Farm leaders worry Congress will forget farm policy

By JERRY W. KRAM
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Farm leaders fear that farm policy will be forgotten as Congress and the nation focus on the response to the terrorist attacks. The House of Representatives set to debate a new farm bill this week, but that debate was put on hold while Congress deals with the

That's going to affect all budgets.

North Dakota Sen. Byron Dorgan thinks the emergency, and the economic impact that it has generated, make it far less likely Congress will complete a new farm package this year. The current farm bill, popularly known as "Freedom to Farm," expires in 2002. Farm state legislators have made passage of a new farm bill one of their priorities this year.

Robert Carlson, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union, said he's not sure how the current state of affairs is going to affect the farm bill debate.

"I think the aftereffects of the tragedy will have kind of mixed news for new farm policy," Carlson said. "I think the biggest question is whether the new administration will do things to help farmers. The biggest issue before all this was going to be money, now it's going to be programs."