

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Secretary Rollins,

Thank you for assembling a small farmer roundtable, including Farm Bureau leaders, at USDA on May 7. Like you, we recognize small farms as the critical building blocks of our entire food system. As the largest general farm organization in the United States, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) matches your commitment to the success of the small U.S. farm, especially as you consider policy proposals that USDA can pursue.

For its part, the AFBF voting delegate body at our annual convention is polled every year and is overwhelmingly representative of small farms and ranches. For broader context, the 2022 Census of Agriculture specifically notes that 74% of America's farm are classified as small. Sadly, the 2022 Census also documents the loss of farms – 141,000 in 5 years – and the rise in the average size of the American farm. This concerning trend shows that the resilience of American farms, especially small farms, is under threat. Now, we have a real opportunity to help you make a course correction for small farms.

AFBF's policy priorities seek to serve U.S. farms of all shapes and sizes, and virtually all of those priorities would provide significant and lasting relief to small farms. For instance, timely and efficient farm program delivery by USDA such as Title I safety net programs and ad hoc disaster programs would provide certainty and avoid gaps in revenue that occurred through no fault of their own. Enhanced options for risk management and streamlined access to credit and capital would provide new tools for small farms that cannot meet certain criteria. Releasing the squeeze of costly regulation would relieve small farms of extraordinary compliance burdens that they cannot offload on staff. This also aligns with the administration's deregulatory agenda. Finally, a durable and sensible solution to agriculture's workforce struggles would give all farmers, especially those with smaller businesses, a stable and streamlined system that is predictable. These are just a few options for USDA to make concrete steps forward on behalf of small farms, regardless of commodity or region.

Madam Secretary, know that Farm Bureau is and always will be a steadfast partner with USDA to uplift the small farms across all of these priorities. I welcome your continued direct engagement with our members as you surface and implement strategies to ensure the sustainability of the small family farm in America.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zippy Duvall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "Z" and "D".

Zippy Duvall
President