

April 8, 2020

Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We thank you and your team at USDA for your decisive actions during this time to help ensure an uninterrupted and stable supply of food, feed, fiber, and fuel for our nation's citizens. On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to outline the severe impacts the COVID-19 pandemic is causing throughout production agriculture and convey our willingness to work with you on recommendations to help the industry recover.

As you know, the impacts across agriculture are broad-based and felt throughout the supply chain – from farmers to input manufacturers and providers to commodity processors and food manufacturers. The widespread closures at the retail level are impacting consumer demand and purchasing patterns in ways that U.S. agriculture has never experienced. Agribusinesses across the supply chain are working to adjust to the new signals from the retail level, while navigating their own business disruptions. Ethanol plants, commodity merchandisers, commodity storage facilities, dairy and meat processing facilities, and specialty crop suppliers are just a few of the examples of the businesses that are struggling to cope in the current environment. The disruptions and logistical challenges in the supply chain are adding costs and risks in the marketing system.

Given the diversity of our food and agricultural industries, we appreciate the daunting challenge facing USDA. There is no “one size fits all” approach that will work for all segments of the U.S. agricultural economy. We would like to work closely with USDA to develop the necessary delivery mechanisms for the funding provided by Congress, both the COVID-19 designated funds and the replenishment of borrowing authority to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). In order to adequately respond to the worsening situation in U.S. agriculture, USDA must bring to bear all the resources and authorities at its disposal, recognizing that additional funding will likely be needed from Congress. It is our view that actions should be taken under the broad authority in the CCC Charter Act to help sustain our country's farmers, ranchers, and all agricultural producers.

Mr. Secretary, we look forward to having an open and productive dialogue with you and your team in order to begin the work of estimating financial losses and impacts across the sector and

considering the available tools and policies that USDA can utilize to help American agriculture respond, recover, and remain the economic engine that supplies the world with food, feed, fiber and fuel.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
CropLife America
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Sorghum Producers
The Fertilizer Institute
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Rice Federation