

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 12, 1962

From the Office of
Congressman Bob Dole
244 House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Congressman Bob Dole, (R-Kansas), a member of the House Committee on Agriculture issued this statement following delivery of President Kennedy's "Message on Agriculture" to the House today.

"President Kennedy's Special Message on Agriculture is more notable for what it does not say than for what it does say. It raises more questions than it answers.

The Nation's wheat growers will certainly want to know much more than is set forth in the Message about the details of the program proposed for them. They will want to know, first, how much of a further reduction in wheat acreage they will be called upon to take. Will the national wheat acreage allotment be 45 million acres, or 35 million or even 25 million? The Message does not specify.

The President says that "marketing certificates would be used to assure growers a price support level between 75 and 90 per cent of parity on the domestic allotment and up to 90 per cent on the export allotment." Thus, while the range of flexibility in price supports for the domestic allotment is set forth, there is no indication as to how low supports for the export allotment might be dropped. The figure could, presumably, be set anywhere between 0 and 90 per cent of parity.

I believe farmers will also want to know how much government-owned wheat would be removed from inventory each year and dumped upon the market. The authority to do this could be used as a club to depress prices artificially and thereby force farmers to divert additional acres from wheat production.

Farmers will want to know more about the President's proposal to establish a "mandatory acreage allotment on all feed grains." Even the present feed grains plan is supposedly voluntary, although the government has, in fact, saturated the market with its own holdings as a means of herding farmers into the program. Many farmers utilize on their own farms all of the feed which they produce. Mandatory feed grain production controls would, for these farmers, also become mandatory controls over their livestock operations.

Implied in the section of the Message relating to land utilization is the ultimate diversion of perhaps 50 million acres or more of cropland "to recreational, aesthetic, and economic purposes." Farmers, I am sure, will want to know how many of them will be retired from agriculture under such a program.

As the President noted, each year one million people move from the farm to the city. If this rate is to be stepped up, perhaps underlying the Administration's proposal to create a Department of Urban Affairs is the recognition that a new agency will be required to deal with the problems of displaced farmers."