

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1981

CONTACT: BILL KATS
(202) 224-6521

SENATE COMPLETES ACTION ON FARM BILL

WASHINGTON -- "The farm bill approved by the Senate last week will provide a level of protection for farm prices over the next four years", Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said today. "The legislation comes close to meeting the budget requirements requested by the Administration and accepted by Congress in March, and is consistent with President Reagan's program for economic recovery."

The Senate completed consideration of omnibus farm legislation covering the 1982-85 crops on Friday, September 18. The House is expected to take up the measure by the end of the month so that the 1981 farm bill can become effective as soon as possible after expiration of the current 1977 act on September 30.

"We came close to not having any farm bill at all," Dole said. "I had been assured that the program passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee was unacceptable to the Administration unless the Senate took its responsibility seriously and reduced the overall cost to the Treasury. This year there were clearly budget constraints which the committee was forced to work within, and those low budget figures were exceeded by the committee's bill. However, with a more disciplined approach on the Senate floor, we have a bill that the government, as well as farmers can live with."

Prior to final approval by the Senate, an effort to eliminate target prices and lower price support loans for wheat, feed grains, cotton and rice was narrowly defeated by a 45 to 43 vote. Senators then accepted an amendment sponsored by Dole to set target prices at about 2.5 percent below the levels proposed by the committee. The action reduced the total cost of the bill over the next four years by \$360 million, including \$270 million in the rice program and \$77 million for wheat. The minimum target price for 1982 crop wheat was reduced from the \$4.10 per bushel level agreed to in committee to \$4.00, with 20-cent increases in each following year. The \$3.50 minimum loan rate was retained in the approved bill.

"We were able to save the target price program by only four votes in 1977 and by only two votes this year," Dole said. "It wasn't a question of whether the level was going to be \$4.00 or \$4.10. I feel certain that target prices would have been eliminated had we not agreed to reduce them."

"The package does not include expensive new price supports, but it assures continuity in current programs, locks in regular increases in wheat and corn target prices and will encourage similar adjustments in loan rates over the next four years. Farmers want to make a profit out of the marketplace, not the Treasury."

"Farmers won't be singled out in any way -- not for heavier cuts in farm programs, not for partial embargoes on agricultural trade. I intend to work closely with President Reagan and Agriculture Secretary Block to regain our share of all foreign markets for farm products and restore profitable prices for U.S. producers."