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INSPECTION OF LIVESTOCK
PRODUCTS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 1215, S. 3942.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill will be stated by title.

The legislative clerk read the bill, by title, as follows: A bill (S. 3942) to provide for thorough health and sanitation inspection of all livestock products imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection to the present consideration of the bill.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum. Several Senators are interested in the bill, and I hope they will be called.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, the pending legislation was originally introduced in the House of Representatives by Dr. JOHN MELCHER, Representative from the First District of Montana. JOHN MELCHER happens to be the only veterinarian in the Congress of the United States, and he is a man who knows his business when it comes to ranching and when it comes to the feed and care of livestock, sheep, and other range animals.

Congressman MELCHER has put a great deal of effort into this proposal and has used his expertise in the drawing up of legislation which would seek to bring imported frozen beef, mutton, and veal up to the same sanitary and hygienic standards as we require of American packers in our own country.

A few days ago, Representative MELCHER told the House Agriculture Committee that inspection of imported meat by examining small samples in "the confusion, dust, and grime of oceanside docks should be ended."

He also testified that present imported meat inspection methods accept some defects and impurities, and give consumers no assurance of a wholesome, sanitary product.

He also noted—and this was brought out in testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee—that at the present time, we have only 14 foreign review officers, watching 1,100 foreign plants which export meats to us, and that that number just cannot assure sanitary processing.

He noted that on-the-dock inspection is "scant and incomplete, with less than 1 percent of all meat inspected"; also, that incomplete examination of "these scant samples of meat is neither adequate nor a real assurance of wholesomeness."

Mr. President, this is something which I think is worth the consideration of the Senate and of Congress. I am disturbed that there is some opposition to it, because the basic intent of this legislation is to place importers of foreign meat products on the same hygienic and sanitary standard as American packers are, under the law, compelled to live up to at the present time.

I would hope, therefore, that the Senate will give this most serious matter, as far as the cattle and meat industry both are concerned, its most serious consideration this afternoon.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the Record testimony which I gave before the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry some weeks ago.

There being no objection, the testimony was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE MANSFIELD, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MONTANA

Senator MANSFIELD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to appear before you in behalf of the Melcher bill, S. 3942, on inspection of imported meat.

There is nothing more important to consumers and to those who produce meat in this country—and we have both in Montana—than the maintenance of absolute confidence in the purity, wholesomeness and sanitary quality of the meat and animal products offered consumers.

Per capita consumption of beef has grown from 85 pounds in 1960 to 110 pounds last year, and of all meats from 161 pounds to 183 pounds per person. The Department of Agriculture is forecasting continued growth, and this is all because American consumers have confidence in our system of inspection and, therefore, in the quality of the meat allowed to be offered to the public at stores.

In recent years, when proof was offered that some slipshod practices existed in handling of meat, Congress has promptly provided for poultry inspection and for improved meat inspection. We have voted the most rigid requirements considered desirable on our own meatpacking and processing establishments, and we have voted to require that meat imported into the United States be produced under equally sanitary conditions so it will meet standards of wholesomeness equal to ours.

My confidence in the quality and thoroughness of inspection of imported meat was shaken when Dr. John Melcher, a Montana veterinarian who was elected to Congress just a year ago at a special election, described to me what he had learned as a result of a personal investigation into the nature of our inspection of foreign meat plants and of meat as it comes into the United States.

We have only 14 or 15 men who travel the globe to make sure that more than 1,100 foreign packing plants are designed and operated to meet our sanitation requirements, and that the day-to-day inspection of meat as it moves down the packing house lines is equal to the inspection standards and requirements we maintain. The annual report of the inspection branch at USDA shows that one of these men frequently inspects three plants a day, which certainly isn't much of an inspection of the plant, the pre-mortem or postmortem procedures, the boning, cooking or freezing, packing and handling of meat destined for the United States. In his hour or two visit, he cannot,

of course assure himself that there is premortem examination of all animals butchered around the year, or that there is thorough postmortem inspection of every carcass on the packing line 365 days a year—that has to be taken on faith that the governments in Central and South America, Oceania, Europe, and the East all provide rigid day-to-day inspection equal to ours.

We run a check on the results of the inspection on foreign plants when meat arrives in the United States. The equivalent of about 75 man-years is devoted to sampling the 1.6 billion pounds of meat shipped to us to make sure that the defects in it do not exceed certain tolerances: one minor defect per 30 pounds, one major defect over 400 pounds, and one critical defect per 4,000 pounds. Congressman Melcher will discuss those defects and their classification.

