

Mr. McCAIN. In light of these agreements, I now announce there will be no further rollcall votes this evening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MONTANA POLE VAULTERS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to take a moment to share with the Senate the remarkable accomplishments of some truly "high fliers."

All of us in this body travel to schools and encourage tomorrow's leaders to "aim high." Last week, three Montana pole vaulters did just that and the result was that collegiate and high school records fell.

Three extraordinary women, all from my hometown of Helena, made a bit of history.

On the collegiate level, Helena High Graduate and University of Montana freshman Nicole Zeller twice set new Big Sky Conference records in the pole vault, first by clearing 11 feet 10 inches, and then, improving her own record with a vault of 12 feet, ½ inch.

Meanwhile, two Helena high school students—one from my and Senator ROTH's alma mater, Helena High, the other from Capital High—were registering the two best vaults in the nation this year. One of them set a new national record for high school pole vaulters.

Not only did Shannon Agee of Helena High set a new national record. She beat the old one by a mile. She vaulted 13 feet and eclipsed the old record by a full incredible five inches.

On the same day, Capital High senior Suzanne Krings cleared 12 feet 6 inches, giving her the second-best vault in the nation this year.

So today, Mr. President, I extend my congratulations to Shannon, Suzanne and Nicole for showing all of us how to soar.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

MR. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 11, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,487,765,423,650.36 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-seven billion, seven hundred sixty-five million, four hundred twenty-three thousand, six hundred fifty dollars and thirty-six cents).

Five years ago, May 11, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,241,563,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred forty-one billion, five hundred sixty-three million).

Ten years ago, May 11, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,511,066,000,000 (Two trillion, five hundred eleven billion, sixty-six million).

Fifteen years ago, May 11, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,257,970,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred fifty-seven billion, nine hundred seventy million).

Twenty-five years ago, May 11, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$453,530,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-three billion, five hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,034,235,423,650.36 (Five trillion, thirty-four billion, two hundred thirty-

five million, four hundred twenty-three thousand, six hundred fifty dollars and thirty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, the Senate passed the conference agreement on S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. I am pleased that this important legislation, containing several amendments I authored, has seen its way to the Senate floor for proper and overdue consideration and passage.

Mr. President, the agricultural provisions of this bill are important for all farmers but I am especially proud of the provisions targeted to support our endangered small farmers.

Mr. President, this country is facing a national farming crisis. Day after day, season after season, we are losing small farms at an alarming rate. In 1980, there were 45,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin. In 1997, there are only 24,000 dairy farms. That is a loss of more than 3 dairy farms a day-everyday for 17 years. And it does not begin to measure the human cost to families driven from the land. As small farms disappear, we are witnessing the emergence of larger agricultural operations. This trend toward fewer but larger dairy operations is mirrored in most States throughout the Nation.

Mr. President, the economic losses associated with the reduction in the number of small farms go well beyond the impact on the individual farm families who must wrench themselves from the land. The reduction in farm numbers has hurt their neighbors as well and deprived the merchants on the main streets of their towns of many lifelong customers. For many of the rural communities of Wisconsin, small family-owned farms are the key component of the community. They provide economic and sound stability. They are good people and we need a system in which their farms are viable and their work can be fairly rewarded.

Many feel that basic research is a necessary and underutilized tool that can help to save this dying breed of farmers. There have been plenty of Federal investments in agricultural research, past and present, focusing almost solely on the needs of larger scale agricultural producers-neglecting the specific research needs of small producers. This research bias has hamstrung small farmers, depriving them of the tools they need to adapt to changes in farming and the marketplace and accelerating the trend toward increased concentration.

To address this concern, I worked with the conference committee to include a provision which authorizes a coordinated program of research, extension, and education to improve the viability of small- and medium-size

dairy and livestock operations. Among the research projects the Secretary is authorized to conduct are: Research, development, and on-farm education, low-cost production facilities, management systems and genetics appropriate for these small and medium operations, research and extension on management intensive grazing systems which reduce feed costs and improve farm profitability, research and extension on integrated crop and livestock systems that strengthen the competitive position of small- and medium-size operations, economic analyses and feasibility studies to identify new marketing opportunities for small- and medium-size producers, technology assessment that compares the technological resources of large specialized producers with the technological needs of small- and medium-size dairy and livestock operations, and research to identify the specific research and education needs of these small operations.

The provision allows the Secretary to carry out this new program using existing USDA funds, facilities and technical expertise. Dairy and livestock producers should not be forced to become larger in order to remain competitive. Bigger is not necessarily better. And in fact, M. President, expansion is often counterproductive for small operations, requiring them to take on even greater debt. Farmers need more help in determining other methods of maintaining long-term profitability. For example, small dairy farmers may find adoption of management-intensive grazing systems, combined with a diversified cropping operation a profitable alternative to expansion. But there has been far too little federally funded research devoted to alternative livestock production systems. Small producers need more Federal research and extension activity devoted to the development of these alternatives. This amendment is a good first step in establishing the Federal research commitment to help develop and promote production and marketing systems that specifically address the needs of small producers.

Using research dollars to help maintain the economic viability of small- and medium-size dairy and livestock operations has benefits beyond those gained by farmers and the communities in which they reside. Keeping a large number of small operations in production can provide environmental benefits as well. As livestock operations expand their herd size without a corresponding increase in cropping acreage, manure storage and management practices become more costly and more burdensome for the operator and raise additional regulatory concerns associated with runoff and water quality among State and Federal regulators. Research that helps dairy and livestock operators remain competitive and profitable without dramatic expansion will help minimize these concerns.

