

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

September 16, 2022

Thomas J. Vilsack
United States Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We appreciate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) support for America's livestock sector during the volatile market conditions over the past two years. The livestock and meat processing industries are an important part of our states' agricultural economy and way of life, and we are grateful for USDA's ongoing support. We write to urge the Department to make a Section 32 purchase to address ongoing market challenges facing the domestic lamb industry.

During the pandemic, American farmers, ranchers, and families endured severe price volatility at the supermarket. Labor shortages at meatpacking and processing facilities, combined with supply chain issues, limited the availability of beef, pork, and chicken. In response, American sheep farmers and ranchers helped close the shortfall by increasing their lamb herds, and demand for lamb increased alongside it. Now that market conditions have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, demand for beef, pork and chicken has rebounded. As a result, domestic lamb supply now outstrips demand, leaving lamb prices stagnant and lamb feeders struggling to find outlets for their maturing surplus.

As you know, Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935 authorizes USDA to support the prices of commodities in surplus through market purchases and domestic distribution. We respectfully request that USDA use its Section 32 authority to make immediate purchases of this year's maturing lamb crop. This will provide farmers and ranchers the short-term stability to sustain the family farm as they work to realign production with current demand.

In addition to a Section 32 purchase of lamb, we support improvements to USDA's reporting structure and requirements for the lamb marketplace to increase price transparency and stability. We hope USDA will work closely with industry members on long-term solutions to support domestic lamb producers and feeders.

Thank you for your consideration our request. We look forward to working with you to help Colorado, North Dakota, Idaho, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Montana lamb producers.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



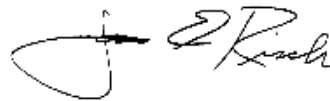
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
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James E. Risch
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
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Jon Tester
United States Senator



John Thune
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