

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1984

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DOLE RAPS "PAROCHIAL" INTERESTS FOR FARM BILL IMPASSE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS BLOCKED BY LONE SENATOR

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today blasted "parochial farm state Senators and special interests who continue to demonstrate a narrow, short-term outlook toward efforts to improve agricultural programs." Dole said that "the future of farm commodity programs is extremely bleak if one crop or one Senator refuses to acknowledge the need for mutual cooperation. I hope Senators representing other commodities will try to resolve single-issue obstacles so we can preserve the concept of omnibus farm legislation for 1985."

Dole's remarks came on the day after vital legislation to improve major farm programs and reduce government outlays was blocked by Alabama Senator Howell Heflin on the Senate floor. Heflin, a Democrat, argued that cotton and wheat farmers in southern states would not receive adequate compensation for reduced target prices for 1985 crops under the bill. During a four-hour snarl on the Senate floor, he presented Agriculture Department officials with a last-minute list of proposed amendments to the package. None of the changes had been offered or discussed during three days of meetings between farm state Senators and top Administration officials or mark-up of the legislation by the Senate Agriculture Committee last week.

"This is only the latest in a series of roadblocks which single-interest Senators have thrown up to prevent passage of responsible farm legislation," Dole stated. "It is unfortunate that it has happened on the eve of today's sign-up deadline for 1984 programs."

Many Kansas wheat producers were anticipating a much improved package to be approved, and must now make this decision on the basis of the less popular announced program." The Kansas Senator added that "we may still be able to make some changes or find some common ground next week, but I don't want to raise expectations of Kansas farmers. We have given this effort our best shot, and we just won't get a better program if various interests want to continue to nit-pick this bill to death."