

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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SENATE APPROVES DISASTER PAYMENTS FOR UNPLANTED WHEAT CROP

Washington, DC -- Kansas Senators Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum working together late last night acted to pass emergency legislation to aid Kansas farmers hard hit by last year's torrential rains which disrupted planting of the winter wheat crop.

"Without this kind of help, we're likely to see more Kansas farmers either being forced out of business or having greater debts piled on them through no fault of their own," said Sen. Dole. "The Senate's approval of this legislation is an important step in the right direction. It was urgent that we put this on a fast track and explore our options to assist these farmers."

Said Sen. Kassebaum, "The legislation passed in the Senate will help many Kansas farmers. But it's essential that we also address the special problems faced by those in Southeast Kansas and other areas."

According to Dole, the legislation would make winter wheat producers who were prevented from planting their crops for harvest in 1987 eligible for disaster payments under the \$400 million disaster payment program enacted in 1986. Under the original disaster program, eligibility was restricted only to farmers who harvested their crop in 1986, Dole noted.

During floor consideration of the legislation, Sens. Dole and Kassebaum also stressed they would seek additional assistance for affected farmers. Options under review include protecting yields for payment purposes at normal levels for counties declared as disaster areas, and for providing deficiency payments for those farmers who could not plant crops due to weather conditions, according to Dole.

Under the yield protection option, farmers with "failed acres" would not have yields reduced due to disaster conditions beyond their control. Dole said farmers in the "prevented planting" category would be able to plant spring wheat, receive program benefits as if they had planted winter wheat and have yields protected at normal levels.

The legislation would also extend the disaster payment application deadline to February 28, 1987, said Dole. The House must still act before legislation can be sent to the President for his signature.