berries are some of the agricultural commodities raised. Castroville is the "Artichoke Capital" of the world, raising 98 percent of the domestic U.S. supply. However, by far the most important single agricultural commodity raised in my district is beef.

This may not remain true for long. The cattlemen in my district are immersed in a severe adverse economic situation. Over the past several years, the cattle industry has been operating on nothing more than the appreciated value of its land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture figures prove that the farm debt is at an all-time high. No business can continue to operate for long without a net profit.

The cattlemen are attempting to solve their own problems within the framework of the free market system. The local cattlemen's associations, in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association and the American National Cattlemen's Association, are voluntarily attempting to balance supplies of beef with effective demand. The main thrust of their program is designed to balance the tonnage of beef produced to achieve a goal that has been eluding them for so many years—a reasonable net profit.

The cattlemen want to achieve their goal of net profit in the best tradition of their industry without direct Government assistance. However, they find that this is going to be extremely difficult to achieve with tremendous quantities of fresh, chilled and frozen imports arriving on our shores from other nations of the world. A State like California, and my district in particular, in a port-of-entry status, suffers even greater consequences from this tremendous competition than do many of the States further inland.

The cattlemen do not seek to ban all imports. They are attempting only to achieve a degree of reasonableness and adjustment to a statute already on the books—the Meat Import Act of 1964. This very act has tended to become a pattern for other commodities to follow because it is not protectionist in the true sense of the word. To the contrary, it guarantees reasonable access to the U.S. market for the exporting nations of the world.

The legislation which the chairman of this committee and I introduced would, we feel, achieve much for the consumers and the domestic cattle industry because it would bring the import situation more into line with what is being attempted nationally by the cattlemen themselves—a balanced, constant supply.

Many misleading and untrue statements have been made about the effect of cutting back imports to the United States. Charges that appear in some syndicated columns would lead one to believe that the price of hamburger is going to skyrocket because the supplies of lean, boneless beef from foreign countries would be regulated.

This is simply not accurate. To the contrary, the cattlemen and meatpackers want to continue to produce the finest quality, most wholesome beef available anywhere on the face of the earth at the most reasonable prices to the consuming public. They can continue to do this on a long-range basis only if their business is placed on a sound economic basis. As a matter of fact, should their economic situation not improve, the consumers of this Nation will suffer the consequences of a shortage of domestically produced beef complicated by the whims of exporting nations. These exporters hold no basic alle-