



September 17, 2008

The Honorable Ed Schafer
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer,

On behalf of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) Cattle Species Committee, this letter is written in support of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) or other source of funding, request for \$15.4 million for the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program.

More than one million acres in South Texas lie under temporary preventive quarantines, in addition to the half-million acres that comprise the permanent quarantine zone. Increased tick pressure from Mexico, lack of treatment options, a growing number of wildlife species found to support the tick and insufficient resources have contributed to the current fever tick crisis. As the preventive quarantines are expanded due to the spread of the tick, the workload exponentially increases, raising the cost of this battle against the tick.

Failure to gain control of fever tick outbreaks in the border area of Texas will result in fever tick infestations in other areas of Texas and the spread of fever ticks to many other states. If we fail to gain control of the current fever tick outbreak and fever ticks continue to spread outside the quarantine zone it is highly likely that other states will begin imposing importation restrictions on Texas cattle. Such eventuality would cost the cattle industry and the economy of the state of Texas billions of dollars. Information contained in the 2006 National Strategic Plan for the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program describes the direct and indirect economic losses caused by cattle fever ticks.

We thank you for your continued efforts to the safeguarding of our national livestock populations and we encourage the authorization of \$15.4 million for this very important program.

Sincerely,

Michele Vise-Brown
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Under Secretary Bruce Knight
Dr. John Clifford
Ms. Cindy Smith