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## ADMINISTRATION'S SALUTE TO AGRICULTURE

By U.S. Sen. Bob Dole

President Nixon can now be expected to be able to devote more of his his time and energy to some strictly domestic issues due to his successes in winding down the war in Indochina and in controlling inflation. As evidenced by last week's radio address on agriculture, and by the "Salute to Agriculture Day" he hosted Friday at the White House, farming ranks high among the President's domestic concerns.

This is, of course, especially good news to Kansans, but certainly, there is not one American who is unaffected by the condition of our country's backbone industry.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry and a member of Congress who has long been active in farm legislation, I see "inadequate income" as the greatest problem facing American agriculture. As evidenced by the direction of the new farm program, and by statements such as his radio address last week, the President also considers this need of the farmer to be of top priority.

This Administration recognizes farm problems, and judging by some early results, is implementing the right kinds of programs to solve many of them. Last week, the President was able to predict that the "total income of American farmers will be higher this year than ever before in our history."

### Growing Markets Mean Growing Income

This Administration's policy to stimulate export markets is a major reason for higher farm income. Agricultural exports this year will be at an all-time high, reaching a value of at least 7.4 billion dollars. By the next decade, they are expected to break the 10 billion dollar barrier.

Another reason for agriculture's brighter future is the President's strong belief in unfettered markets. In contrast to previous programs that emphasized supply management, the government-controlled view of commodity movement, this Administration's farm programs place the point of agricultural decision making as close to the individual farmer as possible.

The earlier policy assumed that men in Washington have greater market and production knowledge than the American farmer. The previous concept placed restrictions on the farmer that often were inappropriate for certain kinds of farmers, in certain regions, at certain times of the year.

The new programs remove many of these old restraints, and as the President explained, "give every farmer a chance to make more of his own decisions about the kind of farming that suits him best."

Although whenever possible the new farm programs seek to place the onus of agricultural decisions on those who are most directly affected, the programs acknowledge the need for "government backup," especially when government assistance can assist in alleviating the "cost-price squeeze."

#### The High Cost of Farming

Recognizing the fact that "increases in total income are not always reflected in more farm net income," President Nixon in his radio address last week explained that more than two-thirds of agriculture's gross income goes back out to pay for farm expenses. For this reason, the President announced several administrative decisions and legislative proposals to increase aid to agriculture. His announced expansion of watershed funding is especially important to Kansas since 76 watersheds have been planned for our state but only 11 have been completed. Ten are still under construction and eight additional watersheds have been authorized for construction, but due to inadequate appropriations, they could not be funded this year. The President's recommendation to increase insured loans to rural water and sewer systems by \$100 million this year, and by \$111 million for next year could provide a significant boost to Kansas farmers.