permits a market-sharing arrangement with other countries. They are allowed to export products to the United States and at the same time the American producer is assured of a share of the market for his commodity.

The ultimate goal of this legislation is to assure the American producer of a chance to market his product—which increases the demand for labor—and stimulates the economy. What's wrong with this?

NATURE OF FLORIDA AGRICULTURE

Florida has a diversified agriculture, including the production of a wide variety of fruit and vegetable crops as well as livestock and sugar cane. In recent years, Florida has become known as "the Nation's Winter Vegetable Bowl," as well as the Nation's Citrus Center, since there are several months of each year, during which Florida is the sole domestic supplier of winter vegetables. It is important to realize that vegetable and fruit producers in Florida claim a share of the produce market in the United States solely because of Florida's geographical location.

During any period or season when vegetables can be produced in abundance in areas to the north of Florida, it rapidly becomes unprofitable to produce commercial vegetables in Florida. Our farmers, therefore, find themselves with productive seasons based on the climatical limitations of other areas within the United States. To permit an increasing volume of foreign fruits and vegetables to be imported could eliminate the only productive period available to Florida producers and, in turn, cause many people to become unemployed. A large majority of them are unskilled and would experience difficulty in obtaining other employment.

The production and marketing costs for our products are relatively high and the risks which include weather hazards are great. Labor is the largest single cost item involved in producing and marketing our crops. Obtaining an adequate supply of capable harvest labor and meeting competition of imports from foreign countries who have an abundance of cheap labor have rapidly become the two greatest problems facing most producers. The availability of cheap labor has encouraged foreign producers, primarily producers in Mexico to ship more produce into this country.

In July 1966, the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture published a "Survey of Mexican Vegetable and Melon Production," which contained statistical data concerning United States imports of winter vegetables from Mexico for 1963–64, 1964–65 and for the period December 1965–April 1966. This information has been updated by the Foreign Agricultural Service—Fruit and Vegetable Division—to complete the 1965–66 season and also includes the 1966–67 season. (See Appendix No. 1.) This data reflects the tonnage of beans, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, onions, peas, peppers, squash and tomatoes brought into the United States during the winter season in direct competition with Florida producers.

This report shows that for the period December 1963–July 1964, the United States imported 517,650,000 pounds of the above commodities. The following season, for the period December 1964–July 1965—a period in which virtually no foreign workers were authorized for the harvest of commodities grown in the United States—and a period when many millions of dollars of crops were abandoned in the United States because of labor shortages as well as economic pressures—the total volume of these commodities imported from Mexico increased to 585,780,000 pounds.

The data for the 1965–66 season shows imports of 668,580,000 pounds and 1966–67 climbs to 713,050,000 pounds. It is interesting to note that in only four years time the total imports of the above listed commodities have increased 195,400,000 pounds, or thirty-eight percent (38%), while total production in Florida of these same commodities has remained constant or decreased slightly.

Mexican strawberry production continued its sharp upward trend in 1965–66 with output estimated at 55,000 short tons, compared with 42,000 in 1964–65. A new record has been set each year since 1958. (See Appendix No. 3.)

Mexican citrus plantings are expanding at an alarming rate. (See Appendix No. 4.) Production for 1965–66 was about 25 million boxes with an increase of more than 100 percent expected within the next five years.

Imports of limes have been rather constant for the last five years; however, mango production has increased rapidly since 1961. (See Appendix No. 5.) The importation of these two commodities along with avocados from the Caribbean areas presents a serious problem.