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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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WASHINGTON, D.C., FEB. 27, 1973 -- Senator Bob Dole today urged swift Senate approval of a bill he introduced in January providing for a five-year extension of the present farm program.

In his opening statement before the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee, Dole expressed his hope that the Congress would move **expeditiously** to pass farm legislation so that the bill could be signed into law by July 1.

"This would give winter wheat farmers sufficient time to adjust their plans before planting. The Agriculture Act of 1970 taught us a lesson which I hope will not be forgotten ...that winter wheat farmers plant their crop in September and October and the act of 1970 was not passed until November of that year," therefore," winter wheat farmers were unable to take advantage of the program's new options."

Since passage of the set-aside program in 1970, which allows farmers to plant the crops they feel will bring them the best return on their investment, most farmers have indicated they like the flexibility the program provides. It is preferable to the rigid cross-compliance controls of previous farm programs. Improvement of farmers' net income should be the primary aim of any farm legislation.

Because of the wide divergence in farming operations across the country, it make the administration of any one nationwide program difficult. Difficulties have been encountered in wheat producing areas such as the reduction in payments on the domestic marketing certificate for wheat, resulting from greatly increased export sales last summer, and in determining projected and proven wheat yields.

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Dole said, "It would seem that the proven yield provision should either be abandoned or changed drastically. Due to certain lease arrangements and other particular circumstances, some farmers cannot document their production and will never be able to prove production. So each year they are forced to give up part of their allotment to those farmers who can prove their yield."

The Administration wants to introduce a proposal to "phase-out" income supplement payments to farmers over a three-year period, thus forcing them to rely on the marketplace. The idea behind this proposal was that this income supplement would be replaced with improved market prices resulting from increased export demand and production controls through a broad set-aside of cropland. Set-aside payments would be continued.

"The Administration's desire to curtail spending and avoid a tax increase is admirable," remarked the Kansas Senator, "but I question the drastic change in the farm program that this proposal represents. The past three years have been a good experience in moving toward more reliance on the marketplace for more farm income. Most farmers are generally pleased with the results, but I wonder whether it is advisable to move as rapidly as recommended by USDA toward a complete "phase-out". I would suggest that such action might be too quick a reaction and could result in disaster comparable to the overconfidence exhibited in 1965 when the Secretary of Agriculture was so confident of export sales and crop shortages that he increased acreage excessively and put us into the surplus position from which we have just extracted ourselves."