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May 28, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to thank you for your timely work on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This program will provide much needed relief to thousands of Missouri producers and help to secure their vital role in our nation's food supply. I also write to inform you of two concerns that have been raised by my constituents in the few days since the program was announced. They need your assistance.

First, cattle producers in my state have tried in earnest to navigate the pandemic and the concurrent collapse in prices. Amidst rapidly changing conditions and with limited information, producers made the best business decisions they could—not knowing if, when, or how aid might come. Many producers now feel the CFAP payment program penalizes them for not selling their cattle at the bottom of the market. I ask that you address this discrepancy to ensure producers get sufficient aid to address their needs.

Second, I have heard from row crop farmers who have raised a serious concern regarding the provision of aid for non-specialty crops. The rule states, "Eligible inventory for the purpose of non-specialty crops is the lower of self-certified unpriced inventory that an eligible producer has vested ownership in as of January 15, 2020, or 50 percent of the eligible producer's 2019 production of that commodity." This may be an effective way to make aid available for up to half a year's worth of stored grain, but some farmers in my state did not have a crop in 2019 due to disasters, specifically flooding. Missouri farmers devastated by these events are worried that they will be deemed ineligible. I ask that you address this unintended consequence and make certain that aid is available to producers as was intended.

For many in my state this program will be the difference between farming another year or shutting down altogether. Thank you for your continued support for agriculture and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Josh Hawley
United States Senator