



June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI), our state affiliates, the National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA), and the Public Lands Council (PLC) thank you for your quick and decisive action to help our nation mitigate the initial economic damage caused by the continued COVID-19 pandemic with the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Our industry, along with all of agriculture continue to suffer tremendously and request additional resources be made available to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to respond to and stem the tide of losses in the agricultural sector.

Specifically, we are asking that Congress raise the Commodity Credit Corporation's (CCC) borrowing authority from the current \$30 billion and make funds available immediately to ensure USDA has, with the oversight of Congress, the ability to respond to the needs of our domestic food and fiber producers. As you are aware, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) developed and administered by the USDA has helped bridge the initial gap caused by the loss of consumer demand and uncertainty in the livestock markets. However, the relief USDA has been able to provide was limited due to funding restrictions and therefore only covered producer losses through mid-April with funding provided by the CARES Act. Additionally, CCC funds intended to compensate for on-going market disruptions have proven insufficient. Our industry continues to suffer greatly and USDA's ability to respond to current and future losses as needed is critical to our producers' ability to continue to operate through what are easily proving to be the most difficult economic times anyone alive has ever faced.

Our initial estimated economic impact to the American sheep industry forecast a loss of at least \$353 million in 2020, and it is clear now that we will eclipse that number. We were pleased that lambs and yearlings (less than 2 years of age) and wool were included as eligible commodities under CFAP. Since the release of the program details, we have submitted additional data through the USDA's Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) filing in the *Federal Register* showing that replacement and cull ewes also exceeded the Department's 5% loss threshold for eligibility under CFAP. The inclusion of replacement and cull ewes, even under the existing coverage dates, would significantly help our industry move toward recovery. This inventory class makes up nearly two-thirds of our sheep flock. That said, it is clear that to provide coverage to all segments and all regions of a widely diverse agricultural industry, a second (and possibly even subsequent) round of temporary assistance is necessary. Many producers in our industry

are only now feeling the full effects of the pandemic's impact; and as was the case for replacement and cull ewes, we are only now able to quantify those losses with sufficient economic data to meet the USDA's threshold under CFAP.

Therefore, we request that additional borrowing authority be made available through the CCC to allow the USDA to extend the CFAP, or similar temporary assistance, as well as any additional funding required to cover losses suffered by American agriculture post the current coverage eligibility; including the 2020 lamb, ewe, and wool crops.

Sincerely,

American Sheep Industry Association  
National Lamb Feeders Association  
Public Lands Council

Alabama Meat Goat & Sheep Producers  
Arizona Wool Producers Association  
Arkansas State Sheep Council  
California Wool Growers Association  
Colorado Wool Growers Association  
Connecticut Sheep Breeders, Inc  
Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida, Inc  
Georgia Sheep & Wool Growers'  
Association  
Hawaii Sheep & Goat Association  
Idaho Wool Growers Association  
The Illinois Lamb & Wool Producers  
Indiana Sheep Association  
Iowa Sheep Industry Association  
Kansas Sheep Association  
Kentucky Sheep & Wool Producers  
Association  
Maine Sheep Breeders Association  
Maryland Sheep Breeders Association  
Massachusetts Federation of Sheep  
Associations  
Michigan Sheep Producers Association  
Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers  
Missouri Sheep Producers, Inc.  
Montana Wool Growers Association  
Nebraska Sheep & Goat Producers  
Association

Nevada Woolgrower Association  
New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Growers  
Garden State Sheep Breeders (NJ)  
New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.  
Empire Sheep Producers Cooperative (NY)  
North Carolina Sheep Producers Association  
North Dakota Lamb & Wool Producers  
Association  
Ohio Sheep Improvement Association  
Oregon Sheep Growers Association  
Pennsylvania Sheep & Wool Growers  
Association  
Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative  
South Carolina Sheep Industries Association  
South Dakota Sheep Growers Association  
Tennessee Sheep Producers Association  
Texas Sheep & Goat Raisers Association  
Utah Wool Growers Association  
Vermont Sheep & Goat Association  
Virginia Sheep Producers Association  
Washington State Sheep Producers  
West Virginia Shepherds Federation  
Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association