

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE PRAISES KANSAS FARMERS IN SENATE FLOOR SPEECH

Washington, DC -- On the floor of the United States Senate, Sen. Bob Dole today praised American farmers on this National Agriculture Day and called on Congress to "make the tough decisions on the budget deficit and other issues which will benefit farmers."

"We have an opportunity today," said Sen. Dole in his Senate speech, "to remind all Americans of the farmer's productivity and the benefits of agriculture to our standard of living. He produces enough food and fiber for 116 people - 86 in the U.S. and another 30 in foreign countries."

Sen. Dole took special note of agriculture's role in the American economy. "Agriculture is the nation's biggest industry. Farm assets total \$1 trillion, and agriculture accounts for 20-percent of the nation's gross national product with \$610 billion of business activity yearly. Agriculture is the nation's largest employer with roughly 21 million people - one out of five jobs - involved in some phase of agriculture, from growing food to selling it at the supermarket," Dole said.

"My own state of Kansas has long been considered the breadbasket of the world," boasted Sen. Dole. "Kansas is the number one state in wheat production and wheat products exported, number one in sorghum silage production, flour milling capacity and grain sorghum produced, and is second in commercial grain storage capacity, total cropland, cattle on feed and dressed beef production. The annual value of Kansas agricultural production is nearly \$5 billion in crops and livestock."

Sen. Dole also paid tribute to agricultural education and research in the Sunflower State. "Kansas is the home of one of the nation's first land-grant schools - Kansas State University, a major teaching and research university. The university has been a leader in training students for successful agriculture-related careers."

"In addition, the Kansas agricultural experiment station has provided basic and applied research for almost 100 years to aid farmers and others. There are currently over 600 research projects ongoing in the experiment station network, which includes scientists from 30 KSU departments, five branch stations and 11 experiment fields. Further, the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service is an essential source in disseminating this information to all parts of our state," said Dole.

"I am proud of our Kansas farmers," Sen. Dole said. "Yet we all know that these are difficult times in agriculture. Many farmers are struggling to simply survive from several years of falling prices. Farmers have been a direct victim of runaway federal spending which has caused a huge budget deficit, resulting in a strong dollar and drastically reduced exports.

"When farmers struggle, the local businessmen struggle, the local bankers struggle and in some cases entire communities wither. So it is important to remind Americans of what the farmer contributes to our society, and to also remind Americans of the difficulties the family farmer is encountering in today's economic environment.

"It is my hope," said Dole, "that Congress will be committed to working in a bipartisan manner to make the tough decisions on the budget deficit and other issues which will benefit farmers and all Americans. The problems in agriculture are not a result of a particular administration or a particular party. Rather they are the result of years and years of shortsighted economic policies and farm policies which have sent confusing and short-range signals to farmers."

"It is our obligation," concluded Sen. Dole, "to work together to address the current problems, provide assistance and give long term direction that makes economic sense for the long-term security and prosperity of our nation and our farmers."