



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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STATEMENT BY SENATOR BOB DOLE BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND GENERAL LEGISLATION S. 3276

THE WHEAT AND WHEAT FOODS RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND PROMOTION ACT

Mr. Chairman: it is an honor for me to appear before your Subcommittee to testify in support of the Wheat and Wheat Foods Research, Education, and Promotion Act (S. 3276). It was my privilege to see this legislation take form while I was a Member of the House of Representatives Agricultural Committee and I have participated in many discussions about the Bill during the past 5 or 6 years. After considerable discussion, change, adaptation, and compromise that the various segments of the Wheat Industry have made, I am proud to have introduced this legislation...legislation that enjoys the support of the entire wheat industry from the Farmer's field to the baker's shelf.

UNANIMOUS SUPPORT

Today, Mr. Chairman, you will hear witnesses from every segment of the wheat industry: The wheat grower, the miller, the baker, the retailer, the union representative...all in support of the bill. Of course, there are a few dissenters in the ranks of the organizations represented, however, the support by the majorities of these groups is unanimous and every few objections have been heard.

I would also call your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the broad support I received with co-sponsors of this legislation in the Senate...from both parties...This is a good bill and is receiving good support. Over 20 Senators have co-sponsored the bill.

DOLE-PAGE TWO

GOAL TO IMPROVE DIET

The research the bill will provide would mainly concern human nutrition and motivation on how specific types of wheat foods fulfill modern dietary, health and social requirements. By its very nature, the results of nutrition research cannot be confined to wheat, but rather applied to human dietary requirements in general. And since no food provides nourishment until it is consumed, information on how and why people eat wheat products or any other kinds of food is prerequisite to action toward the improvement of our national diet.

The educational side of the program would communicate the scientific findings of the proposed studies to teachers, writers, researchers, students, leader groups, and general consumers, as well as broadcast information on how to use wheat foods and other nutritious products to better advantage. And finally, promotion would employ the same kind of factual information in paid advertising to stimulate consumption of wheat products for their positive values and consumer benefit.

CONSUMER DOWN

Because of our changing life style, per capital annual consumption of wheat flour, bread and other wheat-based foods has dropped from 217 pounds in 1909 to less than 112 pounds today. But in the same period we have seen the incidence of heart disease climb until today it is the no. 1 cause of death. Yet there are studies at the University of Iowa that indicate a diet containing large amounts of breadstuffs helps reduce blood serum cholesterol--the commonly used

DOLE--PAGE THREE

index to a person's susceptibility to heart ailments. Is there a connection between declining per capita consumption of wheat foods and the rising incidence of heart ailments.

This is the type of question that would be researched under the provisions of this act. This will be pure research into the unknown additional benefits that can come from this vital grain.

A SELF-FINANCING PLAN

It is estimated that Americans consume about 230 million hundredweights of flour in the various forms of wheat products each year. Under the terms of the bill, first year assessments at 1 cent per hundred weight would net \$2,300,000. In succeeding years, at the top limit of two and a half cents per hundredweight of flour, the bill would provide as much as \$5,750,000 for work such as I have described.

These are not large sums as such when we consider the huge amounts of money commonly handled almost every day in business and government. Yet they are important sums for the reasons I have outlined. The money would be billed and collected by the processor from the end-product manufacturer. Hence, the measure is viewed as an original and highly innovative attempt at industry self-help. Those who developed the concept not only do not wish to receive funds from the government, they actually express fear of such involvement and the consequences of such action. The wheat producers, processors, and end-product manufacturers of wheat foods want to "do it by themselves."

DOLE--PAGE FOUR

It should be emphasized that under the provisions of this bill, the funds with which to conduct the research, education and promotion will be collected from the end-product manufacturer. It is reasonable to assume that this cost will be passed on to the retailer, and by him, on to the consumer. Estimates of this cost run from 1/100 to 1/500th of a cent per loaf of bread. This amount is so small that it cannot be passed on by itself. It is likely that this cost would be absorbed until such time as other costs may increase.

REQUIRES AGREEMENT

As proposed, the program is voluntary, in that a majority of each of the three groups I have named must first agree on what they want to do, a budget and a rate of assessment. But once they have agreed, then the assessment would be equitably and fairly imposed on all... with refunds available only upon the termination of the program. Yet, at the same time, any one of the three groups, or the Secretary of Agriculture, can veto, funds would be refunded to those from whom they were collected.

CONSUMERS BENEFIT

Thus, to me, "Wheat and Wheat Foods Research, Education and Promotion Act" represents a novel, interesting and highly democratic plan of great promise--not only as a self-help plan for wheat oriented industries, but as a proposal that should pay immense dividends to the consumer, with special benefit to those of lower income who must rely on inexpensive and commonly available products of wheat as the mainstay of their diet.

Mr. Chairman, I have enumerated only a few of the attractive features of this unusual piece of legislation, but I am sure the witnesses

DOLE--PAGE FIVE

That will continue the testimony today will broaden these greatly.

I see many friends of the wheat farmer in the Committee Room today and I will look forward to hearing their testimony.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Don Crane, President of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers is present today. He does not plan to testify, but I have discussed this legislation with him. He assures me that the Kansas Association of wheat growers supports this legislation. He plans to write me a letter to that effect along with some recommendations and suggested amendments which the Kansas Association of wheat growers feel will enhance the legislation. I ask that I may submit that letter in a few days for inclusion at this point in the record.