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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 6, 1977

DOLE QUESTIONS SOYBEAN ANNOUNCEMENT LAG

Washington, D. C. -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan) has demanded an explanation by the Agriculture Department for the six-day delay in the announcement of a 390,000-ton sale of soybeans to the People's Republic of China.

Dole wrote a letter to Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland complaining of "possible windfall profits" by exporters. Between the time the transaction was completed on March 25, and details were confirmed in USDA's weekly export report on March 31, soybean futures prices rose from \$8.65 a bushel to \$9.225 a bushel.

(Note: Dale Hathaway, who has been nominated for Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, is scheduled to appear at a confirmation hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee Wednesday morning. Dole said he would question Hathaway about the withholding of the sale information.)

A copy of the Senator's letter to Bergland follows:

I am disturbed by the recent handling of the sale of soybeans to the People's Republic of China and the possible windfall profits to the exporters. My concern is that the information of the sale was withheld for six days. Consequently, only the traders involved knew of this unexpected market demand and thereby had an advantage in the market, while farmers had no way of knowing this privileged information. Soybean nearby futures prices on the Chicago Board of Trade moved from \$8.65 per bushel to \$9.225 per bushel during the time of the withholding of information about the sale.

This policy of sales secrecy is a departure from the open sales information policy of the previous Administration. Could you explain why this policy has been changed?