

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 17, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

Thank you for your continued work in providing relief for our nation's farmers and ranchers as they weather the effects of an unprecedented pandemic. Through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has answered the call of our producers when support is urgently needed. However, we write today concerned for our nation's independent turkey growers that have so far been unable to utilize this critical assistance.

The poultry sector, much like other livestock sectors, is facing unprecedented losses due to the shutdown of the food service industry and broader slowdown of the economy. In particular, independent turkey growers carry the costs and losses of their operation in the same way as cattle and hog farmers, yet these turkey growers remain ineligible for CFAP funds. These independent growers represent nearly 10 percent of overall production.

We are confident that if allowed to apply for this program, many independent poultry producers will be able to demonstrate that they have suffered a 5 percent or greater loss, the threshold required of other commodities in order to receive CFAP funds. For example, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service data shows that when comparing fresh boneless, skinless tom turkey breast meat prices on January 10, 2020, to April 17, June 6, and August 7, there was a 20 percent loss, eight percent loss, and seven percent loss respectively. While we recognize and appreciate that measuring losses on a per-pound price basis may not be sufficient given the unique business structure of the turkey industry, we are confident a consistent measure of losses can be found.

We understand the USDA has been working with the poultry industry in identifying a formula that will adequately, equitably, and consistently show where losses have occurred. We applaud you for that work, and further urge you to finalize a formula in time to allow independent turkey producers to be eligible for any additional and upcoming CFAP rounds. Many producers are left ineligible due to the program not adequately recognizing the unique business structure of their operations from the rest of the sector. We stand ready to work with you in providing this assistance to a critical American industry.

Thank you once again for your leadership in providing critical support to our farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,



Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress



Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress