

June 5, 2009

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2262 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro,

Thank you for your May 28, 2009, letter to the signatories of the letter to President Obama dated April 30, 2009, regarding language in the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Section 727/733) that prohibits the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) from expending any funds to establish or implement a rule allowing poultry products to be imported into the United States from the People's Republic of China. We welcome the continued and open dialogue that we have had with you regarding this critical issue.

Your commitment to the safety of our nation's food supply is well known, respected and appreciated by your colleagues and those of us who are in the business of producing safe, wholesome and affordable food products to the world's consumers. We share your commitment to the safety of the food supply. Food safety is the number one goal and commitment of all responsible producers of food products.

Meat and poultry products produced domestically and in foreign markets are extensively regulated and scrutinized by the professionals at the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). This level of oversight is unique to meat, poultry and egg products and the commitment to a safe food supply is shared by government and industry. In that regard, we are aware of no other commercially produced products in any sector of the economy that undergo such extensive scrutiny.

We agree with your assertion that trade promotion should not "trump" public health priorities or more specifically -- safe food products. Much has been alleged in the media and elsewhere with regard to China's food safety system and we do not dispute your assertions regarding USDA's findings of Chinese poultry slaughter and processing facilities in 2004 and 2005. Any country seeking to export meat or poultry products to the United States, including China, must meet the equivalency requirements established by federal law and administered by FSIS. Further, every country wishing to export to the U.S. must undergo a rigid risk assessment and other stringent criteria before being approved to ship product into our nation. Such product is then subject to re-inspection at our ports of entry. Countries deemed eligible to ship meat and poultry products into the United States are then subject to annual review by FSIS and can be decertified if they do not continuously meet our government's rigid food safety requirements.

Finally, we agree with you completely that a risk assessment of those plants in China seeking to export processed poultry products to the United States must be conducted and the results of that risk assessment must be satisfactory before China can be deemed eligible and approved. That risk assessment is a critical requirement that must be met by any country seeking to ship meat or poultry products here. In addition, updated on-site assessments by USDA must also be acceptable for these facilities to be approved. Unfortunately, one of the unintended consequences of Section 727 (Section 733) is that it prevents FSIS from conducting just such an assessment. Our letter asks that the professionals at FSIS conduct such an assessment based on

sound science in order to determine whether China should be permitted to ship safe poultry products to the United States.

Again, we greatly appreciate your letter and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue and the many important issues that affect our nation's food safety system. Working together we can meet our obligations and serve the consumers needs.

Respectfully,

Advanced Medical Technology Association
AJC International, Incorporated
American Meat Institute
Animal Health Institute
Butterball, LLC
Cargill, Incorporated
DGM Commodities, Corporation
Elanco
Fieldale Farms Corporation
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Grove Services, Incorporated
Hormel Foods Corporation
Interra International, Incorporated
JBS S.A.
Limited OK Foods, Incorporated
MetaFoods, LLC
Monsanto Company
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Foreign Trade Council
National Meat Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Retail Federation
National Turkey Federation
New Orleans Cold Storage and Warehouse Company
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation
Sanderson Farms, Incorporated
Seaboard Corporation
Sellari Enterprises, Incorporated
Shelf-Stable Food Processors Association
Smithfield Foods, Incorporated
Tyson Foods, Incorporated
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
U.S. Dairy Export Council
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S.-China Business Council
U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association
U.S. Meat Export Federation