

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE HELPS WIN "FARMER-FRIENDLY" CHANGES TO ONEROUS FARM BILL REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON -- AFTER TWO MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS, SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS) ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HAS AGREED TO MAKE SOME KEY REGULATORY CHANGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1990 FARM BILL. FARMERS HAVE BEEN ON THE WARPATH EVER SINCE THE NEW FARM LAW TOOK EFFECT, CRYING FOUL TO REGULATORY CHANGES THAT DIFFERED DRAMATICALLY FROM THE REGULATIONS THAT HAD BEEN IN EFFECT FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS. DOLE AND REPRESENTATIVE PAT ROBERTS (R-KS) HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR WEEKS TO TAKE THE FARMERS MESSAGE TO U.S.D.A.

"FARMERS HAVE A RIGHT TO BE UPSET AFTER SEEING THE REGULATORY NONSENSE AWAITING THEM AT THEIR ASCS (AGRICULTURE STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE) OFFICE," SAID DOLE. "NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, IT WAS TIME FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION. WORKING WITH AGRICULTURE SECRETARY MADIGAN, PAT AND I HELPED GET THE JOB DONE. THANKS TO THE DIRECT INPUT OF KANSAS FARMERS, WE KNEW THE PROBLEMS, AND WE DELIVERED THE MESSAGE TO USDA LOUD AND CLEAR."

DOLE SAID THAT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THE WAY IN WHICH USDA WAS INTERPRETING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE FARM BILL, MOST NOTABLY A PROVISION THAT PREVENTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY NEW IRRIGATED CROP BASES FOR PAYMENT PURPOSES AFTER THE 1990 CROP YEAR. DOLE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CLAIMED THAT THE DEPARTMENT TOOK THAT PROVISION TOO FAR WHEN THEY PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH A HISTORICAL-WEIGHTED YIELD (HWY YIELD) THAT BLENDED ESTABLISHED DRYLAND AND IRRIGATED YIELDS INTO ONE WHOLE-FARM YIELD. WHEN THE HWY YIELD IS COMBINED WITH AN IRRIGATED ACREAGE MAXIMUM AND OTHER PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED REGULATIONS, FARMERS WITH IRRIGATED YIELDS WOULD HAVE LOST A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THEIR SUPPORT PAYMENTS, BEEN PENALIZED BY ROTATING CROPS, OR BOTH.

THE NEW REGULATIONS GIVE THE FARMER THE BENEFIT OF ANY HISTORY OF IRRIGATION OF A PROGRAM CROP AND PROVIDES THE OPTION FOR THE FARMER TO ALLOCATE THAT IRRIGATED BASE ACREAGE AMONG THE CROPS, AND RECEIVE THE BENEFIT OF THE ESTABLISHED IRRIGATED YIELD. THE FARMER WILL ALSO HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO INTERCHANGE PLANTINGS OF CORN AND MILO ON FEED GRAINS BASE ACREAGE.

"THE DEPARTMENT, IN MY VIEW, HAS DONE A MAGNIFICENT JOB IN GETTING THE REGULATIONS OUT AS SOON AS THEY DID. THIS WAS SIMPLY A PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION, AND I APPLAUD THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DEPARTMENT WORKED WITH PAT AND I TO MAKE THESE CORRECTIONS. I'M PLEASED THAT THE FARMER CAME OUT THE WINNER," DOLE SAID, NOTING THAT THE BREAKTHROUGH CAME AFTER MORE THAN TWO MONTHS OF DAILY NEGOTIATIONS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

DOLE NOTED THAT TIMING IS OF THE ESSENCE, WITH ONLY TWO WEEKS LEFT IN THE FARM PROGRAM SIGNUP PERIOD AND SPRING CROP PLANTING ON THE HORIZON. "HOPEFULLY, FARMERS CAN GET THEIR CORN AND MILO IN THE GROUND NOW WITH A LITTLE LESS APPREHENSION," DOLE CONTINUED. "THESE CHANGES DON'T SIMPLIFY THE PROGRAM MUCH, BUT WE DID SALVAGE SOME FLEXIBILITY AND DECISION-MAKING ABILITY FOR THE FARMER. I KNOW THE MOST COMMON COMPLAINT IN FARM COUNTRY IS THE COMPLICATED NATURE OF THIS MONSTER WE CALL THE FARM PROGRAM, AND I'LL KEEP UP THE FIGHT TO RESTORE COMMON-SENSE AND SIMPLIFICATION TO THE PROGRAM."

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