

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 09, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write today to urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support all of our hardworking farmers and provide the much needed financial relief that was promised to them.

As you know, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021* (Pub.L. 116-260) directs USDA to “make payments to contract growers of livestock and poultry to cover ... revenue losses.” Our livestock and poultry contract growers have been waiting patiently for USDA to provide financial relief that so many desperately need. We are concerned that USDA’s announcement on June 15 – that described its intent to finalize this program within 60 days – only focused on poultry growers and made no mention of providing assistance to contract swine growers.

Additionally, many pork producers have been waiting for USDA to roll out the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program swine top-up payments that was announced in January of this year. We realize that as Administration transitions occur, agencies need time to evaluate programs. However, over the past eight months, USDA has given no indication as to how it plans to put these funds to use. Our producers are still feeling the economic hardships of the pandemic and look forward to USDA carrying out this program.

We are sure you are well aware of the challenges Iowa and Minnesota’s livestock producers and contract growers have experienced over the last several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for the work that USDA has done to help our farmers and producers through the USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, but it is crucial that assistance is provided for all those impacted, as the law directs.

We urge you to use all USDA resources at your disposal to make contract swine growers eligible for this emergency assistance provided by Congress, and ensure that they are fully aware of their eligibility. We thank you for your timely consideration of this matter and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator