

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 2015

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

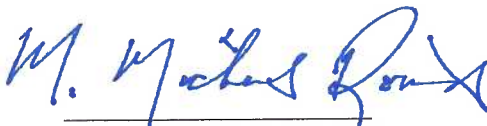
As you are aware, six confirmed cases of the H5N2 bird flu have been found on South Dakota farms and as a result, more than 300,000 turkeys in the state have been destroyed. H5N2 poses no risk to humans or to public health, but due to the potential devastating effects the H5N2 could have on the entire U.S. poultry industry we strongly urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allocate all available personnel and resources to contain this deadly virus and to provide all assistance you have available to impacted states' poultry industries.

Also, it is imperative that foreign export markets continue to be kept open, especially for turkey products. We strongly urge you to make certain that these markets remain open and that you redouble your efforts to ensure an uninterrupted flow of U.S. poultry products to foreign markets continues.

Agriculture is South Dakota's number one industry and vital to our state's economy by providing a \$21.4 billion economic impact each year, directly or indirectly employing 122,000 South Dakotans, and generating 20 percent of the state's economic activity. South Dakota agriculture depends heavily on exports and the loss or reduction of foreign turkey product exports would be highly detrimental to that industry in our state.

As the USDA continues to take steps to contain this virus, please provide our offices with regular updates on the status of the outbreak and your efforts to contain and eradicate it.

Sincerely,



M. MICHAEL ROUNDS
United States Senator



JOHN THUNE
United States Senator