

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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PRESIDENT SAYS U.S. INTENDS TO SELL LARGE QUANTITY OF GRAIN TO SOVIETS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today relayed assurances from President Reagan that the Administration intends to offer a large additional amount of grain for sale to the Soviet Union when consultations are held September 30 on the one-year extension of the U.S./U.S.S.R. Grains Agreement.

Dole said he received notification of the Administration's intent in a letter from the President which Dole received last night. In that letter, the President also stated that the Administration would in no way single out agricultural commodities for restriction in any trade embargo that might be imposed.

Following is the text of the Reagan letter:

"Your letter of September 10 has been received, and your interest in maintaining a free and unrestricted policy for agricultural trade is appreciated.

"I assure you that the Administration fully intends to pursue the best interests of the United States and our farm sector by maximizing agricultural exports to all foreign buyers. Sales of grain and other agricultural products will in no way be singled out for restriction in any trade embargo that may be imposed by this Administration.

"In view of our current abundant supplies of corn and wheat, and prospects for record harvests this year, the Administration intends to offer a large additional amount of grain for sale to the Soviet Union when consultations are held September 30, on the one-year extension of the U.S./U.S.S.R. Grains Agreement. These quantities will be in addition to the specified minimum and maximum levels.

"I trust that this letter serves to clarify our policy regarding agricultural trade and to express the Administration's wholehearted support for this vital part of the Nation's economy."

Dole said, "This letter re-affirms the President's commitment to the expansion of agricultural exports based on the principle of uninterrupted trade and freedom from government restrictions.

"There has been considerable question in our agricultural sector in recent months over the nature and direction of the Administration's policies regarding agricultural trade, particularly on prospects for sales of additional quantities of U.S. grain to the Soviet Union.

"Despite assurances to the contrary by Agriculture Secretary Block, rumors have persisted that the Administration may refuse to offer further quantities of corn and wheat for shipment in the sixth year of the current grain supply agreement with the Soviets, or that agricultural trade may again be the target of another foreign policy embargo.

"I trust that the President's statement will lay to rest once and for all any concerns that the Administration will do less than its utmost in defending our trading position abroad for farm products."

Last week Dole wrote to the President, requesting that the Administration put itself on record in support of an unfettered policy on farm exports.