

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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SOVIET GRAIN OFFER 'ON TARGET,' DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- "The offer of an additional 15 million tons of wheat and corn for sale to the Soviet Union is right on target with the Administration's efforts to restore profitable prices for U.S. farmers," stated Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) this afternoon. "I would be surprised if the Soviets don't buy the entire amount, considering their serious production shortages this year."

Dole's comments followed an announcement by Undersecretary of Agriculture Seeley Lodwick in Moscow that semi-annual consultations with Soviet officials had resulted in the expanded quantity of U.S. grain offered under the sixth year of the current bilateral supply agreement, which began October 1. The Soviets who are short an estimated 40 to 50 million tons this year, have already purchased a reported 7.7 of the 8.0 million tons allowed under the base terms of the accord, including 3.5 million tons of wheat and 4.2 million tons of corn.

"Sales of U.S. grain to the Soviets this year will be limited only by their importing capacity," Dole said. "We should also be ready to increase exports of processed and semi-processed products to the Soviet market in 1982 when negotiations are held next month on a new long-term agreement.

"Commodity markets and our foreign competitors should take a closer look at the Reagan Administration's agricultural trade policy. The intention is to open the world marketplace to free and unrestricted access by U.S. farm products. The normalization of grain sales to the Soviet Union is only the first step in achieving fair and competitive conditions for American farmers and ranchers in world markets.

"We must make a clean break with the misguided policies that resulted in the Soviet grain embargo. President Reagan made this new approach to trade clear in a September 14 letter to me, in which he stated 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.'"