

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE HAILS BOOMING SOVIET GRAIN PURCHASES

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today hailed reported increases in U.S. grain sales to the Soviet Union for giving "much needed support to farm prices during a bumper harvest." Dole, who played a key role in reopening grain sales between the two superpowers, also commended President Reagan on his decision to raise the ceiling for additional sales of wheat and corn to the U.S.S.R. next year.

"With another 2.5 billion bushel wheat harvest nearly complete and the outlook for an 8.0 billion bushel corn crop, the jump in Soviet business is welcome news for farmers," Dole said. "The Reagan Administration has turned U.S.-Soviet agricultural trade completely around in three short years. We've come a long way from the Carter-Mondale grain embargo of 1980 to restoring the role of the U.S. as the top grain supplier to the Soviet market."

Dole's remarks followed reports of renewed Soviet purchases of U.S. wheat and corn for the first and second years of the long-term agreement between the two countries. The total for the current first year ending September 30 is now 14 million tons, including about 7.5 million tons of wheat and 6.5 million tons of corn. For next year, beginning in October, the official total in early August was 6.6 million tons of corn and just over 1.5 million tons of wheat. Recent trade reports suggest that renewed buying may have brought the corn total close to 8.0 million tons, the maximum permitted under the agreement without further consultation.

"I certainly expect Agriculture Secretary Block will act quickly on the President's decision to increase the amount of grain available to the Soviets for the upcoming second year of the agreement," Dole stated. "While these consultations are a formality, Soviet experience during the embargo, when the Carter Administration cut off contracts for 14 million tons of grain and large quantities of poultry and soybean products, has made them sticklers for following the letter of the agreement, which requires some form of consultation."

"We don't know if the Russians are interested in additional wheat and corn, but good salesmen go out and knock on the door rather than waiting for a call," Dole concluded.