

October 10, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

America's farmers and ranchers are facing extreme economic pressures that threaten the long-term viability of the U.S. agriculture sector. Due to insufficient action over the last several years, an alarming number of farmers are financially underwater as policies have failed to address the spiraling farm economy and provide long-term certainty for American agriculture.

Persistent cost pressures from labor, regulatory compliance, fertilizer, and energy have eroded margins, while weak commodity prices and uneven global competition have strained farm finances. Crop receipts have fallen sharply since 2022, eroding the cash flow and equity farmers rely on to weather downturns, while a growing U.S. trade deficit signals mounting competitive pressure in global markets.

These challenges have been compounded by inconsistent enforcement of trade obligations, including unfulfilled trade commitments from China, and the persistence of non-tariff barriers which have added to the volatility and left farmers with little clarity about future revenue potential or market access.

These trends are not abstract numbers. Across the country, farms are disappearing as families close the gates on the farms tended by their parents, grandparents, and generations before them. Row crop growers producing everything from corn, soybeans, wheat, and sorghum to cotton are being squeezed out, not because of poor yields, but because market prices have fallen well below the cost of production. The same story echoes across fruit and vegetable regions, where entire orchards are being bulldozed under the weight of soaring labor, input, and compliance costs that far exceed returns.

More than half of U.S. farms now lose money each year, forcing families to rely on off-farm income just to survive. Every farm lost takes with it generations of knowledge, community leadership, and the heartbeat of local economies: fewer kids in schools, fewer trucks at the grain elevator, and fewer small businesses that keep rural towns alive. As those farms disappear, so too

does America's food independence: our ability to feed ourselves without relying on foreign supply chains.

The American Farm Bureau urges Congress and the Administration to take action to stabilize and strengthen the farm economy and build a foundation for economic viability sector wide.

In the short term, we urge leaders to authorize *bridge payments for farmers before the end of 2025*. These payments must be robust enough to address sector-wide gaps and provide meaningful support as the federal government works to recalibrate trade strategies, stabilize prices, and strengthen key market relationships.

We call for a renewed national commitment to U.S. agriculture through swift, decisive action on policies that restore farmers' ability to stay in business, to rebuild market access and secure the financial resilience of the rural economy. The following policy actions will help ensure that farming provides a dependable living for the farm families who work tirelessly to feed, clothe, and fuel the world:

- Fair and enforceable trade agreements that open markets and ensure reciprocal access for U.S. products;
- Policy support for biofuels, including year-round sales of E15 and other renewable fuels;
- Restoration of whole milk in schools, giving children access to nutritious U.S. dairy products;
- Protection of interstate commerce by opposing and challenging current or future state laws that undermine market consistency, competition, and transparency;
- Investigation into pricing structures for major agricultural inputs to address market imbalances that artificially inflate production costs beyond normal market fluctuations, paired with stronger enforcement of laws and regulations that ensure transparency and fairness in agricultural markets; and
- Prioritization of American-grown fruits and vegetables in federal and institutional purchasing programs.

American agriculture has always been a strategic national asset — vital not only to our economy but to our food security and independence. Federal leadership can now prevent a deepening crisis by taking steps to preserve our agricultural infrastructure and ensure the next generation of farmers and ranchers can continue feeding the world.

We appreciate your longstanding support for rural America and respectfully request you work with the Administration to provide the relief and reform urgently needed to sustain our nation's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zippy Duvall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Zippy" is written with a large, stylized 'Z' and 'p's. The last name "Duvall" is written with a large, stylized 'D' and 'v's.

Zippy Duvall
President

CC: The Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
The Honorable Scott Bessent, Secretary, United States Department of the Treasury
The Honorable Brooke Rollins, Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture