



ACTION ALERT

***SECURE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE POLICIES IN THE
2007 FARM BILL!!!***

URGE YOUR SENATORS and REPRESENTATIVE TO CO-SPONSOR the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007

A **Competition Title** in the 2007 Farm Bill would help address the negative impacts that market concentration of corporate agribusinesses has had on farmers, ranchers, the environment, and consumers. The unchecked bargaining and market power of livestock and poultry agribusinesses has allowed them to force down producer prices and draft unfair and manipulative agricultural contracts with individual farmers and ranchers. The **Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007** (S. 622) and its companion bill in the House (H.R. 2135), as well as the **Prohibition on Packer-Owned Livestock** (S. 305) are some of the bills that should form the basis for a **Competition Title** in the 2007 Farm Bill to help restore fairness, efficiency, and transparency to the agricultural product marketplace.

Please call or fax both of your Senators today and ask them to support fairness and transparency in the agricultural marketplace by co-sponsoring the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007 (S. 622) and Prohibition on Packer-Owned Livestock (S. 305). Please call or fax your Representative and ask them to do the same by co-sponsoring the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act (H.R. 2135). Support from your Senators and Representative through co-sponsorship is a critical step in securing a Competition Title in the 2007 Farm Bill. The more support the bill has prior to the time the farm bill is voted on, the greater its chances of success.

PLEASE CALL OR FAX TODAY

It is easy to call or write. Please call the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) and ask for your Senators' and Representative's office by name. Ask the Senator or Representative's receptionist for the legislative aid who covers agriculture. If the agriculture aid is unavailable, leave a message with your name, phone number and the message below on the aid's voice mail or with the receptionist.

If you prefer to write, ask the receptionist for the office fax number (or get the fax number from the Senator or Representative's website or at www.congress.org) and fax a brief letter with the points below, along with your name and address and contact information.

The message is simple.

Senate side: I am a constituent and I am calling to ask Senator _____ to co-sponsor the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007 (S. 622) and the Prohibition on Packer-Owned Livestock (S. 305).

House side: I am a constituent and am calling to ask Representative _____ to co-sponsor the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2007 (H.R. 2135).

Both: These bills are part of a larger package of legislation forming the basis of a Competition Title in the 2007 Farm Bill. This title is critical to ensuring that agricultural markets be fair with competition among agricultural product packers, processors, and other buyers, as well as adequate market access for farmers and ranchers.

NOTE: If one or both of your Senators or Representative has already co-sponsored the bills – see the list below in the Background section – there is no need to call unless you want to call to thank them.

Background:

An amended **Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act** (S. 622) was introduced by Senators Harkin (D-IA), Baucus (D-MT), Enzi (R-WY), Thomas (R-WY), Dorgan (D-ND), McCaskill (D-MO), and Feingold (D-WI). The companion bill (H.R. 2135) was introduced in the House by Representatives Leonard Boswell (D-IA), Barbara Cubin (R-WY), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Bruce Braley (D-IA), and Dave Loebsack (D-IA). Other co-sponsors include Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Earl Pomeroy (ND-at large), and Steve Kagen (D-WI). The Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act includes standards for contract fairness and requires companies to negotiate in good faith with bargaining associations and cooperatives. It also expands a prohibition on confidentiality clauses so that farmers and ranchers can share with each other details and terms of their contracts and requires that contracts with packers and processors include clear disclosure of producer risks. The bill also directs USDA to sharply define and enforce that prohibition against undue price preferences that discriminate against smaller farming operations, and reduces the high legal barriers that prevent individual farmers from seeking remedies against unfair practices.

The **Prohibition on Packer-Owned Livestock** (S.305) introduced by Senators Grassley (R-IA), Harkin (D-IA), Enzi (R-WY), and Dorgan (D-ND) places a ban on direct ownership and control of livestock by major large-scale meat packers prior to a week before slaughter. Packer-owned livestock has been used to manipulate the market and artificially lower farm gate prices to farmers and ranchers, harming independent producers in the process.