

April 10, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

About every five years Congress reauthorizes the farm bill that directly impacts the livestock industry, which generates an annual revenue of more than \$160 billion. Those who make up the livestock workforce have benefited for the past four years from the multiple livestock-focused provisions within the 2008 Farm Bill.

The under-signed entities, representing tens of thousands of livestock producers — inclusive of cattle, pork, dairy — along with state animal health officials, state secretaries of agriculture, state veterinarians, and equine interests, urge you to include the provisions outlined below into a Livestock Title, as well as provisions in the Research and Related Matters Title. We urge Congress to once again acknowledge the needs of this integral industry and its importance to the U.S. economy by supporting the following:

- Reauthorize the Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs — the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) which compensates ranchers at a rate of 75 percent market value for livestock mortality caused by disasters; the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) which assists ranchers who graze livestock on qualifying drought-or fire-affected pasture land; and the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), which compensates producers for disaster losses not covered under other disaster programs. These programs have been of critical importance to producers across the nation in recent years. In 2010, according to USDA reports, the U.S. beef cattle market was responsible for the retail equivalent of \$74 billion. To ensure its viability and continued funding, we urge inclusion of the Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs in a Livestock Title. The level of success and subsequent importance of this program cannot be overlooked. In January 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) had already made payments exceeding \$175 million through the livestock disaster programs that were enacted within the 2008 Farm Bill. The harsh weather experienced across the nation in 2011 will see these payments reach new levels. The uncertainty surrounding the Supplemental Revenue Assistance

Payments (SURE) program is not worth the gamble to those within the livestock sector. Placement within the Livestock Title will secure these vital programs.

- Maximize the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) budgets through coordination with state-run programs and focus on the overall issue of animal health;
- Create a comprehensive animal health infrastructure including formal authorization for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN);
- Reauthorize Wildlife Services funding;
- Amend faulty provisions within the interstate meat inspection bill. The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) should adopt rules that permit interstate shipment of state inspected (already designated as equal to FSIS) meat products. FSIS needs the cooperation of every trained state inspector available;
- Reauthorize Mandatory Price Reporting to offset 2015 sunsets;
- Reauthorize sheep and goat funds;
- Provide Equine Funding Support that will allow USDA to work with states to secure necessary resources to deal with the notable increases in major equine disease outbreaks, such as equine piroplasmiasis (EP), contagious equine metritis (CEM), and equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHV-1). These outbreaks put U.S. horses and the industry at considerable risk, particularly if these disease outbreaks and incidents continue to intensify in frequency and magnitude. Inclusion of this requested funding in the USDA-APHIS appropriation will mitigate this risk;
- Support for USDA research and development for competitive grants targeted at Tuberculosis/Brucellosis research, development of vaccinations, delivery systems, and diagnostic tests
- Include a “sense of Congress” provision regarding continued support of Fever Tick eradication; and
- Include a “sense of Congress” provision that the research and diagnostic capability of a national foreign animal disease laboratory is exceedingly important to protect the livestock industry of the United States, insure food safety and to respond effectively to zoonotic diseases.

In addition to the provisions outlined above, we call upon Congress to support the inclusion of the following provisions in Research and Related Matters section of the Farm Bill which enjoy broad support from the livestock industry:

- Reauthorize Animal Health and Disease Research, Section 1433 formula funds;

- Reauthorize the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program;
- Reauthorize the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank;
- Formally authorize for the Minor Use Animal Drug Program; and
- Authorize the Veterinary Services Investment Act.

We support the above programs as a means to ensure the continued success and viability for a 160 billion dollar industry. We urge Congress to pass a 2012 Farm Bill that clearly and concisely outlines the critical programs to the livestock industry in a succinct and non-controversial package of provisions in the next Farm Bill. We ask for your support and thank you for your careful consideration of the provisions outlined in this letter.

Respectfully;

American Horse Council (AHC)
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD)
National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO)
National Farmers Union (NFU)
United States Animal Health Association (USAHA)
U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA)

cc: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
House Committee on Agriculture