

WELCOMING REMARKS OF GOVERNOR FARRIS BRYANT  
AMERICAN NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
TAMPA, FLORIDA

JANUARY 25, 1962

As a native of central Florida, where cattle are nearly as numerous as tourists, I have had considerable exposure to both cattlemen and Florida visitors and I am happy to welcome you to Florida in both those capacities today. We are pleased that you selected our state for your 65th Annual Convention. We are proud of the leadership that Floridians have given this organization and, of course, delighted at their prominence.

Your visit here coincides with a period of tremendous growth and expansion in every area of Florida. I hope that you will take time to tour through our state before you return to your homes, for our pride extends beyond our multitude of outstanding tourist attractions and the active new industrial complexes which have sprung up in recent months and years. We are equally proud of the agricultural progress Florida has made -- progress that is in keeping with our position as the ninth largest of the 50 states and the fastest growing state of the Union.

So great is our growth that most of us in State Government must literally run to keep pace with the advances which surround us. In the light of this situation it was no wonder that our citizens selected in 1960 a young and vigorous leader to serve them as Commissioner of Agriculture. Those of you who have not yet met Doyle Conner will hear him shortly and will have an opportunity to meet him during the course of this convention. I can tell you on the basis of close association with him on the state Cabinet that he is a pace-setter and that under his guidance Florida agriculture

and its associated activities will set a pace of which our sister states will be envious.

Doyle, who raises cattle himself, reminds me on a regular basis that those ads you see featuring palm trees and bathing beauties basking in our sunshine ought to include photos of fine cattle grazing on the rich grasses of the state. He hasn't said so, but I don't believe he'd have any objections if we were to work a few of our bathing beauties into such a scene.

And, of course, he is right. Too few are acquainted with the magnitude and diversity of our agriculture, which for the 1960-61 season achieved an all time high of 896 million dollars in gross income -- a gain of 14 percent over the previous year. We estimate the income of Florida's agri-business -- the income of all agriculture production and all businesses dependent on agriculture -- at more than two billion dollars today and it is becoming more valuable each year.

The Florida cattle business has been doing more than keeping abreast of this growth. At the start of 1961 we were the fifth ranking cattle state east of the Mississippi. And as the numbers of cattle raised in Florida has grown, so has the quality and value of Florida beef improved. Much of the credit for this increase both in quantity and quality belongs to the Florida Cattlemen's Association which is as active and progressive a group as exists in any field in Florida today.

Agriculture is a vital part of the economic triangle upon which Florida's sound growth is based. Along with industry and tourism we expect it to continue its upward trend during this decade as we grow toward a conservatively estimated population of eight million by 1970.

This population will, of course, diminish available acreage for cattle and other agricultural development. However, the decrease should not be nearly as large, nor pose as many problems, as the figures might suggest.

For one thing, the recent population increases in Florida, as elsewhere in the United States, have tended to be urban and suburban in nature. Thus the undeveloped areas of the state, those which hold the greatest promise for future cattle and other agricultural expansion, will not be affected nearly as much as the cities and towns will be. Moreover, Florida is a large state geographically. Although the state's population doubled between 1950 and 1960, a comparison of the uninhabited areas of 1950 with those of 1960 shows little change.

The effects of population expansion and of industrial growth stimulated by such major projects as the Manned Lunar Probe Program at Cape Canaveral, which will have an estimated 20 billion dollar long range impact on our economy, cannot, of course, be discounted. But Florida's acreages are so vast that even those effects are minimized. For example, there is one Florida farm and ranching operation, not totally developed, which embraces 310,000 acres, or nearly four times the 80,000 acres adjacent to Cape Canaveral the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is acquiring for the NOVA program. And there are other single operations larger than this tract.

Though we are still not self-sufficient in beef production, we are making progress in that direction. We shall continue supplying feeder cattle to out-of-state buyers for a long time to come. At the same time we shall be increasing our own production of better grade beef. Cattle on feed in Florida have been increasing

the past few years and will continue to rise as our production of feed grains within the state expands.

Much of our progress relates directly to the extensive research constantly underway at our experiment stations and at our universities. In the heart of our cattle country we maintain one of the finest and most modern animal diagnostic laboratories in the nation as a part of our state service in the field of livestock disease prevention and control.

We are blessed, too, with a Legislature well versed on the importance of our livestock industry to the economy of the state. An example of their awareness of the needs of this industry was their appropriation of three million dollars of matching funds with the Federal government to wipe out the screwworm from the Southeast in 1958-59.

If these remarks have sounded more like an invitation to Florida than a welcome, it is because they are. We are a young state, a growing state, and a state of opportunity for all who would share the future with us. We welcome you as visitors, and hope one day to re-welcome many of you as residents. Thank you.