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25TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

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AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

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August 11, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has dealt an enormous blow to American ranchers and farmers, especially in the Great State of Texas. Every sector of agriculture has been hurt by the pandemic including row crops, livestock, dairy, specialty and horticultural crops, and produce. I thank you for your steadfast support of America's farm and ranch families to help them during these difficult times, but more still needs to be done to ensure these hardworking Americans do not face more losses. As Congress and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) continue to draft additional assistance to our farmers and ranchers, I strongly urge you to consider the following requests:

1. Reevaluate all losses on non-specialty crops, specialty crops, and livestock to modify the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)
2. Provide additional funding and support for cow-calf and stocker operators

On behalf of the 25<sup>th</sup> District of Texas, we greatly appreciate the relief USDA has provided through CFAP. While this program has given much needed assistance to farmers and ranchers to make up for revenue loss during COVID-19, they are still harmed by the end date of April 15, 2020. I urge you to reevaluate losses for livestock and crops not only up to April 15, 2020, but also include April 16<sup>th</sup> through the end of June 2020 as this time period marked the height of the crisis. Since the beginning of the year, most agriculture sectors in America, specifically in Texas, have seen the markets drop more than 10 percent. Producers have only continued to lose revenue over the past few months and will continue to be impacted by the price decline unless we can adequately design the program to address and respond to those losses properly.

In addition to this issue, live cattle futures dropped at least 30 percent because of the health pandemic, and cattle producers have continuously experienced major price swings. In hopes of a market recovery from the virus, many cow-calf and stocker operators decided to hold their cattle.

These ranchers faced significant costs from the volatile market prices, feeding animals, land rental, and the disruptions of the beef supply chain. For 2020, the estimated losses for the cow-calf sector is \$111.91 per head and \$159.98 per head in the stocker sector. Now more than ever, we must keep our ranchers in business as America recovers, which is why I urge you to provide more than \$33 per head on inventory for cattle producers and allow USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) the ability to open Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage for emergency haying and grazing.

America's farmers and ranchers, along with the men and women who work alongside them, have proven to be essential in keeping our nation's food supply secure. They continue to meet challenges as markets and supply chains rapidly react to the pandemic. I look forward to continue working together to protect critical workforce, rural communities, and our country through a secure food supply. Thank you for considering these requests, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Williams  
Member of Congress