



June 26th, 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, and the National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) 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 Fund Available (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, to include losses suffered by American agriculture after the current coverage eligibility; including the 2020 lamb, ewe, and wool crops. Further we request that Congress include such oversight mechanisms as are necessary to ensure the equitable administration of this program to aid and provide relief to the broad and diverse ag sector.

Sincerely,

American Sheep Industry Association
National Lamb Feeders Association

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