



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE URGES DISASTER RELIEF CHANGE

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Senator Bob Dole today pressed for an administrative change to speed crop failure assessments under the disaster payments program for farmers.

"Many farmers are trying to salvage some value from their crops which are in the final stages of failure because of drought," Dole said, "and the bureaucratic hassle of getting the crops evaluated is depriving them of salvaging the crop and receiving disaster payments."

Dole's proposal would permit County Committees of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to certify crop failures and forego detailed production output analysis in cases where the crop is an obvious total loss. This change would permit farmers to use whatever corn or sorghum growth that exists for silage or forage. The present evaluation procedures are so time-consuming that by the time they are completed, the crop is often too dry to be used for any purpose and the result is a total loss to the farmer.

At Dole's urging, the State ASCS Committee recently telegraphed the Department of Agriculture requesting authority to permit farmers to proceed with using corn crops for silage or forage after leaving a sample of the crop standing for later evaluation. The request was also for authority to permit farmers to plow under grain sorghum which had reached the "permanent wilt" stage so that the land can be used for other purposes.

The disaster payments provision was a new innovation in the 1973 Farm Bill which Dole worked on as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.