

Ag. Comm. Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D., Minn.) and Chairman Frank Lucas (R., Okla.) Discuss Crop Insurance Issues and Farm Bill Amendment #47 on the House Floor.

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Note this is an unofficial transcript of a House Floor debate.



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Rep. Lucas: Mr. Chairman, I wish to yield two minutes to the Ranking Member of the House Ag Committee, Mr. Peterson.

Chairman: The gentleman's recognized for two minutes.

Rep. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for yielding. You know, what this amendment's going to do is undermine the crop insurance system and take a whole bunch of people out of the crop insurance system that we need to make it actuarially sound.

Now, it was just said here that there's no other program that doesn't have a payment limit. Well, let me tell you something. Mr. Kind is co-sponsor of the Goodlatte-Scott dairy provision, which has no payment limit. And the 6,000 cow dairies in Mr. Kind's district are going to get \$600,000 of benefit from our subsidies in the dairy program, and there's no payment limitation. So come on, you know. If you really believe in payment limits, why isn't it on the Goodlatte-Scott scheme, you know?

So, I mean, this amendment undermines everything that we've been trying to do in the Agriculture Committee. We had the biggest disaster last year, drought, that we've ever had. We had no significant call for an ad hoc disaster for the first time that I can remember since I've been here, and the reason is because crop insurance worked.

Agriculture is working. In my district, we have 3% unemployment because agriculture is working. The one part of the economy that's actually working, and all these people that want to create jobs and want to create government programs so we create jobs, they want to take the one thing that's working in the country and screw it up, and I'm not going to be part of it, so vote no on this amendment.

Rep. Lucas: When you look at the way federal crop insurance works, it shifts the risk from the Treasury to the private companies, to the reinsurers, to the farmers and ranchers. If you look at how these premiums and payments have gone over the last decade, not just the really tough weather last year, you'll find that in reality, 70% of the policies over the last ten years have not returned one single penny—70%.

And if you look at how the program has worked in the seven years prior to the onset of the drought of 2011, basically the federal government actually made money on federal crop insurance. Now, I can't help the anomaly that the super drought was in the Midwest, but I can tell you that's a pretty good track record. The ranking member's entirely right: it works. Let's not mess up something that works. With that, I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.