

December 12, 2022

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing on behalf of the U.S. organic dairy and poultry sectors, made up of thousands of family farmers and the businesses that support them, to request emergency relief in response to skyrocketing feed costs that are impacting the future viability of the industry. The situation is dire and requires your immediate attention. We urgently ask that you work closely with Congress and stakeholders to develop a solution that quickly gets assistance to producers to prevent further losses. Without rapid action, families are on track to lose their farms.

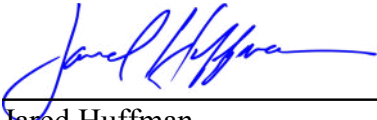
While the agriculture sector overall is struggling with a multitude of challenges that have affected the market, organic is a unique supply chain and market that requires tailored solutions to meet the needs of producers. International trade challenges specific to organic, persistent drought, and the lack of a stable domestic supply of certified organic feed have created a dire economic situation for organic livestock farmers across the U.S. over the last two years.

For example, prices for organic soybeans in the U.S. reached \$40.52 per bushel in May 2022, up close to 110% from January 2021's \$19.37 per bushel. Feed costs for organic dairy and poultry producers traditionally average over 50% of the total cost of production, but dramatic increases year-over-year in organic feedstuffs are now creating unsustainable circumstances that could lead to farm closures, reduced competition and ultimately, limited consumer choice. If not addressed, these closures will have devastating impacts on the burgeoning organic dairy and poultry sectors and diminish the role of organics in the marketplace for years to come. Unlike conventional farming, the organic sector cannot respond quickly to market needs due to the three-year transition period required on most land.

While we are supportive of existing emergency disaster relief, pandemic assistance and other risk management programs administered by USDA, these efforts have unfortunately not been sufficient to address the current situation facing organic livestock producers. Therefore, we ask that you work with us to find a targeted solution to provide immediate, direct relief.

Organic agriculture is a growing market that has provided opportunities for increased profitability for U.S. farmers, benefitting rural communities across the country. We thank you for your longstanding support of the organic industry and look forward to working with you to ensure the longevity of a healthy organic market that supports thousands of family farms.

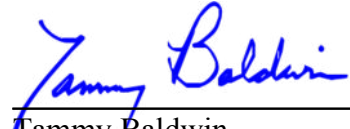
Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



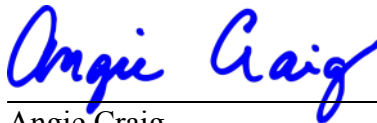
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



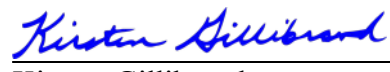
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



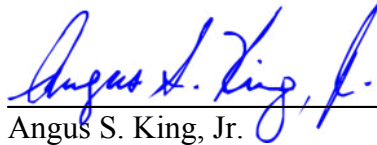
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



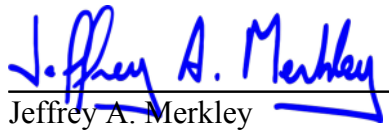
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



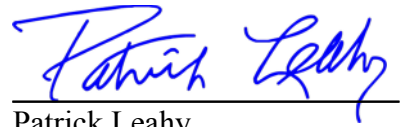
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator




Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla
United States Senator