

mittee presides. I will attempt to contact the appropriate legislators at the time of the hearing to gain their support.

Very truly yours.

These growers and packers represent approximately 95 percent of the national pack of frozen and canned strawberries.

In the three Pacific Coast States, where the largest percent of processed strawberries are handled, there are approximately 2,000 growers whose primary market is provided by processors.

You will note in table I that strawberries are grown commercially and are important to growers in 28 States.

This processing strawberry production represents approximately a \$35 million income to growers, and \$3.8 million to workers in processing plants. It is a significant part of both a farm and processing diversification, which is already seasonal and marginal.

A major factor causing depression in these important industries is the increasingly large imports of frozen strawberries, principally from Mexico, and the potential for further growth in imports and disruption of domestic marketing.

U.S. strawberry growers and processors need your assistance in limiting excessive imports, if they are to continue in this business.

During the most recent 5-year period, average total disappearance was somewhat less than during the previous 5 years, which, when measured against the substantial increase in population, indicates a declining per capita consumption.

In the absence of market expansion potential, there is little or no room in the domestic market for a large volume of imports of this product, and any increase in such volume must be regarded as a replacement of domestic production, to the detriment of all segments of the domestic industry.

The U.S. grower overproduced strawberries in the period of 1956 to 1959, and then adjusted his planting to correspond with the market demand and a fair return.

The success of this self-help program of acreage reduction was short lived, due to the beginning of a rapidly expanding strawberry industry in Mexico. Imports from Mexico moved from 14.2 million pounds, or 5.3 percent of U.S. disappearance, in 1959, to a high of 82.8 million pounds, or 31.5 percent of U.S. disappearance, in 1966.

The 1966 imports of 82.8 million pounds was a 60-percent increase over the previous year. This has upset a balance needed by U.S. growers to keep producing strawberries economically.

The 82.8 million pounds of strawberry imports represents over \$3.5 million to farm labor, \$1.5 million to processing labor, and \$10 million to growers.

Many growers and processors are small operators who have been able to compete effectively in normal domestic marketing, but are most severely affected when the supply is inflated by imported product and prices are depressed.

Strawberry growing and processing is really a small business generally carried on by small and medium sized processors.

We encourage the committee to consider the strawberry problem in this perspective.

U.S. growers are unable to compete successfully in the domestic market with frozen strawberries produced in Mexico. The reasons