

02/13/2003 Senator Roberts, Congressman Moran Secure \$200 Million in Drought Aid for Kansas Producer

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Pat Roberts and Congressman Jerry Moran of Kansas said that late last night, a deal was reached on critical drought assistance legislation targeting approximately \$200 million in aid to Kansas producers suffering from serious drought conditions.

Senator Roberts and Congressman Moran hailed this agreement as the best possible solution for producers in Kansas and all across the country who have been hard hit by this prolonged drought. The final legislation closely mirrors proposals by both Senator Roberts and Congressman Moran earlier this year. "I am very pleased with this legislation," Senator Roberts said. "Finally, the Congress has provided \$3.1 billion in disaster assistance that producers and their lenders can take to the bank. Kansas producers will now have the tools to pull out of a devastating couple of years."

"For the last year, drought assistance has been our number one priority," Congressman Moran said. "This modest assistance has been a long time coming, but may provide farmers and their bankers with the knowledge that at least some help is on the way."

Assistance will go to producers that suffered a loss of 35 percent or greater in 2001 or 2002 crop years - the choice option laid out by Senator Roberts and Congressman Moran earlier this year.

The crop assistance uses a 65/50 formula for producers that had purchased crop insurance and a 65/45 formula for producers that did not purchase crop insurance. The 65 figure represents the percentage of average production included in the calculation formula and the 45/40 represents the percentage of the price election that will be used in the calculation, generally following the structure of traditional disaster programs. Assistance applies to both program and non-program crops and covers both quality and quantity losses.

The legislation provides an additional \$350 million for livestock programs including \$250 million to The Livestock Assistance Program (LAP). The standard LAP formula will be used, last year's 2002 Livestock Compensation Program payment will be subtracted from it, and the producer is paid the difference.

Also included in the legislation is Senator Roberts' and Congressman Moran's proposal to waive the 25 percent reduction in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rental rates for those producers that used their own CRP land for emergency

haying and grazing.

The total cost of program, \$3.1 billion, is completely offset with reductions from the Conservation Security Program.

"Kansas farmers have been fighting through some very difficult times and I'm glad that assistance has finally been delivered," Congressman Moran said.

"I have said repeatedly that Kansas producers didn't need an issue, they need real assistance," Senator Roberts said. "You can't take an issue to the bank, and that is why today we are delivering a package that producers and their bankers can count on."

Senator Roberts is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Congressman Moran is the Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

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