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SEPTEMBER 13, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased today to sign into law H.R. 8410, which assures that our livestock producers will receive payment due for livestock sold to meat packers. This legislation arose out of a demonstrated need for greater protection of livestock producers. I commend the Congress for developing H.R. 8410 to provide this protection which is in the best interest of producers, packers and consumers.

This bill makes constructive amendments to the Packers and Stockyards Act which will both reassure livestock producers and help provide stability in the marketplace. Producers will be reimbursed for livestock sold to meat packers covered by the Act which go out of business unexpectedly. Consumers will be able to count on more stable meat supplies at retail stores.

Without this legislation, sales of livestock to meat-packing firms would have continued without adequate assurances of payment -- as was the case last year when a major midwestern meat packer went bankrupt while many of our cattle producers were left holding over \$20 million of worthless checks. Producers will be protected against this kind of catastrophe in the future.

Although I am opposed to unnecessary interference by government in private business enterprise, Federal action in this instance was necessary and appropriate. The legislation I am signing today accomplishes its legitimate objectives without excessive restrictions on industry and without the creation of superfluous new government agencies.

I would like to commend the bipartisan efforts of the Congress in rapidly responding to the clear need for the legislation now before me, and I am pleased to see the turnout of Members of Congress here today who were instrumental in the passage of this legislation. Your constructive efforts have earned the strong support of all the major farm organizations and livestock producer groups.

The competitive, free enterprise nature of the livestock industry in particular and American agriculture in general has long been the envy of the world. No other nation can match the ability of American farmers and ranchers to provide food for the consumer at a reasonable cost.

H.R. 8410 will help make a good system even better. I take pleasure in signing this bill today.

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