

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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SENATE OK'S DOLE LEGISLATION TO BOOST U.S. AG EXPORTS

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Senate has adopted legislation sponsored by Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) to boost U.S. grain exports by including all traditional American export customers, such as the Soviet Union, in agricultural Export Enhancement Program sales.

Sen. Dole said the amendment "requires the administration to apply the program in a nondiscriminatory way to all our traditional trading partners. It is no secret that one country whose market we are concerned about is the Soviet Union."

According to Sen. Dole, "The administration has taken the position that even though we trade with the USSR - even though we want to increase trade - we do not want to subsidize communism. But the Soviets have been our largest consumer, and as President Eisenhower said, 'you should sell the Soviets things they cannot shoot back at you and use up their resources in the process.'"

"This is not a subsidy, it is competition. We cannot be competitive if the USSR cannot benefit from this particular program - and they are not about to buy from us when they can pay \$14 or \$15 less per ton when dealing with some other country," said Sen. Dole.

"The only purpose of the Export Enhancement Program in the 1985 Farm Bill," said Sen. Dole, "is to improve exports, to improve farm income, and in effect to reduce the cost to the taxpayers of farm programs."

"But the language in the Farm Bill contained some ambiguity. Under present law, the Secretary of Agriculture is only required to 'consider the participation' of all trading partners, including the USSR. My amendment directs the Secretary to 'permit the participation' of all countries' - in effect requiring inclusion of the Soviets in the enhancement program."

"Foreign policy considerations often must be paramount in the actions we take as a nation. But putting the Export Enhancement Program off limits to the Soviet Union does not penalize Moscow, for they will buy elsewhere. It does penalize our farmers," Sen. Dole said.

The legislation requires non-discriminatory application of the program through September 30, 1986. The amendment was tacked on to the Export-Import Bank reauthorization bill. It now goes to a House-Senate conference for further consideration before final passage.