



April 27, 2007

The Honorable Herb Kohl
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

On behalf of the family farmers and ranchers of the National Farmers Union (NFU), I am writing to express NFU's support for S. 1149, your legislation which allows interstate sale and shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry products.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act prohibits the interstate sale and shipment of certain meat products that have been inspected by state inspection programs. This ban on interstate commerce is harmful to small producers and processors who meet federal regulatory standards but are inspected by state regulators.

Ending the ban on interstate shipment of state-inspected meat products would create a new marketing opportunity for America's livestock producers. Many family farmers and ranchers have been forced out of business due to inadequate market competition; S.1149 increases competition, economic marketing and trade opportunities for rural America. Current law allows some meat products such as venison, pheasant and quail to be shipped between states without restriction. Foreign meat and poultry do not face restrictions in interstate trading, while domestic meat products are blocked. Allowing the sale and shipment of state-inspected meat products will level the economic playing field for small business, promote competition in the marketplace and create a more unified inspection system.

NFU supports your efforts to change state and federal inspection laws so that producers and processors can sell their products on the national market.

I commend you for introducing this bill and look forward to working with you to ensure swift passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Buis".

Tom Buis, President
National Farmers Union

Cc. Senator Kent Conrad, Senator Max Baucus, Senate Agriculture Committee Members