June 8, 2021

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Attorney General Garland:

On May 22, 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Antitrust Division issued civil investigative demands (CIDs) to the four largest meatpackers in the United States due to concerns of anticompetitive conduct within the beef industry. Unfortunately, the DOJ has not provided any updates regarding the investigation’s status or conclusive reports resulting from this review. We respectfully request details on the outcome of the investigation. Should this matter require more time, we encourage the Antitrust Division to continue its civil investigation while at minimum providing a status update to Congress.

We understand that a thorough investigation can take many months, but it concerns us that farmers, ranchers, and the packers themselves have all been left with little direction since the CIDs were issued. As you may know, the price for live cattle in the United States has decreased in the last several years, forcing many small operators to make difficult decisions as they strive to stay in business and keep their farms operational. Yet, at the same time, the price of boxed beef has increased significantly, raising consumer prices and widening the gap between live cattle prices, which is a concern for ranchers and consumers alike. This disparity has only been accelerated by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the labor shortages in processing facilities due to enhanced government benefits, all of which has resulted in continued food supply chain disruption.

These challenges reinforce the need to ensure that our nation’s farmers, ranchers, and producers operate in transparent markets, which in turn helps feed American families. We ask that the DOJ continue its attentiveness to this matter and provide updates of findings to ensure confidence in our commodity markets. Thank you for your review and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Michael Guest
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress
Trent Kelly
Member of Congress

Rick Crawford
Member of Congress

Bill Timmons
Member of Congress

William Timmons
Member of Congress

Rick Allen
Member of Congress

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Mike Rogers
Member of Congress

Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Tom Rice
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman
Member of Congress

Garret Graves
Member of Congress
Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

Barry Moore
Member of Congress

Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress

John Rose
Member of Congress

Julia Letlow
Member of Congress

Drew Ferguson
Member of Congress

Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

David Rouzer
Member of Congress

Madison Cawthorn
Member of Congress

Gregory F. Murphy
Member of Congress

Mike Johnson
Member of Congress

Robert Aderholt
Member of Congress

Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress
Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress

Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress

Stephanie Bice  
Member of Congress

David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress