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WASHINGTON, D.C., March 13 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today introduced a bill authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to step up distribution of advance wheat marketing certificate to farmers.

A member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Dole said the bill could "help meet the critical credit needs of farmers early this year."

Praising the President's recent decision to make advance payments of up to 50 percent at sign-up time to feed grain, wheat and small cotton producers, Dole said, "My bill would just step up by several months the wheat payments which otherwise would be made later this year."

Dole's bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to make payments to wheat producers "in advance of determination of performance and the balance of such payments...at such times as the Secretary may prescribe."

Pointing out the Senate did not act on similar legislation which passed the House and was introduced by Dole in 1967, the Senator added, "The credit situation confronting farmers now is more serious than it was in 1967. Even available Farmers Home Administration Emergency Loan Funds are fully committed."

Enactment of the bill, Dole said, "would make money available at an earlier date, saving the farmer from borrowing funds at a time when interest rates are the highest in 100 years."

Urging passage of the bill soon, Dole said, "Severe winter weather in the central and western states has required unusually heavy livestock feeding this year. Farmers and ranchers will have to purchase additional feed early this spring, and they'll need funds now not later."

Dole said the cost involved in making wheat payments at an earlier date would be "minimal".

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