

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman, Homeland Security Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member, Homeland Security Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chairman, Homeland Security Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member, Homeland Security Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby, Capito, Lowey & Roybal-Allard, and
Ranking Members Leahy, Tester, Granger & Fleischmann:

The Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) writes to urge your consideration of its views and recommendations for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Homeland Security spending bill. The AAC is comprised of most major animal and animal-related commodity organizations as well as allied organizations representing veterinary medicine, animal science and various livestock or animal agricultural interests in the U.S. We encourage you to prioritize the needs of the agriculture community within the current constraints of the non-defense discretionary budget caps.

The AAC is grateful to Congress for passing the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019, that authorized the annual hiring of 240 agricultural specialists to address workforce shortages at the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to ensure the safety and security of the nation's food and feed supply. This legislation is a key component in protecting American livestock agriculture.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

The AAC supports full funding of the CBP Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection (AQI) program. The U.S. livestock agriculture sector is a crucial component of the American economy. According to USDA, foreign pests and diseases cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars annually. CBP

Agriculture Specialists, Technicians, and Canine Teams play a vital role in both trade and travel safety and prevent the introduction of harmful foreign animal diseases and exotic plant pests and diseases into the U.S. Diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF), which has killed more than one out of every four pigs on the planet, would have a devastating impact not only on U.S. livestock producers and their communities, but the viability of our nation's robust economy if introduced into the U.S.

We deeply appreciate the work CBP does to protect American agriculture as we rely on CBP Agriculture Specialists to act as the first line of defense at U.S. ports of entry. However, CBP is chronically understaffed, with the most recent results of CBP's Agriculture Specialist Resource Allocation Model (AgRAM) showing a need for an additional 721 Agriculture Specialists. To address this workforce shortage, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019, that authorizes CBP to hire an additional 240 Agriculture Specialists, 200 Agriculture Technicians, and 20 Agriculture Canine Teams each year until the staffing shortage determined by AgRAM is remedied.

While we now have the hiring authorization met, we need funding to fully address the current workforce shortfall at CBP consistent with congressional intent. **AAC urges the Committee to provide a total of \$105.3 million for FY 2021.** . While AAC is extremely grateful for the \$19.6 million provided in FY 2020 for new Agriculture Specialists, this funding was \$30.8 million less than the \$50.4 million authorized and required to meet the workforce shortage for FY 2020. The **\$30.8 million** is requested to support \$10.3 million for Agriculture Specialists, \$11 million for Agriculture Technicians, \$3.5 million for Agriculture Canine Teams, and \$6 million for training of these personnel and canines. Additionally, **\$74.5 million** is needed in order to meet the hiring levels authorized for FY 2021 in the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019. This includes \$36.1 million for Agriculture Specialists, \$25 million for Agriculture Technicians, \$7.4 million for Agriculture Canine Teams, and \$6 million for training of these personnel.

AAC asks that you give our request careful consideration as you determine the nation's Homeland Security priorities for FY 2021. Despite the difficult budget environment, increased investment in safeguarding the nation's food supply is a wise decision now and for the future. AAC stands ready to work with you and your staff to expeditiously pass the Homeland Security appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration; if you would like to discuss the AAC's recommendations further, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Wagstrom, AAC Chair, at wagstromL@nppc.org, or Lauren Broccoli, AAC Vice Chair, at lbroccoli@avma.org.

On behalf of:

AAC Commodity Members

American Dairy Goat
Association

American Goat Federation

American Horse Council

American Rabbit Breeders
Association

American Sheep Industry
Association

American Veal Association

National Livestock Producers
Association

National Milk Producers
Federation

National Pork Board

National Pork Producers
Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat
Institute
R-CALF United Stockgrowers
of America
United Egg Producers
U.S. Poultry & Egg
Association
Western United Dairywomen

**AAC Allied Animal
Agriculture Members**

American Association of
Avian Pathologists
American Association of
Bovine Practitioners
American Association of
Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Small
Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of
Swine Veterinarians
American Association of
Veterinary Laboratory
Diagnosticians

American Association of
Veterinary Laboratory
Diagnosticians
American Dairy Science
Association
American Feed Industry
Association
American Society of Animal
Science
American Veterinary Medical
Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American
Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Veterinary
Biologics Companies
Biotechnology Innovation
Organization
Council for Agricultural
Science and Technology
Fats and Proteins Research
Foundation
Federation of Animal Science
Societies
Livestock Exporters
Association of the USA

Livestock Marketing
Association
Mycobacterial Diseases of
Animals Multistate Initiative
National Aquaculture
Association
National Association of
Animal Breeders
National Association of
Federal Veterinarians
National Association of
Public Health Veterinarians
National Association of State
Departments of Agriculture
National Dairy Herd
Improvement Association
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed
Association
National Institute for Animal
Agriculture
National Renderers
Association
Poultry Science Association
U.S. Animal Health
Association

American Farm Bureau
Federation

National Association for the
Advancement of Animal
Science