

Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Food & Water Watch, Land Stewardship Project, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Missouri Rural Crisis Center, National Family Farm Coalition, Organization of Competitive Markets, Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund – United Stockgrowers of America, Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, Western Organization of Resource Councils

Our organizations are promoting interrelated reforms to restore competitive livestock markets and fair contracts based on a platform supported by over 200 organizations that represent independent farmers and ranchers, contract growers, and consumers (available at <http://tinyurl.com/3gcty2>).

Agricultural Competition Issue Brief 12 of 18: Prevent Retaliation Against Farmer Associations Under the Agricultural Fair Practices Act

Obama-Biden Position: " Prevent Anticompetitive Behavior Against Family Farms... strengthen anti-monopoly laws; change federal agriculture policy to strengthen producer protection from fraud, abuse and market manipulation...."

Relevant Program: Agricultural Fair Practices Act

Relevant Agency: USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Policy Recommendation – Administration Action: USDA should begin monitoring compliance with the Agricultural Fair Practices Act, and take enforcement action for clear instances where growers are being retaliated against based on their leadership of or membership in producer associations.

Policy Recommendation – Legislative Action: If the Administration finds that statutory changes are necessary to fully enforce the Act, draft legislation should be sent to Congress to reform the Agricultural Fair Practices Act, to repeal the disclaimer clause and to require good faith bargaining by processors and handlers with producer associations.

Background: The AFPA was passed in 1967 by Congress to ensure that family farmers could join together in associations and cooperatives to market their produce without fear of interference or retribution from processors. Unfortunately, changes in markets and lack of enforcement of the AFPA have made it difficult for producers to organize to negotiate fair contract terms and prevent abusive treatment.