

February 28, 2011

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

The undersigned national and state sheep and cattle producer organizations, joined by industry associations, wildlife organizations, local and state government, strongly support an increase in the Livestock Protection Program of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services in the FY 2012 appropriations for agriculture.

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.

We extend our sincere appreciation for your support and leadership in Congress for the USDA Wildlife Services which is a crucial program for a healthy sheep and cattle industry in America and as evidenced by this letter, strongly supported by numerous cooperators from wildlife organizations to state and local government.

We commend your inclusion of a line item for livestock protection funding, which began in the FY 2006 appropriations with an increase of \$700,000.

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 that 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, particularly as the costs of control, such as fuel, continue to increase.

Without additional federal funding to support existing western livestock protection programs, predation management expertise will be lost and livestock grazing in some areas will be jeopardized. Our associations join in requesting an additional \$8.3 million for USDA's Wildlife Services for livestock protection.

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Livestock protection is the base of the Wildlife Services agency, yet collectively in our state programs we find cooperators carrying more and more of the funding responsibilities as increased federal funds tend to be more non-livestock oriented. It is important to note the federal, state, county and private cooperation to fund livestock protection. To emphasize the cooperative funding already in place, the policy of the Western Governors Association supports funding of Wildlife Services for livestock protection.

We ask for your support of this appropriations priority for the sheep and cattle industries. Please let us know of any questions or requests that we can assist with on this important issue.

American Sheep Industry Association  
Arizona Cattle Growers Association  
Arizona Wool Producers Association  
California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association  
California Cattlemen's Association  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Public Lands Council  
California Wool Growers Association  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Farm Bureau  
Colorado Wool Growers Association  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Hawaii Sheep and Goat Association  
Idaho Cattle Association  
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation  
Idaho Wool Growers Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Sheep Association  
Montana Association of State Grazing Districts  
Montana Public Lands Council  
Montana State Cattlemen's Association  
Montana Stockgrowers Association  
Montana Wool Growers Association  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Lamb Feeders Association  
National Rifle Association  
Nebraska Sheep and Goat Producers Association  
Nevada Farm Bureau  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
Nevada Department of Agriculture  
Nevada State Grazing Boards Central Committee

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Nevada Wool Growers Association  
New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association  
New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau  
New Mexico Federal Lands Council  
New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.  
North Dakota Department of Agriculture  
North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association  
North Dakota Stockmen's Association  
Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Department of Agriculture  
Oregon Farm Bureau  
Oregon Sheep Growers Association  
Public Lands Council  
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association  
South Dakota Sheep Growers Association  
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas  
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association  
Texas Deer Association  
Texas Predator Control Districts  
Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association  
Texas Wildlife Association  
Utah Cattlemen's Association  
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food  
Utah Farm Bureau  
Utah Wool Growers Association  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Washington State Sheep Producers  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association