

FOR RELEASE
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STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE (R-KANSAS), MEMBER OF THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
ELABORATING ON REPUBLICAN PLATFORM COMMITTEE
INDICTMENT OF DEMOCRAT FARM POLICY

The glittering promises to farmers, set forth in the Platform adopted by the Democrats at Los Angeles in 1960, have come home to haunt the Johnson Administration.

Today American agriculture is in the tightest cost-price squeeze since the depression years. Farm operating costs are at an all time peak and headed even higher. Prices received by farmers are dropping steadily.

This is reflected in the parity ratio, which measures prices received by farmers against those they pay for goods and services. It now stands at 74, lowest since 1939 and more than 10 points below the 84.5 average for the eight Eisenhower years.

This despite the solemn promise in the 1960 Democratic Platform of "positive action to raise farm income to full parity levels ...".

The charge that the Democrats have failed to redeem a single major pledge to farmers is completely borne out by the record.

In 1960 their Platform said: "Republican farm policies forced their (farmers') income to drop by 30 per cent over the past eight years."

FACT: The U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates that net farm income in 1964 will be about \$11.6 billion, nearly \$100 million less than in the last Eisenhower year. This drop is foreseen despite an increase this year of about \$1.6 billion over 1960 in direct government payment to farmers.

Again from the 1960 Platform of the Democrats: "Tens of thousands of farm families have been bankrupted and forced off the land. And this

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despite the fact that the Secretary of Agriculture has spent more on farm programs than all previous Secretaries in history combined."

THE FACTS: In 1963 the number of operational farm units dropped by 100,000 to 3,481,000 -- lowest since USDA started keeping records in 1880. Moreover, under the Republican 83rd Congress in 1953-54, such beneficial programs as the Small Watershed Act, Brucellosis Eradication, the Special School Milk Program and Food for Peace (public Law 480) were all enacted and administered, together with other existing programs at an annual cost of \$1.9 billion. In 1963 USDA expenditures totaled more than \$7.7 billion, and costs were even higher in fiscal year 1964.

Despite promises in the 1960 Democratic Platform to reduce farm surpluses and claims by Secretary Freeman that this is being done, USDA's "Feed Situation" report of June, 1964, says that the feed grain carryover into the new crop year October 1 will be 70 million tons, 7 million more than a year earlier--- This despite the expenditure of \$1.3 billion on the feed grain program in 1964 without any reduction in surplus.

From the 1960 Democrat Platform: "Farm families have been among those victimized most severely by Republican tight money policies ... we will expand and liberalize farm credit facilities...".

Fact: According to USDA itself, average interest rates paid by farmers rose from 5% in 1960 to 5.3% in 1963. Interest paid by farmers on all loans rose from \$627 million in 1960 to \$758 million in 1963. Meanwhile, farm mortgage debt soared from \$12 billion in 1960 to a record high of \$16.7 billion in 1963, as farmers went deeper into debt to stay in business.

The present Administration has protected neither the interests of farmers or consumers. It has forced through a wheat program previously rejected by the farmers which has brought lower prices to two-thirds of

the nation's wheat producers and higher bread and flour prices for all consumers. During the last year, consumers paid the highest prices for sugar in 40 years. Yet the Administration denied to domestic sugar producers an opportunity to share permanently and equitably in the growing U.S. sugar market.

The Administration has demonstrated for nearly four years, that it understands neither the farm people of the nation, their views or the proper role of government in agriculture. In fact, the political appointees who direct the U. S. Department of Agriculture, led by its top administrator, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, have become the greatest single contributing factor of today's farm problem.

Farmers want, deserve and indeed must have better treatment than that imposed upon them by the confused and bungling czars, or the Billy Sol Estes' of this Administration.

We Republicans believe that true agricultural progress can be achieved effectively only in a climate of freedom and opportunity which will permit farmers to use more efficiently and profitably the full resources of American agriculture.

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