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DOLE HAILS FINAL WHEAT SIGN-UP ANNOUNCEMENT

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole said today he was pleased with the increased sign-up in the 1984 wheat program as announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to Dole, the increase of about 7 1/2% nationwide and 8 1/2% in Kansas reflects "the more attractive provisions we included in the mini-farm bill enacted this spring. With the basic terms of the 1985 program already in place, I would anticipate even higher participation in Kansas and other winter wheat states next year."

The USDA announcement indicates that U.S. wheat producers added another 7 million acres of wheat base to the 1984 acreage reduction program during the special April 16-May 4 enrollment period, bringing the total to just over 57 million acres, or 60.8% of total base acreage. The previous total had been 53% of the 93.9 million acre national wheat base. In Kansas, farmers added about 1.2 million acres to the 7.75 million acres enrolled prior to March 16 for a total of 8.95 million acres, or 62.9% of the state's 14.2 million acre wheat base.

The Dole legislation passed in March and signed into law by President Reagan on April 10, the "Agricultural Programs Adjustment Act of 1984," reduced the scheduled increases in 1984 and 1985 wheat target price to \$4.38 per bushel, while adding a 10% paid land diversion each year and boosting the payment rate on the 1984 crop Payment-in-Kind (PIK) program from 75% to 85% of farm yield. It also mandated unrestricted haying and grazing privileges for 1984, a provision particularly popular with Kansas wheat and livestock farmers. The Kansas Senator had earlier sought and obtained a reversal of USDA's initial decision to tighten up provisions for participation by summer-fallow wheat producers.

"I have received assurances from top USDA officials that there will be no effort to change the rules for summer-fallow producers for the 1985 crop," Dole stated. "I have also asked Secretary Block to try to beat the July 1 deadline for announcing the remaining details of the 1985 wheat program by at least two weeks, and he is making every effort to cooperate."