

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4105

<http://www.thune.senate.gov>

October 8, 2013

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am writing to you today to strongly urge you to appoint Farm Bill conferees as soon as possible so formal Conference Committee negotiations can begin in earnest.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, Western South Dakota experienced a devastating early season blizzard which killed thousands of cattle, sheep, and horses, which are mainstays to Western South Dakota's agriculture industry. These losses will create a severe financial crisis for most of the ranchers who lost livestock due to the fact that these losses are for the most part uninsurable, and the sole livelihood for ranchers who in some cases have lost up to 100 percent of their livestock herd.

Both House and Senate Farm Bills include livestock disaster programs including a non-controversial Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), which would provide critically important economic assistance to these producers because it covers eligible livestock losses at 65 percent of fair market value in the Senate Farm Bill and 75 percent of fair market value in the House Farm Bill. Livestock disaster programs authorized and funded in the Farm Bill are desperately needed in South Dakota, as well as other areas where natural disasters have wreaked havoc on our nation's livestock industry.

Although I have concerns with both House and Senate Farm Bill Commodity Titles, I will continue working for modifications to the Commodity Title during the Conference Committee process. My concerns do not lessen the urgency of getting House Farm Bill conferees named and a Conference Committee to begin its work to finalize a new farm bill as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Thune". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Thune

United States Senate