Mr. President, also incorporated into the bill is language requiring the Secretary to fund research on the competitiveness and viability of small- and medium-size farms under the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems—a new research program authorized by S. 1150 and funded at a total of \$600 million for fiscal years 1999 through 2002. With the inclusion of my amendment, the Secretary is directed to make grants for research projects addressing the viability of small- and medium-size farming operations with funding made available under the Initiative in fiscal years 1999–2002. This amendment ensures that the research needs of small dairy, livestock, and cropping operations will be addressed under the substantial new funding provided for agricultural research in this bill.

Finally, Mr. President, the conference committee also accepted important language regarding precision agriculture. Precision agriculture is a system of farming that uses very site-specific information on soil nutrient needs and presence of plant pests, often gathered using advanced technologies such as global positioning systems, high performance image processing, and software systems to determine the specific fertilizer, pesticide and other input needs of a farmer's cropland. This technology may have the benefit of lowering farm production costs and increase profitability by helping the producer reduce agricultural inputs by applying them only where needed. In addition, reducing agricultural inputs may minimize the impact of crop production on wildlife and the environment. While precision agriculture, generally defined, encompasses a broad range of techniques from high-technology satellite imaging systems to manual soil sampling, it is most frequently discussed in terms of the use of capital intensive advanced technologies.

Precision agriculture may result in production efficiencies and improved profitability for some farms, yet many in agriculture are concerned that, because of the capital intensive nature of precision agriculture systems, this new technology will not be applicable or accessible to small or highly diversified farms. It is unclear whether precision agriculture services, even if provided by input suppliers, will be available at affordable rates to small farms. Furthermore, some observers are concerned that private firms may find that marketing efforts directed at small farms are not lucrative enough and thus may avoid efforts to apply the technology to small operations.

In addition to concerns about the applicability and accessibility of precision agriculture to small farms, many are concerned that precision agriculture may not be the most appropriate production system for small farms given the costs of acquiring new technology or contracting for additional services. There may be other

production systems, such as integrated whole farm crop, livestock, and resource management systems, that allow small farmers to reduce input costs, improve profitability, and minimize environmental impacts of agricultural production that are more appropriate for smaller operations.

To address this concern, accepted language allows USDA to fund studies evaluating whether precision agriculture technologies are applicable or accessible to small- and medium-sized farms. The amendment also allows USDA to conduct research on methods to improve the applicability of precision agriculture to these operations. It is critical that USDA's research investment in this new technology not exclude the needs of small farmers. If it does, this new research program could ultimately affect the structure of agriculture, potentially providing disproportionate advantages to large scale farming operations, accelerating the trend to fewer and larger farms. My amendment will allow USDA to conduct research on low cost precision agriculture systems that do not require significant financial investments by farmers and that may be more appropriate to small or highly diversified farming operations.

Mr. President, I appreciate the cooperation of the chairman, Mr. LUGAR, and the ranking member, Mr. HARKIN, of the Agriculture Committee and their staff in addressing the important research needs of small- and medium-size farms by maintaining these amendments during conference committee consideration of this bill.

These amendments will ensure that research money is directed at the interests of the small farmer providing the tools to make these operations viable to survive the riggers of farming in the next century.

SHANNEL QUARLES—KANSAS YOUTH OF THE YEAR

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today, I rise to recognize an outstanding high school student from Wichita, KS. Shannel Quarles won the Kansas Youth of the Year award for 1998–1999. Along with this award, Shannel will receive a four-year scholarship to the college of her choice, sponsored by Oprah Winfrey's Angel Network.

Mr. President, I am proud to recognize the outstanding accomplishment of this high school sophomore. She is an exemplary role model for young people in our nation. I congratulate Shannel and her family and wish her continued success.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages

from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WARNER:

S. 2062. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to clarify liability under that Act for certain recycling transactions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HOLLINGS (by request):

S. 2063. A bill to authorize activities under the Federal railroad safety laws for fiscal years 1999 through 2002, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr.

GLENN, and Mr. SARBANES):

S. 2064. A bill to prohibit the sale of naval vessels and Maritime Administration vessels for purposes of scrapping abroad, to establish a demonstration program relating to the breaking up of such vessels in United States shipyards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MURKOWSKI (for himself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. 2065. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the tax treatment of Settlement Trusts established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CHAFEE:

S. 2066. A bill to reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ASHCROFT (for himself, Mr.

LEAHY, Mr. BURNS, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs.

BOXER, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. WYDEN,

Mr. KEMPTHORNE, Mrs. MURRAY, and

Mrs. HUTCHISON):

S. 2067. A bill to protect the privacy and constitutional rights of Americans, to establish standards and procedures regarding law enforcement access to decryption assistance for encrypted communications and stored electronic information, to affirm the rights of Americans to use and sell encryption products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THOMPSON (for himself and

Mr. GLENN):

S. 2068. A bill to clarify the application of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Governmental Affairs, jointly, pursuant to the order of August 4, 1977, with instructions that if one Committee reports, the other Committee have thirty days to report or be discharged.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself and Mr. CONRAD):

S. 2069. A bill to permit the leasing of mineral rights, in any case in which the Indian owners of an allotment that is located within the boundaries of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and held in trust by the United States have executed leases to more than 50 percent of the mineral estate of that allotment; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. DEWINE:

S. 2070. A bill to provide for an Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural