

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 3, 1986

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PLAN TO AID KANSAS FARMERS HIT BY HAIL STORM OKAYED; MICHIGAN, SOUTHEASTERN FARMERS COULD BE HELPED TOO

Washington, DC -- Legislation to provide relief to Kansas farmers hit by a summer hail storm, flooded farmers in Michigan, and drought-stricken farmers in the Southeast was approved by the Senate Friday, said Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), a co-sponsor of the measure.

The proposal would give the farmers disaster payments in the form of negotiable payment-in-kind (PIK) certificates, according to Dole. He said the payments would be limited to \$100,000 per farmer.

"Many Kansas farmers experienced one of the worst hail storms in memory earlier this summer," said Sen. Dole. "Golf ball-sized hail devastated crops, homes and equipment. More than 3,600 farms were affected, with damage reported to be \$21 million.

"The assistance we're providing is not a bail-out by any stretch of the imagination. But it does provide minimum assistance to those farmers who have faced these unfortunate natural disasters," Sen. Dole said.

Dole said the measure would help farmers in the Southeast who suffered an estimated \$2 billion in crop and livestock losses as well as Michigan farmers who lost approximately \$200 million worth of crops as the result of the worst flooding to hit that state in four centuries.

"When a natural disaster hits, suddenly and unexpectedly, it can cause a farmer who had a chance of surviving in these tough times to lose both his farmer and everything he has gained from a life time of hard work," said Sen. Dole.

The legislation was offered as an amendment to the omnibus spending bill being debated by the Senate. Dole said the proposal would be budget neutral because it would only require a lateral transfer of funds out of emergency loan programs. It passed by a 61 to 33 margin early Friday morning.