

Calls Needed NOW to Pass The Livestock Title of the Farm Bill

You have been working diligently over the past few months to restore Healthy Competition, Markets and Rural Communities. Your **calls are needed today** to ensure that these vital provisions are included in the final Farm Bill. The Farm Bill Conference Committee intends to debate the Livestock Title over the next two days and we expect a vote on the Livestock Title this week.

This is the last opportunity for family farm, conservation, and rural advocates to speak up and ensure healthy competition and market provisions for livestock producers and poultry growers are included in the final Farm Bill!

Below are the House Farm Bill Conferees and the Senate Farm Bill Conferees

House Democrats	Potential House Republicans	Senate Democrats	Republicans
Collin Peterson, MN	Bob Goodlatte, VA	Tom Harkin, IA	Saxby Chambliss, GA
Mike McIntyre, NC	Frank Lucas, OK	Kent Conrad, ND	Richard Lugar, IN
Bob Etheridge, NC	Robin Hayes, NC	Max Baucus, MT	Thad Cochran, MS
Leonard Boswell, IA	Marilyn Musgrave, CO	Patrick Leahy, VT	Pat Roberts, KS
Tim Holden, PA	Jim Moran, KS	Blanche Lincoln, AR	Charles Grassley, IA
Joe Baca, CA	Randy Neugebauer, TX	Debbie Stabenow, MI	
Dennis Cardoza, CA	Adam Putnam, FL		
David Scott, GA	Lamar Smith, TX		
Rosa DeLauro, CT			
Bobby Scott, VA			
John Conyers, MI			

If your Senator and/or Representative is on the list above, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121. Ask to speak with your Senator or Representative. When you get transferred to that office, ask to speak with the Senator's or Representative's agriculture legislative assistant. If you get voice mail just leave a message.

Message: "I am calling to urge the Senator/Congressman to support the Livestock Title of the Senate Farm Bill and oppose any efforts to strike or weaken its provisions in Conference Committee. These provisions will ensure that farmers have fair contracts and access to a healthy marketplace. Please call me at ____ to let me know if the Congressman/Senator will fight to keep the Livestock Title in the final version of the Farm Bill. Thank you."

If the staff person has any questions, please have the staffer call Steve Etko, with the Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, at (703) 519-7772 or Jeri Lynn Bakken, with the Western Organization of Resource Councils, at (701) 376-7077.

Background

- The House and the Senate passed Farm Bills with different competition related provisions. The **Senate Farm Bill contains a very strong Livestock Title** with protections for livestock and poultry farmers that are listed below. The House Farm Bill does not contain any of these provisions. It only has a watered down provision on arbitration that does not help contract farmers who have mandatory arbitration clauses in their contracts.

- Select House and Senate members are part of the Conference Committee that will decide which provisions make it into the Farm Bill that will go back to the House and Senate for final approval (see list above).

Please call or email Becky Ceartas with RAFI-USA at 919-542-1396, ext. 209, becky@rafiusa.org to report the results of your call and/or with any questions about this information

Provisions of the Livestock Title in the Senate Farm Bill

1. **Voluntary Arbitration** - The arbitration provision in the Livestock Title makes arbitration of disputes between producers and livestock and poultry companies voluntary, instead of forcing producers to sign binding, mandatory arbitration clauses as part of non-negotiable contracts. Arbitration is prohibitively expensive for producers, and limits their legal rights. Producers should be able to choose whether or not they wish to arbitrate a dispute. Protect farmers' right to defend themselves against abusive business practices - support the arbitration provision in the Livestock Title. See fact sheet at <http://www.agmatters.net/CCAR/arbitration.pdf>
2. **Minimum standards for agricultural contracts and reasonable government oversight.**
 - Giving the producer at least three days to review or cancel a contract.
 - Prohibiting companies from requiring the producer make additional investments without being offset by reasonable additional considerations.
 - Requiring 90-day notice for contract termination when the producer has made a capital investment of \$100,000 or more for the sole purposes of securing the contract.
3. **Amends the Agricultural Fair Practices Act to protect the ability of farmers to negotiate fair contracts with processors.** This provision enhances the power of producers and their cooperatives to stabilize farm income by making it an unfair practice for companies not to bargain in good faith with associations and protecting farmers who join or form producer associations. See fact sheet at http://www.rafiusa.org/programs/CONTRACTAG/Ag_Fair_Practices.pdf
4. **Amends the Packers and Stockyards Act to provide enforcement authority for GIPSA over all live poultry operations.** Despite evidence of the contract being used as a tool to intimidate, retaliate and reduce growers' profits to poverty levels, the Grain, Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) does not have the authority to take administrative action and protect growers by halting unfair practices or penalizing poultry companies that violate the law. The Livestock Title has an amendment to the Packers and Stockyards Act providing GIPSA with the necessary enforcement authority over poultry cases, which would simply bring poultry in line with other livestock within the Packers and Stockyards Act. See fact sheet at http://www.rafiusa.org/programs/CONTRACTAG/PSA_Reform.pdf
5. **Prohibition on Packer-Owned Livestock:** Meat packers such as Tyson, Cargill, and Smithfield Foods use packer-owned livestock as a major tool for exerting unfair market power over farmers and ranchers. Packer-owned livestock has been proven to artificially lower farm gate prices to farmers and ranchers while consumer food prices continue to rise. By prohibiting direct ownership of livestock by major meatpackers, a packer

ban addresses a significant percentage of the problem of captive supply which packers use to manipulate markets, and would help increase market access for America's independent producers. See fact sheet at <http://www.worc.org/pdfs/Packer%20Ban%20Myths%20&%20Facts%2010-07.pdf>

6. **Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling:** Country of origin labeling is a popular measure that allows consumers to determine where their food is produced and also enables U.S. producers to showcase their products for quality and safety. It also limits the ability of global food companies to source farm products from other countries and pass them off as U.S. in origin. The House and Senate Farm Bills mandate country of origin labeling to go into effect by Sept. 30, 2008, with multi-country labels where applicable. See fact sheet at <http://nfu.org/wp-content/farm-bill-cool-1-pager.pdf>
7. **Office of Special Council:** The Livestock Title in the Senate Farm Bill creates an Office of Special Counsel for Competition and Market Access at USDA to investigate and prosecute violations of competition and fair practice laws.