

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry Committee
328 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry Committee
328 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow:

As you continue work on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, we ask that you include language to authorize an animal disease and disaster response program and a foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccine bank. These provisions would help to adequately address risks to animal health, livestock export markets, and industry economic stability.

In 2015, the avian influenza outbreak affected farmers in 15 different states, claiming more than 45 million birds. The associated economic impact was felt by farmers, rural communities, and the entire agricultural economy. Another outbreak or related outbreak of FMD would immediately impact access to export markets. Economic analyses have described the loss of export markets for beef and pork as having an economic impact of nearly \$13 billion per year.

We have been working closely with livestock producers, land-grant universities, veterinarians, and State Departments of Agriculture to understand what measures are necessary to prevent, identify, and mitigate the potential catastrophic impacts that an animal disease outbreak would have on our country's food security, export markets, and overall economic stability.

An animal disease and disaster prevention program, modelled after the highly successful plant pest and disease management and disaster prevention program, could save our nation billions of dollars. It could be logically organized into three broad components including disease prevention, early detection, and rapid response.

- Disease prevention could be carried out through new cooperative agreements between the Chief Veterinary Officer of the United States and State animal health officials that would facilitate training programs, expanded disease surveillance capabilities, enhanced threat assessments, effective biosecurity, and improved mitigation capacity.
- Early disease detection could be accomplished through sustained funding for the facilities that make up the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN). These front-line State and university laboratories should be given additional tools and funding necessary to continue conducting rapid disease diagnostics.
- The final component is the ability to rapidly respond to a disease outbreak. We should consider authorizing the creation of a vaccine bank that could allow for a rapidly deployable stockpile of FMD vaccine along with the surge production capacity to quickly meet an increase in demand in the case of an FMD outbreak.

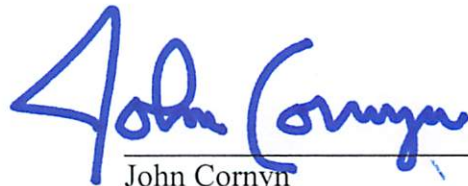
Foreign pests and diseases have the potential to devastate animal agriculture. It is critical that the next Farm Bill address these risks to animal health. We believe the inclusion in the next Farm Bill of a joint animal disease and disaster response program and a FMD vaccine bank would accomplish this goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate



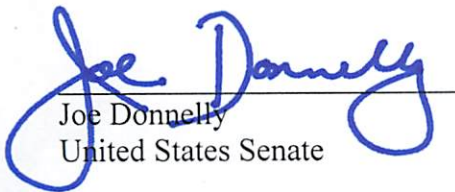
John Cornyn
United States Senate



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate



Thom Tillis
United States Senate



Joe Donnelly
United States Senate



John Thune
United States Senate



Tina Smith
United States Senate



John Hoeven
United States Senate



Mark R. Warner
United States Senate



David Perdue
United States Senate



Tim Kaine
United States Senate



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senate



Roy Blunt
United States Senate



Johnny Isakson
United States Senate



Todd Young
United States Senate