

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
Agricultural Council of Arkansas
Alabama Corn Soybean Association
Alabama Soybean and Corn Association
AMCOT
American Agri-Women
American Association of Crop Insurers
American Cotton Shippers Association
American Farmland Trust
American Malting Barley Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
American Sugar Cane League
Arizona Cotton Growers Association
Arkansas Rice Federation
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
California Cotton Ginners
California Cotton Growers
Chemical Producers & Distributors Association
Colorado Association of Wheat Growers
Colorado Sorghum Producers Association
Corn Producers Association of Texas
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association
Cotton Warehouse Association of America
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau
Crop Insurance Professionals Association
Delta Council

Farm Credit Council
Farmer MAC
Florida Sugar Cane League
Georgia Cotton Commission
Great Plains Canola Association
Growth Energy
Hawaiian Sugar Farmers
Idaho Grain Producers Association
Illinois Soybean Association
Independent Community Bankers Association
Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America
Indiana Soybean Alliance
Iowa Corn Growers Association
Kansas Association of Wheat Growers
Kansas Corn Growers Association
Kansas Cotton Association
Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association
Kentucky Soybean Association
Louisiana Cotton and Grains Association
Louisiana Independent Rice Producers Association
Louisiana Rice Growers Association
Louisiana Rice Producers' Group
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Maryland Grain Producers Association
Maryland Pork Producers Association
Michigan Soybean Association
Midwest Forage Association
Minnesota Canola Council
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
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