

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-6521

DOLE MEETS WITH AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS

WASHINGTON -- In a continuing effort to boost the sagging farm economy, Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) met late yesterday afternoon with U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block, senior Department of Agriculture officials and the Senate Agriculture Committee. The two-hour session was prompted by alarming declines in agriculture prices brought on by overproduction and restricted access to world markets.

"The Administration is making a major effort to encourage farmers to participate in 1982 reduced acreage programs for wheat, feed grains, cotton and rice," Dole said following Wednesday's meeting. "The only way farm prices will climb is for farmers across the country to realize that the government did not tell them to plant fence-to-fence last fall or the previous fall as well."

According to Dole, Secretary Block will announce details tomorrow of the Administration's production/reduction programs for 1982 wheat, feed grains, cotton and rice.

"Secretary Block indicated that some features of the wheat program announced this past September will be changed to encourage greater participation. Farmers should not be penalized merely because the late passage of the 1981 Farm Bill made it difficult for farmers to anticipate program requirements. Secretary Block also told me there could be some increase in either the price support loan rate, or the reserve loan, for 1982 wheat and corn," Dole said.

Senator Dole also announced that he will meet with European common market officials next week to discuss the crisis in U.S. farm prices. That session will be followed on February 11 by a Senate Finance Committee hearing that will focus on specific actions Congress can take under international law to regain U.S. foreign markets.

"I'm convinced U.S.D.A. is looking at every possible alternative for boosting grain prices. I am especially interested in countering the unfair export subsidies paid by the European common market countries to dump their wheat and barley surpluses on the world market," said Dole.