

June 14, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama  
The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
The Speaker  
The U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry M. Reid  
Majority Leader  
The U.S. Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and Majority Leader Reid:

The 133 undersigned organizations write to express our strong opposition to any deficit reduction package that would disproportionately impact U.S. farmers and ranchers and rural America. We are extraordinarily concerned about the depth and timing of cuts to agricultural policies reportedly being considered for inclusion in legislation to increase the debt limit.

We are deeply concerned about any requirement that cuts be implemented for 2012, effectively renegeing on commitments already made to and relied upon by producers and their lenders under the 5-year 2008 Farm Bill. Furthermore, we strongly believe that any policy decisions or mandated cuts ought to be determined by the congressional committees of jurisdiction and made in the context of the 2012 farm bill.

The current record droughts, flooding and other natural disasters clearly illustrate the unique risks producers face and underscore just one of many reasons behind the need for strong, consistent farm policy which is in serious jeopardy if the reported depth and timing of cuts contemplated by negotiators are accurate.

Though we have watched the total federal dollars allocated for assistance to farmers and ranchers diminish with each passing year, farm organizations have consistently recognized the need to reduce government indebtedness. We have expressed a willingness to shoulder a proportionate share of budget reductions in relation to the share of the budget devoted to farm and ranch assistance. In fact, we may have been the only sector to step forward, despite our having already been cut three times in the past six years, most recently with significant cuts to crop insurance.

While our members support efforts to bring down the deficit and debt in an orderly and comprehensive manner, we cannot in good faith support deficit reduction efforts that target U.S. farmers and ranchers and rural America for disproportionately large cuts to the small percentage of the mandatory budget devoted to supporting agriculture. Accordingly, we will oppose any cuts to farm policy that are proposed outside the context of a comprehensive agreement involving all federal spending that seriously addresses the fiscal crisis our nation faces.

We strongly urge you to develop a balanced approach to deficit reduction that distributes reductions to all segments of the federal budget. Reluctantly, we will strongly oppose legislative efforts that fall short of this very basic request for fairness.

Sincerely,

Ag Retailers Association	Farm Credit Council
Agricultural Council of Arkansas	Farmer MAC
Alabama Corn Soybean Association	Florida Sugar Cane League
Alabama Soybean and Corn Association	Georgia Cotton Commission
AMCOT	Great Plains Canola Association
American Agri-Women	Growth Energy
American Association of Crop Insurers	Hawaiian Sugar Farmers
American Cotton Shippers Association	Idaho Grain Producers Association
American Farmland Trust	Illinois Soybean Association
American Malting Barley Association	Independent Community Bankers of America
American Seed Trade Association	Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America
American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers	Indiana Soybean Alliance
American Soybean Association	Iowa Corn Growers Association
American Sugar Alliance	Kansas Association of Wheat Growers
American Sugarbeet Growers Association	Kansas Corn Growers Association
American Sugar Cane League	Kansas Cotton Association
Arizona Cotton Growers Association	Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association
Arkansas Rice Federation	Kentucky Soybean Association
Association of Equipment Manufacturers	Louisiana Cotton and Grains Association
California Cotton Ginners	Louisiana Independent Rice Producers Association
California Cotton Growers	Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Chemical Producers & Distributors Association	Louisiana Rice Producers' Group
Colorado Association of Wheat Growers	Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Colorado Sorghum Producers Association	Maryland Grain Producers Association
Corn Producers Association of Texas	Maryland Pork Producers Association
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association	Michigan Soybean Association
Cotton Warehouse Association of America	Midwest Forage Association
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau	Minnesota Canola Council
Crop Insurance Professionals Association	Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Delta Council	Minnesota Soybean Association
	Mississippi Rice Council

Missouri Rice Producers' Group  
Missouri Rice Research and Merchandising Council  
National Agricultural Aviation Association  
National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Sunflower Association  
Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board  
Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers Association  
Nebraska Soybean Association  
Nebraska Wheat Growers Association  
New Mexico Peanut Growers Association  
New Mexico Grain Sorghum Producers Association  
North Carolina Cotton Producers Association  
North Carolina Peanut Growers Association  
North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association  
North Carolina Soybean Association  
North Dakota Grain Growers Association  
Northern Canola Growers Association  
Northharvest Bean Growers Association  
Ohio Soybean Association  
Oklahoma Cotton Council  
Oklahoma Peanut Commission  
Oklahoma Grain Sorghum Producers Association  
Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association  
Panhandle Peanut Growers  
Plains Cotton Growers  
Rain and Hail, LLC  
Renewable Fuels Association  
Rice Producers of California  
Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers  
Rolling Plains Cotton Growers  
Rural Community Insurance Services  
South Carolina Soybean Association  
South East Dairy Farmers Association  
South Texas Cotton and Grain  
Southern Cotton Growers  
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation  
Southern Rolling Plains Cotton Growers  
Southwest Council of Agribusiness  
Syngenta  
Tennessee Soybean Association  
Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board  
Texas Peanut Producers Board  
Texas Rice Council  
Texas Rice Producers Board  
Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group  
Texas Rice Research Foundation  
Texas Wheat Producers Association  
U.S. Beet Sugar Association  
U.S. Canola Association  
U.S. Rice Producers Association  
United Egg Producers  
United States Soybean Federation  
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Association  
USA Rice Federation  
USA Rice Producers' Group  
Virginia Peanut Growers  
Virginia Soybean Association  
Washington Association of Wheat Growers  
Washington Grain Commission  
Western Peanut Growers  
Western United Dairymen  
Wisconsin Soybean Association  
Wyoming Wheat Growers Association