

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE PUSHES FOR COST-SAVING DAIRY REFORM BILL

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole today urged support of legislation that will reform the costly federal dairy program.

"Congress should endorse the compromise reform bill already passed by both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, which will reduce the \$2.4 billion cost of the dairy program to about \$800 million in Fiscal Year 1984," Dole said. "There is no reason for Congress and the Administration to jeopardize enactment of the dairy plan just because of continuing disagreement over other agriculture issues. Action should be completed before the recess at the end of the week."

Dole's statement follows weeks of Congressional stalemate over the Administration's proposal to freeze grain and cotton target prices at 1983 levels for the 1984 and 1985 crops. The Administration has conditioned approval of the dairy package on Congressional passage of the freeze legislation.

The dairy compromise was worked out in a series of meetings between members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in April and May. It would replace the current 50 cent assessment on each hundred pounds of milk with a paid diversion program funded by a producer payment. The price support for milk would also be reduced by up to \$1.50 per hundredweight over the next two years if government purchases of butter, cheese and non-fat dry milk continue at unacceptably high levels.

"The dairy package may not be perfect, but it is an improvement over current law that most milk producers are willing to accept," Dole continued. "The Administration has spelled out its intentions for the 1984 wheat program -- with or without a freeze on target prices. We should now be able to judge the freeze issue on its own merits. We should do the same for the dairy compromise legislation rather than holding it hostage to approval of the target price freeze."