Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

I rise today in support of the bill to amend S. 1716, which

previously passed the other body and is now before the House.

In May, Congress passed and the President signed U.S. Troop

Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability

Appropriations Act, 2007. This law included disaster assistance for

crop and livestock producers for losses sustained between January 1,

2005 and February 28, 2007.

Producers were able to receive payments for losses sustained in only

one of these years and were required to be in a county that was

declared a disaster county in that same calendar year. This law also

contained provisions found in section 9012 requiring that forage

producers must have participated in a crop insurance pilot program or

the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance program during the crop year

for which compensation is received.

As a result of section 9012, very few livestock producers are

eligible for the disaster relief passed by Congress because crop

insurance is more widely used in crop production than in livestock

production. The amendment before the House will strike section 9012 to

broaden the eligibility requirements to allow more livestock producers

that suffered loss to participate than were allowed under the

previously passed disaster package. The amendment before the House will

not change direct spending because this amendment reconfirms the

assumptions made when the Congressional Budget Office scored the

original bill.

I believe section 9012 establishes an appropriate incentive for

producers to manage their risk using the available tools. However, it

is not reasonable to put this policy in place without warning. To tell

producers in 2007 that they should have bought crop insurance in 2005

to get assistance for losses incurred in 2005 is not fair. Livestock

producers should know, however, that in the future, crop insurance or

participation in similar risk-management programs will likely be

required to qualify for future disaster assistance.

I commend the gentlewoman from South Dakota and others who have

worked for this legislation. I support the bill to amend S. 1716 and

urge its adoption.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.