It is my understanding—and if it is not correct, we should make it so—that as meat moves down processing lines in an American packing plant, if any defect is discovered which affects the absolute wholesomeness of a piece of meat, that piece of meat is pulled off the line and the defect eliminated or the meat "tanked" and removed completely from any possibility of human use.

The bill which I introduced in the Senate, a companion to Congressman Melcher's H.R. 17444, provides for thorough inspection of all animal products imported into the United States, and that means piece-by-piece inspection, after thawing, of the fresh and frozen meat which arrives at our ports of entry.

We cannot provide hundreds or even thousands of U.S. inspectors in foreign plants to maintain daily vigilance over meat produced in each of them which may be shipped to us. We can inspect these products thoroughly which are offered for our markets, and that is what the bill proposes to be done.

I am concerned about the volume of meat and animal products being imported into the United States. Unregulated, it can have extremely serious consequences for our domestic producers, upon whom we must rely for the great bulk of our meat, dairy products, and other animal foods. We deal with the problem of volume in separate import quota legislation. With others I authored the meat import law of 1965.

This question of thorough inspection in a separate question, just as important as any import quota, for failure to guarantee American consumers that imported meat—which is mixed with our own in ground and processed products and is unidentifiable as imported meat except in rare instances where it comes in, in consumer packages—is absolutely wholesome and sanitary can destroy confidence in the meat and animal products on the shelves and in the coolers of our stores.

Congressman Melcher will testify today. As a veterinarian he can discuss with you in some detail the existing inspection procedures, and such problems as the failure of Australia to eliminate certain defects in shipments to us. This aspect of the problem is very technical and I defer to my colleague, Melcher, who is a very thorough person. At least, we have found him to be as a veterinarian in Forsyth, Mont., as a congressional candidate from the Second District, and as a Congressman, in all areas he is tops.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that I have inserted in the record here a letter addressed to you under date of July 14 from Bill McMillan, C. W. McMillan, in charge of the Washington office of the American National Cattlemen's Association, and also a letter addressed to me by Mr. Russell Heine, secretary-treasurer of the National Lamb Feeders Association, of which, incidentally, Mr. Roy A. Hanson of Miles City, Mont., is the president.

Senator JORDAN. It will be so ordered and will be inserted immediately after your remarks.

(The documents referred to follow:)

AMERICAN NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION,
Denver, Colo., July 14, 1970.

HON. B. EVERETT JORDAN,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Committee on Research and General
Legislation, Senate Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR JORDAN: The American National Cattlemen's Association heartily endorses S. 3942, S. 3987, and S. Concurrent Resolution 73.

These bills all would provide for better inspection of meats for consumers. They would give additional assurances to the U.S. consumers that the product they purchase from domestic production or foreign nations will be wholesome.

Our Association was in strong support of amendments at the time of the passage of the Wholesome Meat Act of 1968 which require meat inspection standards in foreign meat plants exporting to the U.S. to be at least equivalent to those in our nation's federally-inspected plants. Up to that time, the regulations only stated that inspection standards should be "substantially equivalent" to those in the United States. That language provided a loophole whereby the foreign produced product needed only be "something less than" the standards of sanitation and wholesomeness existing in the United States' federally inspected plants.

One recommendation we offer to S. 3942 and S. 3987 is to make it perfectly clear that the dockside inspection of foreign meats would include product which is classified as canned, cooked and cured. The requirement for this product to be cooked is one related to animal disease, particularly to assure that the virus of foot and mouth disease is killed, thus preventing that dread disease from gaining entry into the United States. This cooking requirement does not insure that the product might be free from foreign materials considered to be unwholesome for human consumption. The requirement of dockside inspection of this product would be an additional assist in the interest of the U.S. consumers. Interestingly, most of this product arrives in the U.S. in large containers rather than "consumer size" so that administrative difficulties to inspect this product becomes much less.

Today we take the same viewpoint as we did in 1968. We support the legislation pending before your Subcommittee and urge its enactment simply because we feel that U.S. consumers are entitled to wholesome food whatever its source.

We respectfully request that this letter be made a part of the hearing record. Thank you.

