

September 21, 2021

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As organizations who advocate for fair and competitive markets for food and agriculture, we are writing to thank you for your announced plans to move forward with a set of three rulemakings to update and clarify aspects of the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) to address the treatment of livestock and poultry farmers by meatpackers, swine contractors and poultry companies. These reforms are long overdue, and it is critical that you move as expeditiously as possible to complete this rulemaking process.

Updating the PSA regulations is just one important step needed in building a more resilient food system to benefit farmers, workers and consumers.

Currently, a handful of corporations control our food from farm to fork. Over the past fifty years, control of our food system has consolidated under the control of fewer and fewer multinational agribusiness corporations.

Unchecked consolidation and vertical integration create a dramatic imbalance of power between producers and corporations, allowing corporations to manipulate the marketplace, push down the prices paid to farmers and ranchers, and drive them out of business.

It doesn't have to be this way; corporate consolidation and concentration in the food system is not inevitable. With enforcement of existing laws, rules and regulations, as well as new, forward-thinking policies, agencies can create open, transparent and competitive markets that benefit independent producers, rural communities, farm animals and eaters—not just corporate shareholders.

We look forward to working with you in support of meaningful reforms in the Packers and Stockyards Act regulations to ensure that our nation's livestock and poultry farmers have the opportunity to thrive in fair and competitive markets.

Sincerely,

National Groups

Agricultural Justice Project
American Grassfed Association
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Food Safety
Earthjustice
Family Agriculture Resource Management Services
(F.A.R.M.S.)
Family Farm Action Alliance
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Farm Forward
Farm Women United
Food & Water Watch
Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)
Friends of the Earth
Government Accountability Project Food Integrity Campaign
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
National Farmers Union
National Family Farm Coalition
National Organic Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
Open Markets Institute
Progressive Agriculture Organization
Public Justice
Rachel Carson Council
R-CALF USA
Revolving Door Project
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA
Rural Coalition
SEED: Strategies for Ethical and Environmental
Development, Inc.
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
The Humane League
Transformation, a Project of Mercy for Animals
Union of Concerned Scientists

Regional, State and Local Groups

American Federation of Government Employees, L3354 (AFL-CIO)

Buffalo River Watershed Alliance (AR)

Catskill Mountainkeeper (NY)

Dakota Rural Action (SD)

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Land Stewardship Project

Missouri Coalition for the Environment

Missouri Rural Crisis Center

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

Northeast Organic Farming Association – Interstate Council

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides

Treasure Valley Community Gardens Cooperative (ID)

Western Organization of Resource Councils