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, the **$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 Dairymen

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