

March 12, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee  
416 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Chambliss:

The U.S. agricultural organizations listed below are writing to express our strong concern for the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd and strong opposition to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) proposed rule to allow Canadian cattle over 30 months of age into the United States. Canada's ongoing struggle with its bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) epidemic continues to disrupt international beef trade and continues to create hardships for the U.S. cattle industry when Canadian cattle and beef are mixed with U.S. cattle and beef. The USDA's proposal is premature and will cause additional and potentially severe consequences for U.S. independent cattle producers.

We are seeking your help to prevent the implementation of USDA's proposed rule. The following reasons justify congressional action against USDA's proposed rule and demonstrate that Congress should intercede to protect the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd, the safety of the U.S. beef supply, and the viability of the U.S. cattle industry:

1. Allowing older Canadian cattle into the United States will further harm the United States' ability to fully restore lost export markets.
2. The full magnitude of Canada's BSE epidemic is still unfolding, but it is already much greater than what USDA has asserted and assumed.
3. Cattle over 30 months of age that originate in a BSE-affected country have an inherently higher risk for transmitting BSE.
4. As previously recognized by the Food and Drug Administration, and as recognized by international BSE experts, current BSE mitigation measures, principally the U.S. and Canadian feed bans, are inadequate to address the increased risk associated with older Canadian cattle.
5. Allowing older Canadian cattle into the United States will immediately harm the United States' international disease risk profile.
6. The financial losses to U.S. cattle producers will likely be severe if the United States allows higher-risk Canadian cattle into the U.S. market.

Given the importance of the U.S. cattle industry to the economic well-being of Rural America, we trust that you will consider our request favorably. Please contact any of the undersigned organizations should you have any questions regarding our position. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Albany County Stockgrowers Association - Wyoming  
American Grassfed Association  
Arkansas Animal Producer's Association  
Belmont Fresh Meats, Inc. – Wisconsin  
The Butcher Shop – Wisconsin  
Buckeye Quality Beef Association - Ohio  
Calaveras County Cattlemen's Association – California  
Cass County Farmers Union – Minnesota  
Cattle Producers of Washington  
Cattlemen's Weighing Association – North Dakota  
Central Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Independent Cattlemen's Association  
Converse County Stockgrowers - Wyoming  
Crowley-Kiowa-Lincoln Cattlemen's Association - Colorado  
Dakota Resource Council – North Dakota  
Eagle County Cattlemen's Association - Colorado  
Glacial Ridge Cattlemen of Minnesota  
Grant County Cattleman's – Washington  
Harding County Stockgrowers - South Dakota  
Idaho County Farm Bureau – Idaho  
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota  
Independent Cattlemen of Iowa  
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska  
Kansas Cattlemen's Association  
Kit Carson County Cattlemen's Association - Colorado  
Madera County Cattlemen's Association - California  
McPherson County Farmers Union – Kansas  
Merced Mariposa Cattlemen's Association – California  
Mesa County Cattlemen's Association - Colorado  
Mid Oregon Beef Coop-Prineville  
Minnesota Cattlemen's Association  
Minnesota Farmers Union  
Mississippi Livestock Markets Association  
Missouri's Best Beef, Inc., Agricultural Co-operative  
Missourri Bison Association  
Modoc County Cattlemen's Association – California  
Modoc County Cattlewomen's Association – California  
Montana Cattlemen's Association  
Morrow County Livestock Growers Association – Oregon

Navajo County Cattlemen's Association – Arizona  
Nevada Live Stock Association  
New Mexico Cattle Growers Association  
North Washoe Unit, Nevada Cattlemen's Association – Nevada and California  
Northwest Stockmen of Minnesota  
New York Beef Producers Association Southern Tier Region  
Okanogan County Cattlemen's Association - Washington  
Oregon Livestock Producer Association  
Organization for Competitive Markets  
Perkins County Livestock Improvement Association – South Dakota  
Powder River Basin Resource Council - Wyoming  
Producers Livestock – Nebraska  
R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America  
South Dakota CattleWomen  
South Dakota Farmers Union  
South Dakota Livestock Auction Markets Association  
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association  
Southern Colorado Livestock Association  
Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association  
Spokane County Cattlemen's Association - Washington  
Stevens County Cattlemen's Association - Washington  
TenStar Technologies – Montana  
Washington County Stockmen's Association – Colorado  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Weiser River Cattle Association – Idaho  
West Carroll Cattlemen's Association – Louisiana  
Wisconsin Independent Livestock Dealers and Auction Markets  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

**Livestock Auction Yards:**

Aberdeen Livestock Sales Co. – South Dakota  
Anderson Livestock Auction – Utah  
Atkinson Livestock Market – Nebraska  
Bassett Livestock Auction, Inc. – Nebraska  
Belle Fourche Livestock Exchange – South Dakota  
Bloomington Livestock Exchange – Wisconsin  
Buffalo Livestock Auction - Wyoming  
Cortez Livestock Auction – Colorado  
Crawford Livestock Market, LLC - Nebraska  
Creston Livestock Auction, Inc. – Iowa  
Cuero Livestock Market - Texas  
Decorah Sales Commission – Iowa  
Delhi Livestock Auction – Louisiana  
Dunlap Livestock Auction – Iowa  
Faith Livestock Commission – South Dakota  
Fort Pierre Livestock Auction, Inc. – South Dakota

Galesburg Livestock Sales, Inc. – Illinois  
Gordon Livestock Market - Nebraska  
Herreid Livestock Market, Inc. – South Dakota  
Hub City Livestock Auction, Inc. – South Dakota  
Idabel Stockyards - Oklahoma  
Imperial Auction Market – Nebraska  
Lemmon Livestock, Inc. - South Dakota  
Martin Livestock Auction, Inc. – South Dakota  
Mobridge Livestock Market, Inc. – South Dakota  
Modoc Auction Yard – California  
Nampa Livestock Markets, Inc – Idaho  
Neel Cattle Inc. DBA Dothan Livestock Company – Alabama  
Philip Livestock Auction – South Dakota  
Presho Livestock Auction – South Dakota  
Producers Livestock Marketing Association - Oregon  
Riverton Livestock Auction – Wyoming  
Sebastopol Livestock, Inc. - Mississippi  
Shasta Livestock Auction - California  
Sheridan Livestock Auction Company – Nebraska  
Smithfield Livestock Auction, LLC. – Utah  
Southeast Mississippi Livestock, AAL  
St. Francis Livestock Auction – Kansas  
St. Onge Livestock – South Dakota  
Treasure Valley Livestock Auction - Idaho  
Valentine Livestock Auction – Nebraska  
Verdigre Livestock Market – Nebraska  
Watertown Livestock Auction, Inc. – South Dakota  
West Point Stockyard - Mississippi  
Winner Livestock Auction – South Dakota  
Winter Livestock – Kansas

cc: Sen. Kohl, chairman of Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Related Agencies

Sen. Bennett, ranking member of Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Related Agencies