

BOB DOLE
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

COMMITTEE:
AGRICULTURE

DISTRICT OFFICES:
ROOMS 210-211
FEDERAL BUILDING
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS

BOX 31
RUSSELL, KANSAS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

COUNTIES:		
BARBER	HODGEMAN	RAWLINS
BARTON	JEWELL	RENO
CHEYENNE	KEARNY	REPUBLIC
CLARK	KINGMAN	RICE
CLOUD	KIOWA	ROOKS
COMANCHE	LANE	RUSH
DECATUR	LINCOLN	RUSSELL
EDWARDS	LOGAN	SALINE
ELLIS	MEADE	SCOTT
ELLSWORTH	MITCHELL	SEWARD
FINNEY	MORTON	SHERIDAN
FORD	NESS	SHERMAN
GOVE	NORTON	SMITH
GRAHAM	OSBORNE	STAFFORD
GRANT	OTTAWA	STANTON
GRAY	PAWNEE	STEVENS
GREELEY	PHILLIPS	THOMAS
HAMILTON	PRATT	TREGO
HARPER		WALLACE
HASKELL		WICHITA

For Release: Monday, July 1, 1963

Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas), a member of the House Committee on Agriculture, released the following statement with reference to Committee action on the Administration's Cropland Conversion Program (H.R. 7154).

"'To graze, or not to graze' was the key question involved in (H.R. 7154) a bill reported by the House Committee on Agriculture last Thursday, June 27, by a one-vote margin (17-16). Under the Conservation Reserve Program which at its peak covered some 28.5 million acres, and now approximately 25.5 million acres, participating farmers were prohibited from grazing (except when designated a drought or disaster area, and then at reduced rates) and the prohibition was originally included in Conservation Reserve Program at the insistence of the livestock industry.

"In the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, a new pilot program (Cropland Conversion) was initiated. The cost of this program was limited to \$10-million but under provisions of the bill passed there is no limitation. It is operating on a pilot basis now in 41 counties in 13 states and covers about 140,000 acres. This program permits grazing on acres diverted from production of crops. Since the pilot program involves only about 140,000 acres, all of which was previously in production, the impact on the livestock industry has been insignificant; but since the Conservation Reserve Program involves some 25.5 million acres, it is easy to determine what a serious impact the Cropland Conversion Program could have on the livestock industry, for without a doubt, the Administration contemplates including all the acreage in the Cropland Conversion program by 1970.

"H.R. 7154, as reported by the committee would allow the Secretary to expand the Cropland Conversion Program by an acreage equal to acreage covered by expiring Conservation Reserve contracts in 1963 and 1964. About 7.4 million acres are covered by expiring 1963 contracts, and 3.6 million acres by expiring 1964 contracts. This means approximately 10-million additional acres could be available for grazing of livestock in just the next 2 years and eventually over 25 million acres if expiring Conservation Reserve contracts are absorbed by the Cropland Conversion

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Program as they undoubtedly will be once this precedent is established.

"The impact will be severely felt by the beef, dairy, and other livestock interests, as the U.S. cattle population is now at a record high, while present dairy output far exceeds demand.

"The Department of Agriculture's testimony in support of their legislation that Cropland Conversion payment rates would be less (\$7.00 per acre average payment) than average rates (\$12.00 per acre) under the Conservation Reserve Program; and that the impact on the livestock industry would be insignificant, were not convincing, and in fact, no evidence was presented to verify conclusions of the witnesses. It was another case of voting on a program affecting thousands of farmers without full and complete hearings and without having an opportunity to check the conclusions of Administration witnesses.

"This program is " a slap in the face" to those presently in the livestock and dairy industry for, if passed, those participating will receive payments, but still be permitted to graze the land, in other words --"subsidized grazing" financed by the government becomes the rule and not the exception.

"In Kansas, Conservation Reserve contracts covering nearly 450,000 acres will expire during the next 2 years. The acreage has been withheld from production at an average cost of \$11.90 per acre, and grazing was not permitted, except in instances of drought and disaster. Under the Administration's Cropland Conversion program, assuming the Department witnesses are correct, farmers will receive \$7.00, more or less, per acre but can still graze the land or receive payment and lease the land to a neighbor. The farmer may also receive a lump sum payment of the total rental due under the contract.

"This is not fair to those presently in dairy or the livestock industry. The better approach would be to extend existing Conservation Reserve contracts by renegotiation at less cost wherever possible,"Dole concluded.