

# ■ Coalition for Fair Agriculture and Rural Markets ■

May 21, 2007

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Representative:

The organizations listed below are writing to express our strong support for legislation that would allow state-inspected meat and poultry to be sold in the national marketplace.

Two bipartisan bills have been introduced in the House—H.R. 1760 by Rep. Ron Kind (WI); and H.R. 2315 by Reps. Earl Pomeroy (ND) and Roy Blunt (MO). Both bills will resolve a basic inequity that has existed since 1967 and allow interstate sales of state-inspected meat and poultry. The reasons to support this legislation are clear and simple:

- Meat and poultry products from 34 foreign countries can be freely shipped and sold anywhere in the United States—but our domestic small businesses and processors cannot. This is unfair and wrong. *Why are small businesses in the U.S. denied the same market opportunities that are given to companies in foreign countries?*
- The restriction on interstate meat sales does not apply to “non-amenable” products—such as venison, bison, pheasant, quail, rabbit and others. These products are normally regulated by state inspection programs, yet can be shipped in interstate commerce without restriction. *It does not make sense for these products to be sold across state borders while beef, poultry, pork, lamb and goat cannot be shipped interstate.*
- No other state-inspected food commodities are prohibited from being shipped across state lines. Other state-inspected food products (milk, dairy products, fruit, vegetables, fish and shellfish) are freely marketed across the country. *Why aren't the same market options available for meat and poultry?*

Twenty-eight states currently have meat and poultry inspection programs. They serve more than 2,000 state-inspected meat processors—mostly small, family-owned businesses—who are prevented from competing in the national marketplace. Our locally-produced, state-inspected meats are some of the best specialty products in the country. *It doesn't make sense to say consumers in Iowa can enjoy these products while consumers across the state border in Missouri cannot eat and enjoy the same products.*

Three USDA advisory committees have long recommended that the ban on interstate sales be removed. Congress has debated and introduced legislation for more than a decade—and all of the resulting hearings, reports, and recommendations have supported removing the ban on interstate meat sales.

Current law discriminates against U.S. products and favors imports from foreign countries. American processors and businesses are simply asking for a fair and reasonable chance to market their products here at home. Our country's hard-working producers, processors and family-run small businesses only want the opportunity to expand their markets. How can anyone deny this to them? Again, we ask you to support and cosponsor H.R. 1760 and H.R. 2315 and level the economic playing field for rural America.

Sincerely,

## ■ Coalition for Fair Agriculture and Rural Markets ■

American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP)  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Grassfed Association  
American Meat Goat Association  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)  
Association of West Virginia Livestock Auction Markets

Buckeye Quality Beef Association (Ohio)  
Calaveras County Cattlemen's Association (California)  
Cattle Producers of Washington  
Center for Rural Affairs  
Colorado Association of Meat Processors  
Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association  
Dakota Rural Action (South Dakota)

Fligners Market (Ohio)  
Georgia Livestock Marketing Association  
Goat and Sheep Producers of Alabama  
Grow Wisconsin Livestock Initiative Consortium  
Illinois Association of Meat Processors  
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas  
Independent Cattlemen of Iowa  
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska  
Iowa Livestock Auction Markets Association

Kansas Cattlemen's Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Livestock Marketing Association  
Kansas Meat Processors Association  
Kit Carson Cattlemen's Association (Colorado)  
Land & Lamb Co., Inc. (Vermont)  
Livestock Marketing Association  
Livestock Marketing Association of Texas  
Louisiana Livestock Marketing Association

Merced-Mariposa Cattlemen's Association (California)  
Mesa County Cattlemen's Association (Colorado)  
Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments  
Mississippi Livestock Markets Association  
Missouri Association of Meat Processors  
Missouri Bison Association  
Montana Cattlemen's Association  
Montana Association of Livestock Auction Markets

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)  
National Bison Association  
National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Farmers Union

## ■ Coalition for Fair Agriculture and Rural Markets ■

National Grange

New Mexico Livestock Marketing Association

New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association

North American Deer Farmers Association

North Carolina Livestock Auction Markets Association

Northeast States Association for Agricultural Stewardship

Ohio Association of Meat Processors

Ohio Cattlemen's Association

Oregon Livestock Producers Association

R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America

South Carolina Association of Meat Processors

South Carolina Livestock Marketing Association

Southern Colorado Livestock Association

Tennessee Goat Producers Association

Texas Association of Business

Tunbridge Woolworks LLC (Vermont)

United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA)

Vermont Meat and Poultry Processors Association

Vermont Sheep and Goat Association

Virginia Livestock Markets Association

Washington Cattlemen's Association

Washington County Stockmen's Association (Colorado)

Western Organization of Resource Councils

Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors

Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association

Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative

Wisconsin Pork Association

Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)