

April 9, 1956

STATEMENT for JOHN EDWARD FOGARTY, RHODE ISLAND

Gentlemen of the House:

The Conference Committee report submitted to this House undoubtedly represents long hours of consideration and an attempt by farm area lawmakers to find some answers to an admittedly serious economic situation in American agriculture.

However, as a representative of producers and consumers in the State of Rhode Island I must take issue with several of the major items embodied in this proposed legislation.

This bill, with its provision for high rigid government price supports and increased incentives for surplus production, can mean only higher taxes and rising production costs for the consumers and the farmers of my district. Farmers in this section of the United States can see little benefit in a legislative proposal that would provide increased costs on the feed grains they must have in order to raise--on limited acreage--livestock, poultry, and dairy cattle. At the same time under the three price program advanced for wheat the cheap feed that might result to farmers in other sections of the United States--particularly in the grain belt--can only mean greater competition to us by producers not now raising poultry, dairy, and other livestock.



This bill will depress agriculture in Rhode Island. It will further aggravate misunderstandings between consumers in the metropolitan areas and producers in rural and fringe areas.

It is not easy for a Rhode Island farmer, hamstrung by this type of legislation and all the publicity connected with it to explain to a city dweller in my State that he is reaping none of the benefits but, in fact, is finding his income steadily pushed lower and lower by the ever-mounting surpluses of over-production from other areas of this country.

As many Congressmen from the Northeastern states know, the present program, and the program now before us, while not benefitting Northeastern farmers in any discernible respect, imposes harmful restrictions on us. Many of our Northeastern farmers would like to grow wheat on their farms to use as feed. But if they raise more than 15 acres of wheat, heavy penalties are imposed upon them even though they feed all wheat they produce on livestock on their own farms. If they fail to pay such penalty they are eventually faced with court action compelling them to pay it.

The legislature of the State of New York recently approved (Assembly Resolution 40, March 19, 1950) a resolution memorializing the Congress to permit farmers who use for livestock or poultry feed all the wheat they produce on their farms to be permitted to do so. These farmers do not receive any benefit from the federal farm program. They should not be penalized by it. I am disappointed that there is nothing in this Conference Report that would lift such restrictions.

Farmers don't want this bill; consumers can only be against it. For these reasons, I urge that the Conference Committee report be rejected.