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DOLE STATEMENT FOLLOWS FARM BILL SIGNING

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Following is the text of a statement made by Senator Bob Dole after President Carter signed the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Dole was present at the signing ceremony at the White House.

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I am pleased that President Carter has signed the farm bill. If properly administered, it could be helpful in combatting the agriculture economic crisis. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 will not solve all problems. Low market prices must be increased by efforts to increase demand for grain. The Administration should immediately expand P.L. 480 projects, increase Commodity Credit Corporation credit and promote U.S. agriculture products in foreign markets.

Increased agricultural exports are very important to farmers and the entire U.S. economy. Our present balance of trade deficit problems could be resolved with increased exports of agricultural products especially grains which have become a burdensome surplus. Talk about increasing exports is nice, but what we need now is action.

Target prices determined on the basis of the cost of production on a farmer's planted acreage provides greater protection for farmers' income. Loan levels were increased to bolster market prices. Set-aside provision intentions were announced for wheat at a 20 percent reduction. The program details, however, have not yet been announced. This late announcement may cause some farmers to lose money because they have already planted the wheat.

The sugar loan and purchase program in this bill needs to be implemented immediately to avoid a complete economic collapse of the sugar industry. This program coupled with increased duties and/or import fees is the "better idea" to increase sugar market prices. It is time now to demonstrate to the U.S. Congress the intent to carry out this program, instead of insinuating a lack of Administration willingness to implement the sugar loan and purchase program. Sugar beet and sugar cane producers should not be expected to wait for action to remedy the finding of injury to the industry because of excessive imports as determined by the U.S. International Trade Commission in March, 1977. Additional Administration foot dragging would just mean less income from the marketplace for sugar producers.

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