

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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FARM BILL

DOLE LEADS SENATE TO PASSAGE OF HISTORIC FARM BILL GIVING FREEDOM & FLEXIBILITY TO AMERICA'S FARMERS

Let me begin my very brief remarks by thanking the Chairman and the ranking member for the countless hours of hard work they devoted to crafting this bipartisan legislation.

This has been a long process, and there were quite a few frustrating moments for this Senator, and for others as well.

But just as farming requires patience and perseverance, so, too, does passing a farm bill.

And today, our patience and perseverance have resulted in the most historic and significant changes in agricultural policy since Iowa's Henry Wallace was Secretary of Agriculture under FDR.

Planting for the Market, Not the Government

This bipartisan legislation will transition America's farmers into the 21st century without disrupting the farm economy or land values. Farmers will finally plant for the market and not the government. The government is getting out of the supply control business.

We can also take pride in the fact that this bill is good for the environment. The Conservation Reserve Program is reauthorized. A new program, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program is included to provide farmers and ranchers a cost share program as they work to develop ways to manage their farming operations.

Victory for American Taxpayers

And no doubt about it, another big winner in this legislation is the American taxpayer.

This legislation provides for a responsible agriculture spending bill through a capped entitlement. If we are to balance the budget--and we will--entitlement spending must be reined in.

Ensuring the Survival of Rural America

I believe this bill is not an end--but a beginning. Because there is still much more we need to do to ensure the survival of rural America.

We still need estate tax reform, so the term "family farm" does not become extinct.

And we need regulatory reform, so farmers can make decisions without filling out a bumper crop of forms from Washington, D.C.

And I hope we can take action on both of these reforms this year.

Let me conclude today by repeating a quote I shared on the floor last week. The words are those of George Washington, who wrote over two centuries ago,

"I know of no pursuit in which more real and importance services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture."

The Senate has improved America's agriculture today, and we have done it by giving more freedom and more flexibility to one of America's true unsung heroes--the American farmer.

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