Cordially,

C. W. McMILLAN,
Executive Vice President.

NATIONAL LAMB FEEDERS ASSOCIATION,
Spencer, Iowa, July 13, 1970.

HON. MIKE MANSFIELD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SIR: It has been brought to our attention that you are cosponsoring a bill for stricter inspection on imported meats. We highly commend you for this action.

We realize, of course, that lamb is not subject to quota restrictions but we feel it is very important that lamb be included along with other meats in this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

RUSSELL HEINE,
Secretary-Treasurer.

Senator JORDAN. Do you have any questions, Senator Curtis?

Senator CURTIS. Well, I am certainly in accord with the objective of the bill.

I just have one question: Where would this inspection take place as envisioned in your bill?

Senator MANSFIELD. We would hope that more thorough inspections would take place at ports of entry, but we would leave that to the committee in its judgment which is more cognizant of the entire agricultural field, and specifically this area, as to what it would recommend as to what it thought should be done.

Senator CURTIS. Well, I am for more inspection.

Senator MANSFIELD. It is going to cost money but I think it is going to be worth while.

Senator CURTIS. I am glad to have any information available on the effectiveness of inspection at the point that it originates as compared with the point of arrival.

Senator MANSFIELD. We think the foreign governments have a responsibility in this respect, too.

Senator CURTIS. And we have a responsibility in the foreign countries.

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right.

Senator CURTIS. Under the prior act, if it is not being carried out and hasn't been funded or carried out in a big enough way.

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right. You can not do it, it is an impossibility with 14 or 15 inspectors around the world.

Senator CURTIS. Does your bill envision the inspection of canned and processed meats?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes; I think it ought to take in the whole gambit.

Senator CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator JORDAN. Senator Burdick, do you have a question before you start?

Senator YOUNG. I want to thank the Senators from North Dakota and Montana for sponsoring this kind of legislation. I do think we have a responsibility to the consumers of the United States to see that imported foods are thoroughly inspected and as pure and wholesome as American produced foods. There is no means of accomplishing this unless you have a better inspection.

I think this should be done both in the United States and at points of origin. I think we have to spend the money to see that meat is properly slaughtered at the points of origin in foreign countries.

Senator MANSFIELD. I agree completely.

Senator JORDAN. In that respect, I am sure Senator Curtis and other members of the Agriculture Committee heard Senator Bellmon at the last meeting, I believe, or the meeting before that. He had been to Australia on another occasion and visited what they said was the best packing plant there. He said it was far below the standards that we would require here, and he was surprised that they would take him to this particular plant as their best one.

Senator YOUNG. If I may say off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator CURTIS. Senator Allen, do you have any questions?

Senator ALLEN. No, sir.

Senator CURTIS. Senator Burdick, we will be glad to hear from you at this time.

Mr. MANSFIELD. May I say further that this measure has nothing to do with imports per se. There is an import limitation, providing quotas on frozen products. That will still remain in effect. This is concerned only with the matter of raising the hygienic and sanitary standards for imported beef to the same

standards which we apply to our own packers in this country.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, the purpose behind the pending bill is to assure American consumers of imported meats that they will be eating the same wholesome quality of meats that would result from our own inspection and standards here at home.

At the time of the "clean meat" bill's passage here in the Senate, the distinguished Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HRUSKA) and I offered an amendment which provided that, in the case of imported meats, they would be subject to the same inspection requirements as our own domestic meats. The Senate accepted this amendment, I am pleased to say, but I fear that in the haste with which we passed that legislation, we did not go far enough, and the bill authored by the distinguished majority leader is designated to fill that gap.

I point out, on page 2 of the committee report, the following language:

Imported meat products * * * are permitted to come in and move freely in interstate commerce and be commingled in the preparation of federally inspected products, if the plant producing them has inspection deemed equivalent to Federal inspection. This provides much less opportunity for continuing surveillance and much less assurance that the products will be wholesome than do the State systems.

This undoubtedly has been found to be true, and the Senator from Montana has quoted from one of the Members of Congress who is also a veterinarian to that effect.

Mr. President, I have an amendment which I hope will satisfy the requirements of the Senator from Montana, and at the same time not cause any abrasiveness with those countries in which either they now have or are fully capable of having standards and inspection equal to ours. I am referring particularly to Australia and New Zealand. Generally, those countries and their meat producers are quite proud of the quality that they produce. I myself have visited a good many of their packing plants, as well as a good many in this country, and I would have to say that I thought that the quality of their cleanliness, their modern machinery, and the way they handled their products was equal to that in this country.

