

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

Thank you for your announcement of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). For many family agricultural operations, this support will mean they are able to stay in business and pass farms and ranches on to the next generation of producers in spite of these challenging times.

However, we are concerned about the \$125,000 per commodity and \$250,000 per individual or entity payment limits as it relates to assistance for the livestock, dairy and specialty crop sectors. This limitation would severely restrict the program's effectiveness for many family-owned farms and ranches across the nation. We strongly urge you to eliminate payment limits for livestock, dairy and specialty crop producers before the final CFAP program details are announced.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused unprecedented damage to the livestock, dairy and specialty crop industries. Agricultural economists have estimated over \$13 billion in harm to the cattle industry and \$5 billion to the pork industry due to the pandemic, with many billions more in injury to dairies, fruit, nut, and vegetable producers, and the horticulture and floriculture industry. As is true for many other small businesses across the country, this financial harm comes through no fault of these farmers and ranchers, nor is it the result of typical market forces. As such, these relief payments should aim to indemnify as much loss as possible without restrictive payment limitations.

While some farmers and ranchers produce multiple commodities, and therefore will be eligible for up to the \$250,000 total payment limit per individual or entity, many cattle, pork and dairy operations are solely invested in livestock. This common business practice within the cattle, pork and dairy industries of being invested in a single commodity means this payment limit structure will be even more severe for these producers compared to other commodities. Fruit and vegetable producers by comparison can have very high costs of production—strawberry producers can invest \$30,000 an acre for example—and thus payment limits of this level are too restrictive to meaningfully address the losses many producers are facing.

It is critical for USDA to provide a level of support that is responsive to the disaster situation producers are currently facing. As you know, Congress approved \$14 billion in the CARES Act to partially replenish the Commodity Credit Corporation and we believe that a significant portion of these dollars should be used to ensure that needs are met, even if the payments must be paid in tranches.

We appreciate the support you and Secretary Perdue have provided farmers and ranchers, and we look forward to working with you make certain agricultural producers receive the level of assistance necessary in response to COVID-19.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jerry Moran
Jerry Moran
United States Senator

/s/ Pat Roberts
Pat Roberts
United States Senator

/s/ James E. Risch
James E. Risch
United States Senator

/s/ Mike Crapo
Mike Crapo
United States Senator

/s/ Thom Tillis
Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ John Barrasso, M.D.
John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator

/s/ Cory Gardner
Cory Gardner
United States Senator

/s/ Kevin Cramer
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

/s/ David A. Perdue
David A. Perdue
United States Senator

/s/ Joni K. Ernst
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones
Doug Jones
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez
Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall
Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Patty Murray
Patty Murray
United States Senator

/s/ Martha McSally
Martha McSally
United States Senator

/s/ Deb Fischer
Deb Fischer
United States Senator

/s/ Roy Blunt
Roy Blunt
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Burr
Richard Burr
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ John Cornyn
John Cornyn
United States Senator

/s/ Todd Young
Todd Young
United States Senator

/s/ Kelly Loeffler
Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator