



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SEES GOOD PROSPECTS FOR FARM BILL AGREEMENT

Washington, D.C. -- As a Senate-house conference committee prepared to iron out the final details of the 1977 farm bill, the ranking Senate Republican conferee -- Sen. Bob Dole -- said Saturday the chances were good that a measure would be sent to the White House that provides significant assistance to financially troubled farmers. The conference committee is scheduled to begin meeting on Monday.

Dole praised the House for agreeing to the \$2.90 per bushel target price for this year's wheat crop contained in the Senate bill. Influenced by an earlier threat of presidential veto if the price support level was raised any higher, the House Agriculture Committee had proposed a 1977 target price of only \$2.65.

'78 WHEAT: \$3 OR \$3.10 TARGET PRICES

The House bill set the target price for 1978 wheat at \$3 a bushel, compared to \$3.10 in the Senate measure. Dole said he would fight in conference to preserve the \$3.10 figure. The difference between the two target prices is \$180 million a year for U.S. wheat producers, the senator declared. Big crop forecasts have pushed wheat prices below the cost of production, bringing many farmers to the brink of bankruptcy, he said.

SUGAR PROGRAM DIFFERENCES

Another issue before the conferees will be the sugar program. On Friday, Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland raised a new threat of a presidential veto if the conference report includes price supports for sugar. Dole said he would favor the House sugar program provisions that are opposed by the Administration. The Administration prefers ~~an~~ alternate support system ~~contained in the Senate bill~~ based on direct payments to sugar growers. Supporting market prices would be a far better solution to the sugar industry's economic crisis than direct payments to growers, Dole contended.

Yet another point of difference in the conference will be the payment limitation. The Senate voted to limit annual payments to \$50,000 per producer, whereas the House bill set the limit at \$35,000.