

Mike Crapo
United States Senator
239 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

James E. Risch
United States Senator
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



Mike Simpson
Member of Congress
2084 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress
1520 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

On behalf of the Idaho Delegation, we appreciate and applaud your entire team at USDA during these difficult times. Your staff at headquarters all the way down to local offices in Idaho have been very responsive and helpful to our farmers and ranchers.

In an effort to capture the larger picture of our agricultural industry, which makes up 20 percent of Idaho's economy, the Congressional Delegation reached out to food producers across the state to help better understand the COVID-19 impacts to our 25,000 farms and 185 different commodities.

While we anticipate more information will come available in the coming weeks, we believe the enclosed emails and letters help illustrate the damage COVID-19 has caused the agriculture sector in Idaho, seeming to leave no commodity untouched. With nearly a million pounds of milk being dumped a day and contracts between potato farmers and processors being cancelled while crops are still in the ground, this is just the beginning of what could be years of hardships for our farmers. The beef industry estimates it will suffer \$13 billion total in losses due to COVID-19, and Idaho will be disproportionately impacted with our 2.2 million head of cattle. Onion growers face similar challenges, estimating in Idaho they are currently dumping 5 percent and reporting as much as a 95% reduction in business, all before their August harvest. Our sheep industry losses are two-fold, with the domestic lamb demand cut in half and its wool export industry completely decimated. Idaho is now the second largest producer of hops, and they stand to lose 15 percent of their crop's value. Our grain producers are suffering decreases to barley production and therefore, increases in spring wheat as an alternative crop for many commodities, which will increase supply and drive prices further down.

This is only a snapshot of our diverse agricultural industry in Idaho, and we hope this provides perspective as you make important decisions on how to use the resources included in the CARES Act. We also stand ready to work with USDA and our colleagues in Congress to continue to find ways to support our agricultural industry through this unprecedented time. The necessary measures taken to combat COVID-19 have changed the landscape of our economy, especially our food marketing chain, and it is our duty to ensure we don't punish our farmers and ranchers and jeopardize the food security of the nation in the process.

Please see the enclosed attachments from the various agriculture sectors in Idaho to assist USDA in surveying the needs of the agriculture community. We will continue to keep you apprised of future updates from Idahoans as the situation of COVID-19 continues to evolve.

Thank you again for your leadership and attention to the many issues facing our agricultural industry. We stand ready to assist your agency so you can continue to serve Idaho farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator



MIKE SIMPSON
Member of Congress



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



RUSS FULCHER
Member of Congress