

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
MAY 27, 1983, FRIDAY

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DOLE CONCERNED BY SKYROCKETING COSTS OF FARM PROGRAMS  
FUTURE AG LEGISLATION IN TROUBLE WITHOUT ACTION ON TARGET PRICES

WASHINGTON -- Pointing to bulging federal deficits, Kansas Senator Bob Dole today expressed serious concern over the skyrocketing costs of federal farm programs and called for responsible action to freeze target prices.

In a letter to Deputy Agriculture Secretary Richard Lyng, Dole warned that unless the ever-increasing price tag for farm programs can be controlled, a backlash from non-farm interests and non-farm members in Congress will seriously jeopardize future farm legislation.

"Agriculture expenditures have grown faster than any other program, even defense. From 1981 to 1983, the cost of farm programs has increased by five times," Dole said. "Efforts to control the growth of federal spending in other areas are bringing the unchecked expansion of agriculture costs under critical examination by the majority of Congress which has little or no farm interests. The message is clear: without cost controls, legislation providing adequate protection for farm income and prices will be difficult, if not impossible."

In his letter, Dole noted that farm programs have increased from \$4 billion in Fiscal Year 1981, to \$12 billion in 1982, and to an alarming \$21 billion in 1983; and he says these figures do not even include the costs of the new "PIK" program.

"The PIK program will provide much-needed cash flow for farmers and help ease grain surplus pressures, but let's not forget this stopgap program could cost up to \$12 billion. This new expenditure will only add to the difficulty of justifying the cost of future farm programs," Dole said.

Dole also expressed concern over the consequences of unchecked outlays for farm programs yesterday during a meeting with Agriculture Secretary John Block. In discussing proposed legislation, Dole stated that "a lot of farmers didn't like the 1981 Farm Bill, but then again a lot of Congressmen from non-agricultural districts didn't either. It passed the House of Representatives by only two votes. There's no assurance that the necessary support will be there in two years if we don't get a handle on programs that simply are not cost effective."

At the meeting, Block indicated that Congress will have to pass legislation to freeze target prices before he can announce other details of 1984 programs. Dole expressed the hope that action can be completed before the end of June, adding that "Kansas farmers are interested in getting the details of next year's wheat program as soon as possible after harvest. If the wheat target stays at \$4.30 per bushel with a reasonable PIK program, I believe most farmers will support it and participate."