Total red meat imports into this country jumped from about a billion pounds in 1960 to 1.8 billion pounds in 1967—an increase of 67 percent. The most dramatic increase has been in beef imports. In 1960 beef imports were equivalent to about 4.9 percent of domestic production. By 1967 these imports were equivalent to 6.3 percent of production. Imports are expected to be even higher in 1968, and no downturn is in sight in the foreseeable future. There is no question that these imports have had, and will continue to have, direct impact on prices received by domestic producers for livestock.

Because we now have record supplies of domestically produced meats and at the same time are experiencing balance-of-payments problems, it would be a good time to curb the level of meat imports. Reducing meat imports into this country would have little effect on the volume of agricultural products exported from the United States, since most of the meat exporting countries are nearly self-sufficient in food and fiber and buy very little from us. At the same time, quota provisions in our present meat import law (Public Law 88–482), which was passed by Congress in 1964, are very liberal when compared to meat import policies of the other major importing countries.

To cope with this growing problem, I want to lend my support to your bill (H.R. 9475) which would modify the 1964 meat import law by (1) lowering the base quota of imports by 20 percent, (2) eliminating the 10 percent override for triggering quotas, (3) dividing the annual quota into four equal quarterly quotas, and (4) authorizing the imposition of quotas on other meats when determined by the President to be needed to prevent unwarranted increases in imports.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any questions, if not, then thank you Mr. Hagan, for sharing your views with us.

Mr. HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The Honorable Dave Martin, of Nebraska, is our next witness. Come forward, sir, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVE MARTIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Mr. MARTIN. Mr. Chairman and members of the Ways and Means Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this morning in support of legislation to put further restrictions on imports of beef.

The present law, which was enacted in 1964, does not adequately protect the industry and as you are well aware, imports of beef have risen at an alarming rate over the last 4 years.

The present law sets a quota based on the average imports of beef, veal, and mutton during the years 1959 through 1963 but allows for 110 percent of this figure to be imported before controls on imports may be triggered. The base quota under the law for 1965 was 725 million pounds, or approximately 797 million pounds under the 110-percent allowance. Since imports may increase percentagewise, the same as beef production in the United States, the 1968 quota is now 1,045 million pounds.

Imports have been constantly increasing each year, with a 27-percent increase in 1966 over 1965, and a 10-percent increase in 1967 over 1966. During the first 4 months of 1968 we have again had a substantial increase over 1967. Under the present law canned or prepared