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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FARM BILL HEARINGS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Dole today called for Congressional action to help farmers. It is evident that the Administration will not act to adequately improve farm income so the ball is in the court of the Congress. Following is the text of Dole's statement at the opening of farm hearings in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

"I want to commend Chairman Talmadge for scheduling this hearing today at which all members of the Committee will have an opportunity to hear from members of the American Agriculture Movement. At subsequent hearings we will have testimony from other organizations and individuals on the crisis that now prevails in the farm economy. Members of this Committee, by virtue of our interest in agriculture and our service on this Committee, are, certainly more keenly attuned than some of our Congressional colleagues, especially from urban settings, to the problems currently facing farmers, and, in fact, all of rural America. However, I believe it will be highly constructive for us as the Senate Committee on Agriculture to hear today directly from members of the American Agriculture Movement.

I have conducted field hearings in Kansas and South Carolina. From what I heard at those hearings and at numerous meetings here in Washington with farmers from a broad area of rural America, I am convinced that farmers are facing the toughest situation that has confronted them in over forty years.

While the plight of farmers is and should be of major concern to members of this Committee and to the national leadership, it is becoming more evident every day that we cannot long maintain a healthy national economy if farmers cannot maintain their purchasing power. Therefore, all Americans, including consumers, have a vital interest in improving the current farm situation.

I am hopeful that from these hearings we can strengthen existing legislation which will be implemented quickly to help improve farm incomes which have sagged so drastically. I feel that we have a real responsibility to do what is feasible in helping farmers achieve a fair share of the national income. I, therefore, welcome those who are here to testify and I am hopeful that many productive ideas will emerge from these hearings.

I believe we are at the stage now where help from farmers must be initiated in the Congress. Therefore, as a starter, I have taken the following legislative initiatives:

- (1) S. 2481, Flexible Parity Act of 1978.
- (2) S. 2482, Interest Charges on Commodity Loans.
- (3) S. 2483, Increasing of Title I, Public Law 480 Financing.
- (4) S. 2488, Social Security Tax Credits for Small Business and Farms.
- (5) S. 2492, Amendment to the Meat Import Quota Act of 1964.
- (6) S. 2504, Export Stimulation Act of 1978.
- (7) S. 2531, Rural Credit Service.
- (8) S. 2532, Economic Emergency Loan Act of 1978.

I am hopeful that from these bills that I have offered and from bills offered by my colleagues that this Committee can mark-up a bill that will strengthen existing legislation to aid in increasing farm income."