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August 26, 2026

Donald J. Trump
President
The United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

Thank you for your commitment to America's farmer and ranchers. Over the course of your two presidencies, you have been a champion for American farmers and ranchers, who make up the fabric of rural America, and have prioritized issues critical to the rural economy. The unintended consequences of your recent beef import announcement, however, would have very different impacts and would damage U.S. agriculture in the long term.

A 90-day suspension of the tariff rate quota on imported ground beef has created apprehension and chaos in the cattle market. In fact, 70% of the spring-born calves are sold during the 90-day window that overlaps with the plan to increase beef imports. This weakens cattle prices and erodes the confidence U.S. ranchers need to make the long-term investments required to rebuild our cattle herd.

As you know, the U.S. cattle herd is at a historic low after years of drought, loss of grazing lands, reduced regional packing capacity, and other challenges. One factor ranchers consider when deciding to invest in rebuilding the cattle herd is market stability. A rancher making the decision to invest in rebuilding today may wait two years or more to see a return. A stable market with unwavering domestic and international demand for American beef would give ranchers the signal that their investment is worth the risk.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Cattle markets remain volatile as farmers and ranchers navigate a rapidly evolving set of challenges, including regulatory pressures, disease threats, and trade barriers that limit reliable access to export markets. The closure of the southern border with Mexico, to protect the U.S. herd from New World screwworm, has further constrained feeder cattle supplies.

Record retail beef prices are not due to one single issue, as we have communicated to your team over the last year. Rather, they reflect a combination of strong consumer demand, fluid global trade relationships, and record production costs across the supply chain. Cattle markets are experiencing strong demand for beef, but at the same time, they are facing record production costs, which have increased by 30% since 2020.

Mr. President, a key tenant of your reelection campaign was affordability, including the costs of essentials like groceries and gas. Bringing down the price of cattle will not bring the price of beef down for American families. Instead, it will discourage American farmers and ranchers from making long-term investments in herd rebuilding, extending the cycle of tight cattle supplies, high production costs and elevated beef prices for consumers.

To put it simply, allowing 300,000 metric tons—equivalent to more than 660 million pounds—of foreign beef into the United States at a 25% discount "below market prices" will undermine America's ranchers who work tirelessly to grow food for American families. America's farmers and ranchers are proud of the beef they raise, and they do not want to be one of the last generations working the land and raising cattle. Please prioritize their family businesses and the stability of our American-grown food supply.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the long-term implications that this short-term effort to lower beef prices may have on American cattle producers, the broader farm economy, and our country's ability to feed families with U.S. grown food.

Sincerely,

Zippy Duvall
President