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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1502

July 18, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I write to bring your attention to the expiration of two critical disaster relief programs and to inquire about your authority to extend this assistance for 2012 if action is not taken through a new farm bill, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2012 (FARRM Act). I also respectfully urge USDA examine Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program land in Iowa.

Specifically, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program will no longer cover disaster losses after September 30, 2011 and the Livestock Indemnity Program will no longer cover livestock losses after October 1, 2011, leaving a large gap in critical assistance for farmers experiencing extraordinary losses that insurance won't cover. The livestock program is extended in the new farm bill draft but a crop disaster program for 2012 was not addressed. I have called on the Speaker of the House to bring the farm bill to the Floor and have pushed for a crop disaster program for 2012 to be included in the bill when, and if, it comes to the House floor.

Corn farmers are concerned about lowered crop yields, turkey producers have lost thousands of birds, and livestock producers have started feeding hay to cattle already and some are calling for CRP land to be released for grazing because of dried up grazing fields. The National Weather Service Drought Outlook for July-September states that drought is likely to persist or intensify across the Midwest with the U.S. Drought Monitor for Iowa already showing Eastern Iowa and much of the Midwest in moderate to severe drought conditions.

Given the worsening conditions and already substantial livestock losses that have occurred in the Midwest and throughout the South, I again respectfully inquire as to your authority to extend the SURE program and the Livestock Indemnity Program to the 2012 crop year and to examine Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program land in Iowa. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Dave Loeb sack
Iowa's Second District