1975 season resulted in a very substantial decline in feed grain use, we are steadily recovering.

The number of cattle on feed is sharply higher than a year ago, although it will be later this year before we can expect feeding rates to approach those of the early 1970s.

I suspect we will get into these particular matters in a little more detail during the question-and-answer session, but let me make one or two brief general observations first.

With respect to our overall Agriculture policies, as you know, I have appointed the Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, as Chairman of my new Cabinet-level Agricultural Policy Committee.

This Committee will have the central role in developing and directing our nation's food policies, and with Earl Butz as Chairman, you can be sure that his strong, plain-spoken voice of common sense and his advocacy of your interests will be heard in the highest councils of government.

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You will also be interested to know that Secretary Butz leaves tomorrow on a ten-nation mission to promote the further development of our agricultural export markets. Or as Earl says, he's going overseas to drum up some business for the most prolific producers of food and fiber in the history of mankind.

All of you know that, to a large degree, your success depends on your country's success. When your country has economic problems, so do you. When your country has good relations with foreign nations, so do you.

The real decision that you and your fellow Americans will be making this year is whether or not America is on the right course for the future.

The evidence strongly suggests that we are on the right course. After suffering the worst economic problems this nation has faced in forty years, America is on the road to a new prosperity.

Employment is going up, and unemployment is going down. Sales and investments and industrial production are going up, while inflation and the rate of growth in federal spending are going down. In fact, they have been cut in half in the past year. In addition, our balance of trade is the best on record. Every single leading economic indicator today is a sign of progress and a sign of hope for America. We have pursued some common-sense policies in the past twenty months that stressed the revitalization of the private sector, rather than relying on big government to cure our economic ills and increase its control over our lives.

We must never forget that a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have. My policies have reflected that basic truth, and they have worked. They're still working, and we have a lot more progress in store in the months and years ahead.

That is a promise I can make with confidence, and the watchword of this Administration has always been to promise no more than we can deliver, and deliver everything we promise.

Finally, we are pursuing the same kind of common sense policies internationally as we are domestically. America is at peace. We are pursuing a policy of peace through strength. Our strength is unsurpassed by any other nation on earth, and let me assure you that I intend to keep it that way in the future.

Our military capability is fully sufficient to deter aggression, to keep the peace, and to protect our national security. But strength involves more than military might. A nation's real power is measured more completely by considering a combination of its military, agricultural, industrial, technological, and moral strength. In every one of these areas, the number one nation in the world is the United States of America.

We have every right and every reason to be confident and optimistic about our future. Even as we enter our third century of independence, I believe America is still in the springtime of its life.

I am ready to meet the great challenge of the future with you, to fill that future with new achievement and a new life for the nation we love so much.

That is my goal, and that is why I am asking for your support on May 1, November 2, and in the years to come.

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