



June 6, 2012

Dear Senator Klobuchar,

As an organization that has been working for fair and sustainable farm policy for over 25 years, we thank you for your work on the Farm Bill in the Agriculture Committee. As you know, there will be numerous amendments proposed to the Farm Bill on the Senate floor in the next few weeks. Below are amendments we hope you will support:

- Senators Grassley (R-IA) and Conrad (D-ND) will offer an amendment to prohibit meatpackers from owning livestock more than 14 days before slaughter. Meatpackers use cattle and hogs they own to control market access and lower prices paid to family farmers and ranchers. This amendment will help ensure free and competitive livestock markets.
- Senator Cardin (D-MD) will introduce an amendment to modernize conservation requirements for crop insurance participation. Conservation practices that protect against soil erosion and conserve wetlands were required for crop insurance until 1996. These practices build resilience in times of increasingly extreme weather linked to climate change, and can ultimately lower costs.
- Senator Tester (D-MT) will offer an amendment to ensure that farmers have access to the seeds and breeds suited to their local climate, soils and pest conditions by allocating a small percentage of USDA's research budget to classical breeding. Crop diversity helps address diseases, pests and national food security, yet more public resources are being shifted to a limited set of major crops and breeds.
- Senators Brown (D-OH) and Nelson (D-NE) will offer an amendment to reinstate critical funding in Rural Development, specifically for Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG), Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP), Rural Energy Savings Program, and Water/Wastewater Backlog. The Rural Development Title is a proven job-creator through essential grants and loan programs targeted local initiatives to spur growth.
- Senators Brown (D-OH) and Nelson (D-NE) will introduce an amendment to provide mandatory funding for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). As our farmer population ages, we need to ensure that our new farmers succeed in this environment of high land prices and limited access to credit.
- Senator Udall (D-NM) is introducing an amendment to restore and expand the funding base for Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers program (Section 2501 – OASDFR). This program is essential to level the playing field for disadvantaged farmers who have been historically discriminated against and expand the program to include veteran farmers and ranchers.

We hope that you will support these amendments when they reach the Senate floor during the Farm Bill debate. Thanks once again for your leadership on the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

Jim Harkness, President