

NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS' COALITION

May 23, 2013

Dear Senator,

As the floor debate for the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 continues, the National Young Farmers' Coalition would like to provide you with the following list of amendments we urge you to support.

Speaking on behalf of thousands of our member-farmers, we ask that you support policies that encourage the success of the next generation of American farmers, while also maintaining a healthy environment and strong communities.

The list below is not in order of priority, and we strongly urge you to stand with beginning farmers in voting in favor of these amendments.

Sincerely,



Lindsey Lusher Shute

NYFC Executive Director

AMENDMENTS TO SUPPORT

Title V: Credit

- **SA 986 - Casey-Harkin-Johanns - Microloan Authorization**

Access to credit is one of the most significant barriers that farmers face, and current commercial and federal loan programs do not adequately meet the needs of small, diversified, and beginning producers. This amendment authorizes a new simplified microloan category within the Farm Service Agency's direct operating loan program, to make small farm loans up to \$35,000. The new microloan program would include specific terms for loans made to beginning and military veteran farmers and ranchers.

Title VI: Rural Development

- **SA 1088 - Brown - Food and Agriculture Market Development, Entrepreneurship, and Education**

Increasing markets for farmers and increasing access to healthy food contribute to strong communities and a thriving economy. This amendment would provide much-needed funding for and/or make important technical policy changes to the Value-Added Producer Grants, Business & Industry Loans for Local Food Enterprises, Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program, Community Food Program, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Title X: Horticulture

- **SA 1051 - Sessions - Study on Local Food and Program Evaluation**

Local and regional agriculture is a major driver in the farm economy, yet lack of data is a barrier to growth. The Senate Committee-passed bill directs

USDA to collect data on local and regional food systems and evaluate the effectiveness of existing local and regional food programs. This amendment would add evaluation of the impact of federal regulations on local and regional producers to the Committee-passed provision.

Title XII: Miscellaneous

- **SA 978 - Merkley-Tester-Blumenthal-Begich-Heinrich-Boxer - Repeal of Biotechnology Rider in the Continuing Resolution**

The Continuing Resolution passed by Congress earlier this year contained a provision that strips federal courts of the authority to halt the sale or planting of biotechnology products that have not been adequately reviewed for their economic and environmental impacts. This amendment would strike that harmful provision.

- **SA 993 - Rockefeller-Tester-Johnson - Anti-Retaliation**

This amendment would clarify that it is a clear violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act for companies to retaliate against farmers for exercising their legal rights, such as talking to federal agency officials or members of Congress about their farming operations and contracts.

- **SA 1033 - King - Economic Analysis of New Food Safety Regulations**

The Food and Drug Administration recently released new proposed food safety regulations that will significantly impact farmers and food processors. The agency has done limited economic and scientific analyses on the impacts of the proposed regulations, especially on agricultural businesses. This amendment would require more complete scientific and economic analyses of the proposed food safety regulations.

- **SA 1042 - King-Tester - Clarification in New Food Safety Regulations**

The Food and Drug Administration has recently released new proposed food safety regulations that will impact more farmers and food processors than intended. This amendment would clarify that when determining the status of a farm or facility under the new food safety regulations, only sales of food subject to the new regulations – not all food sales from that farm or facility – count in the determination of a farm or facility’s status under the new regulations.

- **SA 1055 - Udall-Heinrich - Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Producer Training**

The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers program is a historic program that provides training and technical assistance to African-American, American-Indian, Asian-American, and Latino farmers and ranchers. The Committee-passed bill expands program eligibility requirements to include veteran farmers and ranchers and yet decreases annual funding. This amendment would restore funding of \$17 million per year in order to serve both the traditional and new producers now eligible for the program.