

Our farms and ranches drive Southern Missouri's economy. Missouri's agricultural businesses contribute \$12.4 billion annually to the state economy, and directly employ nearly 250,000 Missourians. Congress must work to ensure this economic engine continues to thrive, even in the face of foreign subsidies and barriers to trade. For the period between 1995 and 2005 US agriculture support trailed Europe by 24%; per acre commodity support in 2007 EU support outpaced US \$127 to \$12 . We can best aid our producers by working to knock down non-tariff barriers to trade and working to ensure domestic regulations do not ensnare US producers in excessive red tape.

Cuba

Our government's Cuba policy has been a failure. Existing policies of the United States do not punish the Cuban government; they punish American and Cuban citizens. Furthermore, our policies threaten agriculture exports to Cuba from Missouri and deprive the Cuban people of U.S. food and medicine.

In the past, the U.S. policy of open trade and travel has helped bring an end to several communist regimes. I firmly believe an open trade and travel policy is the best ambassador for democracy. A policy of isolation simply has not been effective in bringing change to Cuba.

Global Food Security

Hunger is a tremendous problem, and it is not enough for our response to conditions of malnutrition, starvation and poverty to simply be well-intentioned. We must construct a complete response to hunger and script wide-ranging and proven-effective strategies. Congress needs to approve legislation that establishes commonsense waypoints so we can measure success at alleviating hunger and set good goals for the future. I'm glad to work with a bipartisan group in the U.S. Congress to raise the profile of this critical issue and implement solutions.

Horse Slaughter

In recent years, aggressive efforts have been made to ban horse slaughter. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues do not fully understand the negative consequences such proposals would have on the horse industry. Along with depriving horse owners of the market value for their horse, significant costs associated with caring for an unwanted horse and euthanasia would be transferred to horse owners and taxpayers. Additionally, I have serious concerns regarding the precedent set by excluding an animal from slaughter for reasons beyond health concerns derived from science. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, which

I serve on, removed the restrictions in the Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations bill that prohibit funds from being used for horse inspections.

National Animal Identification System

We can all agree that the National Animal Identification Program has been ineffective and the \$150 million USDA has received since 2004 has not provided benefits to animal health. However, not only does the program continue to receive funding, but there continue to be calls to mandate participation in the program. Please know that I will only support a voluntary system, and that support depends on USDA developing a voluntary plan that provides real benefits in animal health and marketing to our ranchers, dairymen and livestock producers. Missouri producers must be assured they will not be solely responsible for additional costs and burdens of complying with an animal ID system. Furthermore, producers must retain their privacy and be granted liability protection in such a system.

GIPSA

I remain concerned about USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration proposed rule which would change the way livestock are marketed and sold. I agree that markets should be fair and transparent, however, I believe the GIPSA rule goes far beyond what Congress had intended in the last Farm Bill. The GIPSA proposal in its current form would hurt livestock producers in Southern Missouri. I have joined with colleagues in urging USDA to conduct a thorough economic analysis of the proposed rule and enable stakeholders to comment on changes to the rule before a final or interim final rule is published. The process must be as fair and transparent as possible.

Missouri's livestock sector is important to the region's economy as well as being one of the nation's leaders in feeder calves. We cannot afford to over regulate the industry, increase costs at home, and lose the competitive advantages we have been blessed with in Southern Missouri to foreign competitors.

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