I send my amendment to the desk at this point, and ask that it be read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment will be stated.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Insert the following before the comma (,) on line 5 of page 1: "from countries which do not have standards and inspection equal to those of the United States".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment of the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, the point I wish to make is this: There was a gap left in the law, not intentionally but unintentionally, by the amendment which the Senator from Nebraska and I secured the adoption of at the time of the "clean meat" bill. Under our amendment, and under the existing law, a single plant which might be able to satisfy inspec-

tion requirements that are equal to those here in this country could export meat to the United States. But, as is pointed out in the committee report and as the Senator from Montana has pointed out, the surveillance of that situation is very limited. What is needed is something over that, in the country itself.

In Australia and New Zealand, they are quite capable of having standards and inspections equal to those of this country, and with the assurance that the country itself, as well as the plant, has standards and inspection equal to ours, I do not believe we are going to have a problem.

In the case of plants in countries other than those, the Senator from Montana would have a very tight requirement, which hopefully would induce those countries to adopt standards and inspection equal to ours, but until they do, they are going to have to get along under a much more restrictive situation.

I would say that with my amendment, the objectives of the Senator from Montana will be achieved, and our friendly neighbors like Australia and New Zealand, which are capable of having equal standards to ours and inspection equal to ours, will not have any misgivings over this legislation.

Mr. HRUSKA. Mr. President, I rise in support of the amendment just proposed by the Senator from Iowa.

There was an effort made, when the Wholesome Meat Inspection Act of 1967 was enacted, to meet this very problem, but apparently that effort was not extensive enough, and it should be in some way strengthened and built up.

The amendment offered by the Senator from Iowa is a good faith effort to improve the bill as nearly as we can here, by way of meeting some of the comments and exceptions taken to the bill in its present form by the Department of Agriculture.

Those exceptions and comments were made in the Department's letter of July 16 of this year. As to whether or not this amendment will fully comply with their request for tightening up the bill and making it less comprehensive than it is, as the Department of Agriculture desires, remains to be seen. But it is a good faith effort in that direction. I therefore support it, and I hope that the author of the bill will see fit to accept the amendment, if possible.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. HRUSKA. I yield.

Mr. MANSFIELD. May I say that the author of the bill is the distinguished Representative from the First District of Montana, Dr. JOHN MELCHER, and all I am doing is offering the Senate version, in cooperation with my distinguished colleague from Montana (Mr. METCALF), who is now presiding over this body.

It appears to me, from reading the amendment proposed by the distinguished Senator from Iowa, that it fits in entirely with the intent of the Melcher proposal, and certainly, if these particular countries meet the standards which our own people do, there is no need for legislation of any sort.

May I say, in passing, that when I presented my testimony before the sub-

committee, under the chairmanship of the distinguished Senator from North Carolina (Mr. JORDAN), immediately afterward I received a call from a CBS station in San Francisco. Some member of the Australian Cabinet, as I recall, was so put out that he ventured the suggestion—I hope in jest, but I am not at all certain—that "Senator MANSFIELD ought to be hung, drawn and quartered"—I think I quote his exact words—for offering this type of legislation. I could not follow the Australian's reasoning, because I do not think I mentioned Australia once during the course of the testimony.

So I hope that this Minister—I cannot recall his name, unfortunately—will follow this debate today, deal with the intent on the part of the Senate so far as this particular measure is concerned, and recognize that all we are asking of those who import frozen meat is that it be of the same standard, quality, and hygienic aspect as that which we require by law of our own producers in this country.

I am delighted to accept the amendment. I think it fits in with the intent, and I hope that the amendment will be unanimously adopted.

Mr. BROOKE. Mr. President, I should like to ask some questions of the distinguished Senator from Iowa.

I am not from a livestock-producing State but from a consumer State, and I should like to ask these questions. First, let me say that I certainly am in sympathy with the purpose of the proposed legislation.

Could the Senator give us any indication of the countries which do not have inspection standards which are equal to those of the United States from which we receive a sizable amount of imports of livestock?

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I understand that the inspection standards of Australia and New Zealand are substantially equal to ours. There might be some little differences. But I understand, further, after talking with the Australian and New Zealand meat boards and their ministers of agriculture, that their intention was to make their inspection standards equal to ours.

I do not know for a fact, but I have heard that some of the other countries from which we do receive some limited amounts of meat imports—from South America and from Poland—do not have standards of quality and inspection systems equal to ours. There may be an individual plant that does. But, so far as the countries are concerned, that is my understanding.

The Senator from Massachusetts undoubtedly realizes that approximately 75 percent of our imported meats do come from Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. BROOKE. Would the imposition of these standards be so costly upon the exporting countries that they would be unable to export livestock to the United States?

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I do not know. I would say that in the case of quantities of canned hams, for example, of which we receive a considerable amount from Poland, it would probably be worthwhile for them to adopt standards equal to ours. But in the case of

other countries, I can see where they might make a decision that the cost of providing standards and inspection equal to ours, for the sake of their overall population, would make it prohibitive, and therefore they would forgo the exports to the United States. That would be an individual country's decision.

I want to emphasize that the largest chunk of imported meats by far comes in from Australia and New Zealand, which is one reason why the Senator from Iowa went to those countries to inspect some of their plants, to see how they were doing.

Mr. BROOKE. What effect would this legislation have on the cost of meat in the United States?

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I would say that I do not believe that it would have much effect, because the bulk of this meat comes in from those two countries, which I am quite well satisfied will be able to satisfy the requirements of the amendment.

But I might turn the question this way: There is no question in my mind that the Wholesome Meat Act and its implementation will require the consumers, either directly or through their taxes, to pay more for their meats. But we made a policy decision by an overwhelming vote in Congress that it was worth it, so that we would have the assurance that we would not have people eating contaminated meat.

Mr. HRUSKA. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROOKE. I yield.

Mr. HRUSKA. In answer to the first question, I should like to make a little comment, because there has been some development in the foreign meats plant inspection activities of the Department of Agriculture within the last few months.

The original question of the Senator from Massachusetts was as to what countries are complying with standards equal to ours and what are not. That will fluctuate, and it will be different from time to time, depending upon their behavior and upon their application of laws and the standards, some of which are in their statutes and some of which are not. Only recently, the Department of Agriculture embargoed further shipments of mutton from Australia or New Zealand.

I do not recall which, and I ask unanimous consent that in due time I be allowed to confirm one or the other. I do not want to do injustice to the other.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HRUSKA. We had to embargo them because the conditions of processing in the plants there were so deplorable that the Department of Agriculture felt that they ought to be kept out.

Obviously, whatever the cost of such an operation is—and in that case it was embargoed—it had to be incurred, because the first consideration is the consumer, as it is in our Wholesome Meat Act itself.

So I would say, in answer to the first question, that, from the information I have on the subject, it will depend upon

the constant efforts of these countries not only to impose standards which are equal to ours but also to execute them.

Mr. BROOKE. Will the Senator enlighten me as to the percentage of imports so far as the consumption of meat products in this country is concerned?

Mr. HRUSKA. In the case of beef and veal, I do not have the exact percentage, but it would be something on the order of 6, 7, or 8 percent currently. I should like to get a verification of that figure, too.

Perhaps the chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee would have some information on that.

Mr. JORDAN of North Carolina. I cannot give the Senator the exact percentage of either of these meats, but last year, 2,300,700,000 pounds of canned and frozen meat were brought into the United States.

Mr. HRUSKA. That included the boneless beef, also.

Mr. JORDAN of North Carolina. That is correct.

Mr. HRUSKA. Plus the canned, cured, and chilled.

Mr. JORDAN of North Carolina. That is correct. A tremendous amount of meat came in.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROOKE. I yield.

Mr. MANSFIELD. The distinguished Senator from Nebraska and I, among others, introduced a frozen meat import limitation bill 6 years ago. It passed both Houses. A reasonably good bill was arrived at in conference. It met with the satisfaction of the American National Cattlemen's Association, the International Livestock Feeders Association, all of the State livestock associations, and I believe with the approval of the Australia and New Zealand governments, though that is subject to a question mark at this time. But it did prevent the American market from being flooded by the frozen meat coming in and on a basis which seemed to be agreeable all around.

The pending bill in no way interferes with the imports as such based on U.S. production, and it does not apply to countries which meet U.S. hygienic, health, and sanitary standards.

In brief, what we are trying to do is to place these importers on the same plane that we, through law, place our own domestic producers.