

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF
CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE (R-KANSAS)

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Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas) said today that "Congress still has an opportunity to approve legislation which would further reduce the wheat surplus next year and protect farm income at the same time.

Noting that Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman has set a national wheat referendum for August 30, when growers will vote on the question of invoking marketing quotas on a 55-million acre allotment, Dole proposed:

1. "That Congress authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to contract with wheat growers to retire from 10 to 40 percent of their 1963 wheat acreage allotments on a voluntary basis. These contracts could be negotiated after the August 30 referendum and after planting.

2. "That diversion payments representing 50 percent of the value of the historical annual wheat production on these retired acres be made to cooperating farmers.

"I am confident that many producers would participate in such a program. This would bring about a further reduction in the Nation's burdensome wheat surplus, with considerable savings to the government.

"Since the plan is strictly voluntary, it would encounter little opposition from producers and would, in fact, have the endorsement of most of them. The plan would meet the objections of many members of Congress who oppose tighter mandatory controls over wheat production. It could be enacted quickly, in my opinion, and would not change the rules in the "middle of the game" for wheat farmers after the referendum is held.

"In proclaiming the wheat referendum, Secretary Freeman recognized that it is too late to enact a permanent wheat program which could become effective for the 1963 crop. Planting time is at hand now for the winter wheat growers of the Southern Great Plains area. They have already been considerably inconvenienced by the delay in the determination of what form the 1963 wheat program would take. It has been most difficult for these producers to make their planting plans without knowing how many acres they would be permitted to harvest or what the price support level would be.

"Secretary Freeman's uncompromising 'all-or-nothing' attitude on farm legislation is largely responsible for the present unhappy situation. Had he yielded earlier in his demands for rigid production controls on feed grains, a farm bill, embodying an acceptable wheat plan, could have been passed months ago.

"Under the circumstances, it seems to me that a one-year voluntary wheat acreage retirement plan, which could easily be fitted into the 1963 wheat program, offers the best hope for farmers now. I am bringing this suggestion to the attention of key members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in the hope that they will join with me in pressing for immediate action on the proposal."