

APR 12 2001

YOUR ISSUES YOUR AGENDA • SPRING 2001



Congressman Fletcher Continues His Commitment to Family Farmers.

QUOTA INCREASE HELPS, MORE CAN BE DONE
 Congressman Fletcher continues to fight to protect the heritage of the family farm in Central Kentucky. From his seat on the House Agriculture Committee, he is constantly looking for short and long-term solutions for the farming problems facing Central Kentucky farmers.

"Since my first days in Congress, I have worked to preserve the family farm. For too long, tobacco farmers and small family farms have faced unfair and harmful policies from the Clinton Administration," commented Fletcher. "With a new administration comes a new sense of optimism for our farms."



Rep. Fletcher inspecting barley tobacco in Hartson County and talking about regulations faced by farmers.

Part of the optimism comes with this year's basic quota. Due to the hard work of Congressman Fletcher and Senator Mitch McConnell in getting the 1999 pool stock wiped out, this year's basic quota is 34 percent higher. This is still much lower than the highs of the past, but it is a step in the right direction. Tobacco farmers still face reductions in the demand for cigarettes and increased foreign tobacco imports. While these challenges are daunting, efforts are being made to give hope to tobacco farmers.

One area of opportunity is making tobacco a negotiated item during trade talks with other nations. China is an enormous and untapped opportunity for Kentucky tobacco

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and will generate a lot of attention this year. It is the world's largest consumer of tobacco products, yet has had prohibitively high tariffs on imports in the past. Last year, Congressman Fletcher voted for an historic bill that would open up the Chinese market to American products and lower the Chinese tariffs on tobacco by 75%. He also worked with the Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, to ensure that China agreed to drop its non-tariff barriers and cease discrimination against U.S. tobacco by citing unfounded phytosanitary issues concerning blue mold.

Another point of optimism for Kentucky farmers is the Rural America Prosperity Act, which Congressman Fletcher helped introduce in February 2001. This legislation will help farmers manage risks while reviewing costs of complying with

federal regulations. Some of the key components are significant tax relief, elimination of the unfair and dreaded death tax and trade promotion authority for the President.

While there is optimism for tobacco farmers and family farms throughout Central Kentucky, concerns remain about the future of the tobacco program. Congressman Fletcher is working to make sure that tobacco companies work with tobacco farmers and not against them. If tobacco companies continue to contract with individual farmers, steps must be taken to ensure the maintenance of the federal grading system so that the viability and future of the tobacco program is sustained and the traditional quality of our tobacco is assured.

The heritage of our family farmers is too important to America to allow it to wane. Farmers are the backbone of United States history and agricultural future. Congressman Fletcher will continue to work to ensure that farmers and farming remain an important part of Kentucky and America.



Rep. Fletcher meeting with Kentucky farm business members from Woodford County and discussing the importance of sustaining the tobacco program.

RURAL AMERICA PROSPERITY ACT

CREATION OF FARM ACCOUNTS

Establishes tax-deferred accounts into which farmers could deposit up to 20 percent of the annual farm income to be used in low-price years. It also ensures that farmers are not disqualified from using income averaging due to the Average Minimum Tax calculation.

REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE COSTS

Mandates that the General Accounting Office assess the overall cost of complying to Federal regulations and recommend reasonable, less costly alternatives.

EXPANDED TRADE AUTHORITY

Provides for trade promotion authority for the President, so that he is better able to negotiate to open up new markets for U.S. agricultural products.

TAX RELIEF FOR FAMILY FARMERS

Makes 100% of health insurance costs deductible so healthcare is more affordable for the farming family. It also offers a \$500,000 exclusion from capital gains on the sale of a farm, making it similar to the current exclusion for the sale of a home.

ELIMINATES THE DEATH TAX

Eliminates the dreaded death tax so the family farm can stay in the family. It's just not right to have to visit the tax collector and undertaker on the same day.

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Constituent Service Reference Sheet

ACADEMY APPOINTMENTS

One of the most rewarding opportunities for a member of Congress is to nominate young men and women for admission to our nation's Service Academies. An individual must meet the admissions requirements of the academy and receive a nomination in order to gain admission to the academy. Applicants, who may have questions or who are interested in obtaining a nomination to one of the Service Academies, should contact Lorrie Cash in the Lexington office at 859-219-1366.

CASEWORK - ASSISTANCE WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

Congressman Fletcher and his staff offer assistance for constituents having problems with government agencies. If you have a concern regarding Social Security, IRS, Passports, INS, Veterans Issues, Medicare, Military Cases, HUD, Small Business Loans, Contracts, etc. - please feel free to contact the Lexington office at 859/219-1366.

INTERNSHIPS

Flexible internships are available in either the Lexington or DC office. To be considered for an intern position, please forward a letter of intent with a resume to Lorrie Cash in Lexington or Brian Johnston in Washington, DC. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact either office.

PAGE PROGRAM

The Speaker of the House allows Members of Congress to nominate page applicants for spring, summer or fall terms. Page applications are reviewed and acceptance into the program is quite competitive. Congressman Fletcher was pleased to sponsor a young woman from Lexington who was appointed for the fall, 2000 term. Any student interested in the challenging page program should contact either office and complete a page application. The initial application should be submitted to the Washington office for transfer to the Speaker of the House. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age at the time of appointment and have a B average or better in English, science, mathematics, social studies and foreign language.

TOURS - OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Congressman Fletcher's office is pleased to provide a comprehensive list of museums, attractions and tours in the Washington, DC area. Most of the attractions in the Washington, DC area are offered at no charge and are open to the public. If you have questions regarding Washington sites, do not hesitate to call the Lexington or Washington office.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL TOURS AND/OR GALLERY PASSES

If you would like to see the House or Senate in session, gallery passes are available from the Washington office. You may phone in your request to either office. Passes may be picked up at the Washington office.

In order to arrange a tour of the Capitol, please contact the Lexington office and indicate the dates you will be in Washington. The Washington office will call you to verify whether a tour can be arranged during your visit. To better serve your needs, please give as much notice as possible.

WHITE HOUSE GREETINGS LETTERS

Congressman Fletcher's office can facilitate constituent receipt of letters from President George W. Bush honoring birthdays, 40 or older, or anniversaries, 50 or more years. Contact either the Lexington or DC office. The White House usually needs three to five weeks to process a letter request.

WHITE HOUSE TOUR TICKETS (LIMITED)

Please contact either the Washington or Lexington office with the dates you request for a Congressional White House tour. The White House is closed on Sundays & Mondays. All White House tours, including public tours, are conducted during the morning hours. Each Congressional office is provided a maximum of ten tickets per week, so it is important to arrange for tickets as early as possible. Requests are handled on a first-come, first-served basis. The White House confirms tickets approximately one month prior to the date of the tour. Tickets must be picked up at the Washington office.



Rep. Fletcher reflects with House Page Chelsea Woodyard of Lexington about her firsthand experience in the legislative process.

We're Here to Help when You Need Us.



Rep. Fletcher congratulates 2000 appointees to the United States Service Academies from Kentucky's 6th Congressional District.