

# 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