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October 2, 2007

Members of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Request for Livestock Title Provisions in the 2007 Farm Bill

Dear Member of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee,

On behalf of the thousands of individual, cattle-producing members of R-CALF USA, we urge your support of several reforms to ensure that U.S. farmers and ranchers will continue to have the opportunity to earn a profit from an open and competitive cattle market.

Specifically, we ask you to include the following livestock reforms in the 2007 Farm Bill:

- Require full implementation of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) no later than Sept. 30, 2008.
- Limit the packers' use of price-depressing captive supplies by including the Captive Supply Reform Act (S. 1017) and the limitation on packer ownership of livestock (S. 305) in the 2007 Farm Bill.
- Include the Competition and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007 (S. 622) to update and strengthen the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) and ensure its enforcement through the establishment of an Office of Special Counsel. Also, clarify that producers need not prove an injury to competition before obtaining protection against unfair practices, and clarify that a packers' claim of a legitimate business justification is, itself, unjustified.
- Amend the Animal Health Protection Act (Act) to address the weakness identified by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the R-CALF USA v. USDA lawsuit – the court found the Act does not impose any restrictions on how USDA must respond, if at all, to the risk that bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) will enter the U.S. from foreign countries.
- Make clear that U.S. meatpackers have a right to voluntarily test for BSE.
- Support voluntary arbitration for hog and poultry contract growers.

These reforms are needed to ensure open and competitive markets and the safety of our U.S. livestock herds. Thank you for helping to strengthen and protect our U.S. cattle industry.

Sincerely,

R.M. Thornsberry, D.V.M.
President, R-CALF USA Board of Directors