

April 13, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We thank you for the tremendous amount of time and effort you and the entire team at the U.S. Department of Agriculture are bringing to the policy table so that farmers can survive and Americans can keep food on their kitchen table. Our farmers and ranchers are doing their part to help the nation navigate the effort to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Your work is providing valuable assistance in that partnership you so often refer to in your motto to “Do Right and Feed Everyone.”

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27th includes several provisions for assistance to agriculture. While few sectors of the economy have been spared from the economic impacts of the heroic efforts of Americans to contain the spread of the coronavirus, perhaps none have experienced the loss of markets to the degree of the U.S. dairy industry. For example, products typically sold to dine-in restaurants, that nearly all have closed due to social distancing requirements, are backing up in warehouses and much of the farm milk used to make those products no longer has a market.

Farm milk prices are on the verge of collapse due to this shift in consumer demand. Dairy producers who, just a few weeks ago were looking at the prospect of the first promising year in more than five, are now in the most economic difficulty in memory.

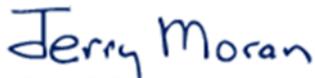
In this case assistance for the dairy industry adds up to both help for farmers and nutritious food for the entire country. Support for Americans suddenly in need of food assistance is a national priority at this time of need. Economic stability for the dairy industry will help ensure that a stable and abundant food supply is available to the public at reasonable prices now and long into the future.

The Congress provided several ways in the CARES Act to help the dairy industry. We urge you to develop strong measures to help mitigate the current market upheaval so that the dairy industry can survive this crisis.

Sincerely,


James E. Risch
United States Senator


Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator

/s/ Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Martha McSally
United States Senator

/s/ M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Mitt Romney
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator