



May 23, 2007

The Honorable Leonard Boswell, Chairman
House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock Dairy and Poultry
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boswell and Members of the Committee,

Today you received a letter from the Meat and Poultry Promotion Coalition that purports to represent the interests of “a vast majority of the livestock, poultry, and meat producers in the U.S.” (Emphasis added.) The signatories are urging you, on behalf of producers, to vote against H.R. 2135.

This letter is an attempt to mislead you. The letter’s signatories, specifically Tyson Foods, Inc., Cargill, Swift & Co., and National Beef are the four largest U.S. meatpackers that now control over 80 percent of the steer and heifer slaughter in the U.S. The American Meat Institute and the National Meat Association are their trade associations. These entities are not producers, they are meat packers and meat processors – they do not represent the interests of the livestock farmers and ranchers that H.R. 2135 seeks to protect.

Not a single one of these entities represents any of the 15,000 independent cattle-producer members of R-CALF USA. In fact these entities economic interests are in direct competition with the economic interests of the U.S. farmers and ranchers. U.S. cattle producers and these meat packers and meat processors compete against each other to maximize their respective profits, minimize their respective risks, and enhance their respective competitiveness.

We trust you will recognize the tremendous disparity in market power between the highly concentrated meat packers and processors and the U.S. farmers and ranchers who produce cattle.

H.R. 2135 is an essential measure to level the economic playing field between producers and packers and processors. Your support of H.R. 2135, H.R. 2213, and a ban on packer ownership is needed to ensure that there will be robust competition in U.S. livestock markets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Bullard". The signature is stylized and includes a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Bill Bullard
CEO
406-670-8157