

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
THE "FOOD, AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND TRADE ACT OF 1990"
"WE NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY ON THIS BILL," SAYS DOLE

IT IS EXPECTED THAT NEXT WEEK WILL MARK THE COMPLETION OF THE FIRST MAJOR STEP IN WRITING THE 1990 FARM BILL. THE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE HAS PUT IN SEEMINGLY ENDLESS TIME AND EFFORT IN ORDER TO GET THE BILL WRITTEN AND INTRODUCED ON THE FLOOR. I AM PLEASED THAT THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER SHARES THE COMMITMENT TO A SWIFT AND TIMELY PERIOD OF FLOOR DEBATE, AS HE HAS ALLOWED FLOOR TIME SO QUICKLY AFTER WE VOTED THE BILL OUT OF COMMITTEE. TIMELINESS IS A TOP PRIORITY TO OUR NATION'S WINTER WHEAT FARMERS, WHO WILL BE SEEDING THEIR CROPS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. OVER THE LIFE OF THE 1985 FARM BILL, FARMERS HAVE KNOWN THE TENTATIVE PROGRAM DETAILS SIXTY DAYS IN ADVANCE OF NORMAL PLANTING DATES. WE ARE ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THAT, BUT IF WE ACT QUICKLY WE CAN ASSIST THOSE FARMERS WITH GUIDELINES THAT WILL AID IN PURCHASING AND FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING. AFTER ALL, WE ARE WRITING THIS BILL FOR OUR NATION'S FARMERS AS WELL AS THE CONSUMER, AND SINCE FARMING REQUIRES YEAR-ROUND DECISION MAKING WE MUST KEEP THEIR NEEDS IN MIND.

BUDGET WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE

ASIDE FROM THE FACTOR OF TIME, THE BOTTOM LINE FOR ACCEPTANCE AND PASSAGE OF THIS LEGISLATION MUST BE THE BUDGET. WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL HOPEFULLY RESULT IN SOME BI-PARTISAN COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING THE BUDGET DEFICIT. ALTHOUGH ALL OF US FROM FARM COUNTRY WOULD SURELY LIKE TO THINK WE COULD SOMEHOW EXEMPT AGRICULTURE FROM THIS FISCAL RECKONING, WE WOULD ONLY BE FOOLING OURSELVES AND CREATING FALSE HOPES FOR FARMERS. AGRICULTURE WILL NOT BE EXEMPT FROM BUDGET CUTS, SO IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF AGRICULTURE TO WRITE A BILL WHICH HAS SOME REAL SAVINGS. IF WE DON'T, WE FACE THE PROSPECTS OF A SEQUESTER WHICH WILL BE MORE PAINFUL TO FARMERS THAN IMPLEMENTING FISCALLY SOUND POLICY.

I HAVE HEARD SOME COMMENTS THAT THOSE OF US WHO HAVE VOTED AGAINST LOAN RATE INCREASES OR TARGET PRICE ESCALATORS ARE VOTING AGAINST FARM INCOME. WHAT WE ARE VOTING FOR ARE THE MARKET-ORIENTED POLICIES OF THE 1985 FARM BILL, UNDER WHICH FARM INCOME HAS REACHED RECORD LEVELS. WE ARE VOTING FOR LOAN RATES WHICH ALLOW THE MARKET TO REFLECT WORLD-WIDE DEMAND, RATHER THAN ISOLATIONIST LOAN RATES WHICH PRICE US OUT OF THE WORLD MARKET. AND WE ARE VOTING TO PROTECT FARM COUNTRY FROM ADVERSE SWINGS IN INTEREST RATES AND THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR WHICH MAY ARISE DUE TO A CONTINUAL DISREGARD FOR THE FEDERAL DEFICIT. GIVEN THE HIGHLY LEVERAGED NATURE OF FARMING AND THE IMPACT WHICH A STRONG DOLLAR HAS UPON TRADE, WE MAY BE HURTING PRODUCERS MORE BY WORRYING ABOUT A NICKEL RAISE FOR TARGET PRICES RATHER THAN THE LONG TERM HEALTH OF THE ECONOMY.