

February 28, 2011

The Honorable Sam Farr  
Ranking, Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, FDA & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2362 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6016

Dear Representative Farr:

On behalf of the nation's livestock producing farm families, we ask for your continued support of the livestock protection program of USDA's Wildlife Services (WS).

The undersigned organizations representing livestock producers and local government of the Eastern United States strongly oppose the Administration's proposed reductions in WS operations. Wildlife Services operations actually requires an increase of \$4.39 million beyond the FY 2010 level to adequately fund the livestock protection program in the eastern region of Wildlife Services.

We ask for your active opposition to the proposal of the Administration to reduce Wildlife Services by over \$10 million with elimination of the federal partnership in livestock protection in several states including South Dakota, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. We are also concerned by the recent action taken by the House of Representatives on the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution (CR) with regards to reductions in APHIS funding for the remainder of the fiscal year. The FY2011 CR passed by the house cuts the funding for APHIS programs by approximately \$77.6 million from FY 2010 levels. Our concern is that agency funding cuts of this magnitude will have a disproportional effect on Wildlife Services livestock protection activities.

The Wildlife Services livestock protection program is vital to the economic survival of the livestock industry. Livestock protection is important to tens of thousands of farm families across the country, who recognize that even with federal assistance joining private and state agency efforts, over 250,000 sheep and nearly 150,000 cattle are still lost to predators each year. The value of livestock lost to predators and predator control costs are major expenses of livestock production.

The \$4.39 million needed for the Wildlife Services Eastern Region in the FY 2012 appropriations for agriculture would help fund livestock predation protection programs in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Maine, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Mississippi, Minnesota, Michigan, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and Wisconsin. In recent years, Wildlife Services provided predator damage management assistance in 11 states of approximately \$878,000. Of this amount 70 percent or \$650,000, was cooperative funding from state and county governments, livestock groups and livestock producers themselves. This funding was in addition to funding designated to protect livestock from wolf depredation in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Livestock production is an important component of agriculture in our states; however, predator problems and wildlife conflict management are increasing. The proposed increase we support in livestock protection funding will assist our individual producers, state and county governments and the Wildlife Services Agency to better address predator management.

Alabama Cattlemen's Association  
American Sheep Industry Association  
Center for Dairy Excellence - PA  
Century Commercial Lamb Producers and Feeders  
Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida  
Florida Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia Cattlemen's Association  
Indiana Sheep Association  
Iowa Sheep Industry Association  
Kentucky Goat Producers Association  
Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office  
Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association  
Keystone Beef Marketing Network - PA  
Maine Sheep Breeders Association  
Maryland Sheep Breeders Association  
Michigan Cattlemen's Association  
Massachusetts Federation of Sheep Associations  
Michigan Sheep Breeders Association  
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation  
Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association  
Mississippi Cattlemen's Association  
Mississippi Farm Bureau  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Lamb Feeders Association  
National Rifle Association  
New York Beef Producers' Association  
North Carolina Sheep Producers Association  
Ohio Cattlemen's Association  
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation  
Ohio Sheep Improvement Association  
Pennsylvania Center for Beef Excellence  
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau  
Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association  
Tennessee Sheep Producers Association  
Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation  
Virginia Sheep Producers Association  
West Virginia Farm Bureau Federation  
West Virginia Shepherds Federation  
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation  
Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative