

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE APPLAUDS PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON SOVIET GRAIN TRADE POLICY

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) today greeted President Reagan's statement on U.S. grain trade policy toward the Soviet Union as "a forthright and positive action which removes any doubts about the Administration's determination to expand sales of corn and wheat to all foreign markets."

In a strongly-worded radio message to U.S. farmers who are feeling the impact of low prices and sluggish exports, the President reaffirmed the Administration's opposition to the use of sanctions on U.S. agricultural exports except in extreme circumstances, and as part of an overall trade cut-off supported by other nations.

In addition, the President indicated that the U.S. will offer to sell up to 23 million tons of corn and wheat to the Soviet Union at the Fall consultations scheduled for October 28-29 in Vienna, Austria. This quantity represents an increase of 15 million tons over the base eight million tons established under the current extension of the US/USSR grain agreement, which became effective on October 1.

"Whether the Soviets decide to buy in November -- and I intend to encourage them to buy -- the President's willingness to guarantee delivery against all private contracts for U.S. farm products during the next six months is an historic precedent and a welcome step away from the mistaken embargoes and threats of export controls of the past," Dole said.

"I believe that President Reagan has gone the extra mile for U.S. farmers," Dole continued. "This idea of a buying period followed by a six month guaranteed delivery period may not fit the USSR's grain import schedule, although I'm sure adjustments can be made. Furthermore, the policy is a clear indication that the President is prepared to temporarily suspend his right to conduct trade policy if that's what is needed to put farmer's fears to rest. It's abundantly clear that the White House has no intention of following the disastrous embargo politics of the Carter Administration."

The President also stated that sales against these additional quantities made during the month of November will be guaranteed against any disruption during the ensuing 180 day period. The status of such contracts has been a major issue in the farm community ever since President Carter cancelled private contracts on nearly 14 million tons of wheat and corn, plus other commodities, on January 4, 1980, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.