

November 18, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman - Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions (HELP)
Committee
731 Senate Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member - Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
(HELP) Committee
379-A Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

The safety of this nation's food supply is the highest priority for the food and agricultural organizations represented on this letter. As the Senate considers S. 510, the "Food Safety Modernization Act," we have concerns with the current process and in particular the language being offered by Senators Tester and Hagan on exempting small entities. Even with the adjusted language, we believe exempting processors and producers based solely on size, location, and proximity to markets does not make food safer.

The undersigned organizations represent the vast majority of growers, producers, shippers, distributors, processors, packers, and wholesalers, and the vast majority of our members are small businesses. What matters for food safety is that the operation implements prudent product safety practices, regardless of whether the product is purchased at a roadside stand, a farmers' market, or a large supermarket. We support FDA food safety programs developed through a scientific, risk-based approach and that benefit public health.

We urge the Senate to reject the modified Tester/Hagan provision as a part of S. 510. Consumers should be able to rely on a federal food safety framework that sets appropriate standards for all products in the marketplace, no matter the size of the producing entity. If the Tester/Hagan language is included in S. 510 it will significantly weaken the bill.

Sincerely,

American Feed Industry Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Frozen Food Institute
American Meat Institute
American Spice Trade Association
Corn Refiners Association
International Dairy Foods Association
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
American Fruit and Vegetable Processors and Growers Coalition

National Council of Farmers Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Meat Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
Pet Food Institute
Produce Marketing Association
Shelf-Stable Food Processors Association
United Egg Producers

