



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521
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DOLE MARKS AGRICULTURE DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Following is a statement made by Senator Bob Dole to the Senate.

today in honor of American Agriculture Day:

Mr. President, I call your attention to the fact that today -- March 21, 1977 -- has been designated by the National Agri-Marketing Association and other farm groups as American Agriculture Day. This is a day to pause, reflect and pay homage to the several million farmers and ranchers who constitute American agriculture.

Local organizations throughout the nation are mounting campaigns to make this day and the week ahead a memorable time for the farm community. Thousands of farm and rural people have pooled their time, talents and money in a nationwide effort that will culminate this week. From farm wives, school children, local business people, and government representatives to teachers and the media, thousands will be involved in celebrating the achievements and contributions of American agriculture.

The purpose of Agriculture Day is to increase the awareness and visibility of agricultural producers at a time when only five percent of our national population consists of farmers and ranchers. The Senator from Kansas, for one, hopes that a great deal of attention may be focused on the central importance of the family farmers to the nation's economic prosperity, to the maintenance of social stability, and to the furtherance of our positive spiritual values.

Another purpose of Agriculture Day is to bring producers and consumers closer together in their mutual understanding and appreciation. Today a single average farmer produces enough food in one year to feed 53 consumers -- three times as many as twenty years ago when there were twice as many farm workers. In the last ten years, agricultural production has climbed twenty percent on six percent fewer acres. Thanks to the hard work, efficiency and ingenuity of producers, American consumers pay a lower percentage of their annual income on food than consumers in any other industrial society!

The American farmer has accomplished impressive achievements, and his story needs to be told. We can all be proud that our farmers and ranchers are the most productive in the world. Now we must make sure that farmers and ranchers have sufficient incentive and profit to remain in production, and we must make sure that consumers and urban people understand these facts.

Mr. President, Agriculture Day comes at an appropriate time. This is the second day of Spring, and the rich earth is once again being broken to receive new seed. Those of us who celebrate Agriculture Day are also planting a seed that may one day blossom into a keener appreciation of the mutual interdependence of producers and consumers.