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FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE  
NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510  
(202) 225-6521

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WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 30 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today met with three top Agriculture Department officials to discuss compliance with the Wholesome Meat Act in rural communities in Kansas and other states.

The 1967 law gave states two years to meet rigid requirements or federal inspectors would step in. Earlier this year, Kansas joined other state legislatures in enacting legislation which some small meat processors fear may put them out of business. For example, after December 15, 1970 (the date the federal law takes effect), meat can no longer be sold in an establishment that slaughters and processes meat unless certain requirements are met.

After today's meeting with USDA Assistant Secretaries Richard Lyng and William Galbraith and Consumer and Marketing official James Payne, Dole said, "The Department of Agriculture is acutely aware of the difficulties envisioned by many smaller plants in trying to comply with the new law. USDA has no desire or intent to inflict undue hardship on the smaller plants including about 360 in Kansas, over 280 of which are the locker-type operations."

"The principles of the law -- cleaning up some unsanitary plants and assuring uniformly high meat standards -- are laudable and should be reasonably enforced," Dole said.

"The problems occur in sparsely-populated areas where meat butchering, processing and selling is often done by a single firm."

Noting the Kansas State Board of Agriculture will sponsor a meeting to explain provisions of the new Kansas law January 14, 15, and 16 in Topeka, Dole said, "In some cases, part of the trouble anticipated by processors is based on misinformation or lack of information. This meeting at the Municipal Auditorium should be particularly helpful to the small locker owner and operator."

The Kansas Senator also said area meetings with U.S. Department of Agriculture officials and small processors could also be arranged, upon request.