

March 7, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We know the Department is working quickly to help farmers weather the economic downturn they're facing by implementing the 2018 Farm Bill and providing an opportunity for dairy farmers and producers of covered commodities to enroll or re-enroll in USDA Farm Service Agency farm programs.

In light of the changes in the 2018 Farm Bill to the dairy safety net and Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage, and how these programs interact with crop insurance products, as well as the current economic challenges facing producers, the undersigned organizations request that USDA provide the financial resources necessary to update and modernize the 2014 Farm Bill's web-based decision aids and to conduct training and outreach initiatives.

Not only do we need these educational resources, we support the department's efforts in timely implementation of the overall farm bill and corresponding regulations. These education and implementation efforts on behalf of the Department will assist farmers across the U.S. in making important risk management decisions, including determinations about crop insurance eligibility and preferences.

The 2018 Farm Bill provides much-needed flexibility in the choice of risk management tools by allowing producers of covered commodities to elect either ARC or PLC on a commodity-by-commodity and farm-by-farm basis up to four times during the life of the 2018 Farm Bill, and dairy farmers may make a one-time or annual election for their Dairy Margin Coverage. These coverage decisions will be made in the coming months, magnifying the need for the timely updating of decision tools and in coordinating outreach efforts.

Farmers should know how these new programs will impact their operation prior to a decision on program election and enrollment. Our organizations have already begun educating our members, but a nationwide effort following the model from the 2014 Farm Bill is needed. We respectfully urge the Department to quickly allocate funding to begin this important education effort in addition to timely implementation.

Sincerely,

American Association of Crop Insurers
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Pulse Association

American Soybean Association
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau
Midwest Dairy Coalition
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Milk Producers Federation
National Onion Association
National Sunflower Association
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
US Canola Association
US Dry Bean Council
US Rice Producers Association
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice