

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1601

August 10, 2021

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK AND
FOREIGN AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM
COMMODITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In my letter¹ to you on April 19 regarding your decision to abruptly cancel the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, I noted that several of the relief-era programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) were perfectly created to respond to many of the issues caused by the pandemic – supporting American farmers and ranchers; reducing barriers to nutritious food; preventing food waste and loss; and more. These programs do not work, however, when those responsible for implementing them fail to properly employ them.

In 2020, USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provided much needed financial support to agricultural producers during the supply chain disruption and market turmoil caused by the pandemic. In 2021, CFAP 2 had the potential to do the same. Congress approved the use of the funds; USDA announced the program; producers applied in full confidence; and USDA even approved more than 2,000 applicants for expanded limits under CFAP 2. To date, USDA has paid only about 60 of those expanded limit producers and has failed to provide technical assistance or timelines for payment to inquiring producers.

Many farmers and ranchers in my district are awaiting their payments to fulfil contracts, buy feed and supplies, and provide for their families. The longer they wait for their payments, the longer they feel CFAP 2 is another empty promise from the federal government. **I urge USDA to immediately deliver these payments to the approved and deserving producers, as the program was designed.** The future of agriculture as we know it cannot afford to wait.

Sincerely,



Tracey Mann
Member of Congress

¹ Mann, Tracey. "USDA Cancels Farmers to Families Food Box Program." Received by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 19 April 2021. Awaiting your response regarding the review of the then nearly \$1 billion left in authorized but unspent funds for the Farmers to Families Food Box Program.