

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of the Secretary

Reed 6/30/53  
at

Washington, June 27, 1953

Advisory Groups Recommend Relief Measures for Southwest Drought Areas:

A three-pronged attack to bring relief to drought-stricken farmers and ranchers of Southwest Plains States was recommended yesterday by livestock, credit, and meat trade groups in a meeting with U. S. Department of Agriculture officials in Washington.

The recommendations of the three groups highlighted the serious drought situation in the States through suggestions that would (1) provide needed feed supplies, assist in the transportation of livestock, and other measures to avoid liquidation of herds, (2) provide credit to farmers to stay in business or rebuild herds, and (3) lend strength to the livestock market by stimulating consumption of large beef supplies now available for distribution.

Officials emphasized that the cooperative efforts of the distributive trades and the government to increase consumption of meat will benefit not only the cattle industry in drought-affected areas, but in all beef-producing areas of the Nation as well.

President Eisenhower yesterday declared the drought affecting areas of Texas and Oklahoma a "major disaster" under Public Law 875. The request for this designation was made by Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson upon recommendation of the Livestock Committee which conferred in Washington yesterday. Secretary Benson, who is in Texas today to confer with Southwest

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: Records as President (White House Central Files)  
Official File: Box 474  
Folder: OF 113-I Drought Disaster 1953 (1)

agricultural leaders about the drought situation, has been apprised of the committee recommendations.

The three committees--consisting of livestock, financial, and retail trade and industry representatives--first met in general session to discuss the entire drought problem, and later broke into separate sessions for development of recommendations. John H. Davis, Director of Commodity Marketing and Adjustment, presided. Both Secretary Benson and Under Secretary True D. Morse met with the groups.

At the conclusion of the meeting the groups went on record as expressing confidence in actions that have been taken by the Secretary and his staff to help meet the situation confronting farmers and ranchers in the areas affected. Specific recommendations of the three committees follow:

Livestock Industry Committee

In view of the emergency situation existing in the drought areas of the Southwest, the committee makes the following recommendations for direct action as promptly as possible for immediate relief in the area:

1. We recommend that the U. S. Department of Agriculture make available in the emergency drought area, cottonseed and other feed concentrates for maintenance of herds and flocks and at prices livestock producers can afford to pay.
2. We recommend that railroads be requested to reduce freight rates for emergency movement of feed and livestock in and out of the drought area.
3. We recommend that the U. S. Department of Agriculture continue to purchase maximum quantities of beef for which there are outlets and also explore

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: Records as President (White House Central Files)  
Official File: Box 474  
Folder: OF 113-I Drought Disaster 1953 (1)

fully for additional foreign outlets. On this point, we recommend that a small committee be named to confer with Mutual Security Agency Administrator Harold Stassen on the possibility of sending larger quantities of U. S. produced beef to foreign countries as part of the MSA program.

4. We reaffirm the recommendations made to Secretary Benson at the conclusion of the March meeting of this committee.

5. We recommend that the USDA through the Extension Services and other agencies develop a program to bring distress livestock and surplus feed together by acquainting producers and feeders in and out of the drought area with availability of distress livestock and of grass and other feeds.

6. We wish to express our deep appreciation for the opportunity to present the facts in this serious situation to the President, the Secretary of Agriculture, and members of the Congress. We are deeply grateful for the prompt and direct action that is being taken.

#### Committee on Finance.

The advisory committee on credit agreed that there is an immediate and urgent need for a supplemental credit program to help livestock producers stay in business. Too many livestock producers are liquidating all or part of their holdings because of their inability to obtain additional financing. There will also be a need in the future for this type of credit to help farmers rebuild their herds.

The committee also agreed that no government-sponsored direct loan program should lend funds to a farmer or rancher who is able to obtain his credit

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: Records as President (White House Central Files)  
Official File: Box 474  
Folder: OF 113-I Drought Disaster 1953 (1)

from other sources. They added that no government program should be set up primarily to refinance the loans presently held by other lenders, or support a basically unsound livestock operation.

Retail Meat Trade and Industry Committee

There is a serious emergency situation brought on by the drought and this, coupled with the largest number of cattle in the history of the United States, calls for record distribution of beef.

Per capita beef consumption is now the greatest in 44 years. It has taken the combined efforts of all segments of the cattle and beef industry to accomplish this end. While new records have been established, still more can be done, and packers, processors, and all those connected with the ultimate distribution to consumers plan to intensify their efforts to move the maximum quantity to consumers.

Our goal will be to increase consumption rather than to store emergency amounts now coming to market.

We ask for the cooperation of all the industry in helping to move the maximum tonnage to consumers. To accomplish this, we ask that everyone do all possible to educate consumers to the best use of the types and cuts of beef that will be in heavy supply.

We are glad to report that the National Livestock and Meat Board, meat packing industry, brokers, wholesalers, independent retailers, food chains and super markets, restaurants and hotels, and government agencies are already planning to step up their educational and promotional programs. We feel certain that there can be an increase in consumption that will help all in the industry as well as be beneficial to consumers.

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: Records as President (White House Central Files)

Official File: Box 474

Folder: OF 113-I Drought Disaster 1953 (1)