



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE GETS CASH FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

Washington, D.C. -- The efforts of Senator Bob Dole were successful today in getting cash for the School Lunch Program in Kansas provided in lieu of commodities for the federal share of the School Lunch Program assistance. This cash will result in about \$5 million of additional purchases of food within local communities and an estimated savings of \$80,000 to the budgets of the state and local school districts.

"The decision of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to provide the federal assistance for the School Lunch Program in the form of cash will permit several savings and conveniences for school districts," Dole said, "and I am gratified to see the outcome so much in response to the needs of Kansas."

Dole's efforts to get cash provided in lieu of commodities began at the request of the Kansas School Food Service and the Department of Education, and more recently were in response to a letter from the Governor of Kansas.

When an amendment by Dole to the School Lunch Bill failed in the face of opposition from leading Democrats, Dole took the issue to the joint Senate-House Conference Committee where the conferees agreed that the Department of Agriculture should provide cash to the School Lunch Program in Kansas. USDA initially refused to accept the instructions of the Senate-House conferees but an appeal by Dole to the General Accounting Office resulted in the final decision today to provide cash. Facilities for commodity distribution were phased out by the state government under the expectation that the USDA would end its commodity distribution program.

The decision to provide cash in lieu of commodities will permit school districts to purchase more food from local food merchants equivalent to a value of \$5 million. In addition to savings for commodity distribution facilities equal to \$80,000, school districts will be relieved of commodity storage payments which, in the case of just one school district in Topeka, were \$18,500 last year.

Dole stated that "providing cash will give the state and local education officials greater flexibility in purchasing food and managing the School Lunch Program. Hopefully, more federal assistance can be provided in this manner in the future."

Health institutions and youth agencies which have received commodities in the past will continue to do so as they have requested.