

It also might be quite appropriately the time to ask the Secretary of Agriculture to take as much interest in this problem as the Secretary of Labor has so ably done with regard to the importation of foreign labor. But even this latter Cabinet member has not solved the problem of the American worker in other industries which are suffering from the same ailment. As you well know we are working on that aspect too in the hopes of a broader approach through H.R. 478 and H.R. 479 and similar bills which have been introduced.

I would like to suggest that you consider the merits of appropriate market sharing controls on imports of agricultural products and that you ask the Secretary of Agriculture to outline the type of measures that might be enacted for this purpose. Otherwise any proposed legislation in this respect will, as it has always in the past, run the gamut of criticism not only from our own Department of Agriculture but other Departments which will concern themselves with this.

We are not interested in hearing any further response from Administration officials with regard to the "escape clause" and other well-meaning statutory provisions which have been totally ineffective in resolving this problem.

Let me thank you again for your serious consideration of this problem and let's recognize that we must come up with a better answer than we have been able to in the past if it is going to be resolved in the best interests of our agricultural industry.

Sincerely yours,

JOFFRE C. DAVID,
Secretary-Treasurer.

APPENDIX C

FLORIDA FRUIT & VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION,
Orlando, Fla., July 6, 1967.

HON. ORVILLE L. FREEMAN,
*Secretary of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR SECRETARY FREEMAN: Thank you for your thoughtful letter of June 16. I appreciated the opportunity of attending your Farm Policy Conference in Athens, Georgia, and felt that it was extremely worthwhile. You are to be complimented for your interest in holding these meetings at the grass-root level and getting firsthand information and advice from the farmers and their representatives with regard to their problems.

We concur in your thoughts on the need for more bargaining power for farmers—for more "muscle in the marketplace." It might interest you to know that we have several marketing agreement and order programs in effect, both Federal and State, on fruits and vegetables. Additionally we have organized a few Exchanges which in essence provide some bargaining strength by virtue of the fact that these cooperative organizations acquire title to the members' products for the purpose of setting conditions of sale. These programs have produced some measure of stability and improvement in the returns to the growers. However the commodities to which they are confined have been largely those which as yet are not under the serious threat of foreign competition.

By now I am sure you have heard from members of our Congressional Delegation with regard to the disastrous inroads being made into some of our fruit and vegetable industries here in Florida by foreign competition from low-wage areas, principally Mexico and the Caribbean countries.

Quite obviously some of the programs which we have would not work satisfactorily on commodities which are subject, such as tomatoes, to a flood of cheap imports from Mexico unless some reasonable quantitative or flow-to-market restrictions can be applied on the imports, as well as the domestic product. No one is asking for the total exclusion of imports of competitive commodities but rather better control so as to give the domestic producer first consideration and an opportunity to exercise his "muscle in the marketplace" as you have suggested.

Tariffs at their presently low levels have long ceased to be a satisfactory means of equalizing costs of production and thereby controlling imports, in the light of the tremendous wage differentials and other related labor costs which exist in our country vis-a-vis Mexico and similar areas of production to the south of the border.