

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 3, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

In light of repeated misinformation surrounding the proposed prohibition on packer ownership of livestock within the Farm Bill, we write to correct the record, and to urge your support for a targeted ban. The current language included in Title X of the Senate Farm Bill will finally restore a level playing field between livestock producers and large packers.

The U.S. steer and heifer slaughter industry is dominated by just four meat packers. That control has enabled the largest meat packers to limit producers' access to markets and gain an unfair price advantage, thus damaging market integrity. The Senate's Farm Bill language that bans packer ownership of cattle for longer than 14 days before slaughter will prevent this dominant industry from taking further advantage of that control.

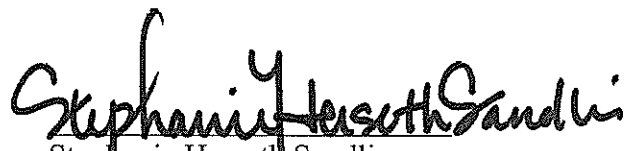
Contrary to some reports, the Senate language does not harm producers' ability to use forward contracts or to use value-added marketing programs. In fact, Section 10207 of Title X explicitly establishes that producers can enter into contracting agreements, and then protects those agreements by requiring producer ownership and participation in the management of their livestock production. Additionally, Section 10207 exempts packers that own only one plant, that slaughter less than 125,000 cattle annually, and packers that are owned by a producer cooperative.

As the U.S. cattle industry continues to contract at an alarming rate, it is imperative that Congress and your Administration take action to protect competitive markets now. Failure to act could severely damage the already jeopardized cattle industry. We urge you to reject the misinformation campaign regarding these provisions, and support the Senate's Title X language in the final version of the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Barbara Cubin
Member of Congress



Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
Member of Congress