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KANSAS CITY, Dec. 4---U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today said this nation "can no longer sweep rural problems under the rug."

Speaking here at the annual meeting of Farmland Industries, Dole said, "Rural or non-metropolitan areas of America contain most of the land, about one-third of the people, 60 percent of substandard housing and nearly 50 percent of the nation's poor.

"Farm prices aren't up to par with what non-agricultural segments receive. Caught in the price-cost squeeze, the average American farmer had less than three-fourths as much income as the average non-farmer last year.

"The challenge then is not to only stem the flow of farmers to the cities, but to build in and around smaller cities and towns good employment opportunities and environments so that larger numbers of families will choose to live and remain living there.

"Steps must be taken to improve the economic position of agricultural producers and farm production must be effectively balanced with needs.

"We must wipe out malnutrition and improve the quality and safety of the nation's food supplies.

"Our rural and small towns offer hope and opportunity for a better life for all of us and our children's children. With the cooperation of all Americans we can develop rural America to its full potential for more of our people."