

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE/KASSEBAUM ANNOUNCE FEDERAL DROUGHT AID PACKAGE FOR BONE DRY KANSAS

WASHINGTON -- SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CLAYTON YEUTTER TELEPHONED KANSAS SENATOR BOB DOLE TODAY WITH SOME GOOD NEWS FOR DROUGHT-PLAGUED KANSAS FARMERS. THE SECRETARY INFORMED SENATOR DOLE THAT HE HAS AUTHORIZED SEVERAL DROUGHT-RELIEF OPTIONS TO HELP PRODUCERS WHO HAVE BEEN STAGGERED BY A WINTER AND SPRING-LONG DROUGHT AND NOW RECORD-SETTING HEAT.

Dole had spoken to Yeutter by telephone earlier in the week asking for quick action on haying and grazing and livestock feeding programs and other options as a scorching heatwave baked what is left of the state's wheat and pasture land.

"The Secretary's visit in Mid-April at the request of Governor Hayden and our combined daily updates on conditions to the Secretary's office has helped put this issue on the fast track at USDA. Time is critical as the outlook for our number one crop is turning into a disaster and our pasture lands continue to burn up -- farmers needs relief and they need it now. These first steps can't take the place of a week's worth of rain or a green wheat field, but it's the best news yet under the circumstances," Dole said.

"The Secretary agreed that livestock producers are in immediate need of assistance due to the dwindling supplies of grass and water and that they need help to stem the flow of cattle to markets and feedlots and the liquidation of cow herds," Dole continued. "Additionally, the option to receive the zero/92 deficiency payment level could help the income crunch of some crop producers."

"Undoubtedly, Kansas wheat and livestock producers are facing one of the worst droughts in the last half-century. Pasture and forage conditions continue to deteriorate and hay and feed prices are rising. In addition, many of the state's wheat acres have passed the point of no return," said Kassebaum.

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The following provisions are included in today's announcement for all counties meeting loss criteria:

- * Authorization of emergency haying and grazing provisions on set-aside acres during the five principal growing months.
- * Authorization of Emergency Feed Program (EFP) allowing producers to purchase feed to provide up to 50% of producers' cost for replacing feed loss due to drought.
- * Authorization of The Emergency Feed Assistance Program (EFAP) providing CCC-owned grain at 75% of the county loan rate to producers in drought-designated counties. Individual producers must have suffered a 40% loss to qualify under both EFP and EFAP.
- * Allow sale of hay -- and take bids for grazing -- from FmHA inventoried property in drought counties.
- * Allow program participants with total losses who choose not to plant a subsequent crop to qualify for the "0-92" deficiency payment.
- * Expedite "failed acre" approval at the county level.
- * Authorize emergency ASCS county office meetings to respond to farmer/rancher concerns.
- * Review emergency credit needs through FmHA low interest operating loans.
- * Appoint an inter-agency 1989 Drought Task Force to monitor weather, crop and livestock conditions nationwide.

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