

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

On behalf of the undersigned state Farm Bureaus, we want to thank you for your steadfast support of America's farm and ranch families, especially as we work through the many challenges of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As you are aware, livestock producers across the country have faced many challenges due to the impact of COVID-19. Cattlemen and women have lost value on their livestock due to the dramatic market drop that occurred in response to the pandemic. Since the inception of the virus, live cattle futures have been down roughly 28 percent, posing a major threat to our nation's cattle producers' ability to continue operating.

This global pandemic certainly qualifies as a natural disaster. We hope adequate relief will be provided as we see the "Phase III" Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

We respectfully request that you explore all options within your authority to provide relief during these difficult times for cattlemen and women across the country. While we are pleased the CARES Act provides \$9.5 billion for various agricultural industries, we must ensure struggling cattle producers receive enough assistance to help make up for the significant losses they have endured. Specifically, we ask the department to direct support to the stocker and cow-calf operators as these producers have shouldered the brunt of this market decline.

In addition, we request you thoroughly examine all opportunities within the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) existing authority to provide funding to offset losses from depressed cattle prices. Moreover, programs such as the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) may be a viable option given the broad flexibility provided by the program. We also ask USDA to monitor any price manipulation that may be occurring within the cattle industry.

Again, we thank you and your staff for listening to the concerns of the many Farm Bureau members who work hard daily to provide food and fiber for consumers worldwide. We look forward to working to provide critical relief for our nation's farm and ranch families during this difficult time and know that we can accomplish this important goal with your help.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us anytime.

Sincerely,

Alabama Farmers Federation
Arizona Farm Bureau Federation
Arkansas Farm Bureau
California Farm Bureau Federation
Colorado Farm Bureau

Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Georgia Farm Bureau
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation
Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
Maine Farm Bureau
Maryland Farm Bureau
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
Missouri Farm Bureau
Montana Farm Bureau Federation
Nebraska Farm Bureau
North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
South Dakota Farm Bureau
South Carolina Farm Bureau
Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation
Texas Farm Bureau
Washington Farm Bureau