



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

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COALITION ENDORSES FAIR COMPETITION BILL

Washington, DC – Today Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Mike Enzi (R-WY), and Thomas (R-WY) introduced the “Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act of 2006,” a bill to address the serious problems plaguing USDA’s Packers and Stockyards Programs and to provide much needed protections for farmers engaged in contract production. The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has endorsed the proposed legislation, as has R-CALF USA, Organization for Competitive Markets, Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, Center for Rural Affairs, North Carolina Contract Poultry Growers Association, National Farmers Union, Land Stewardship Project, and others. SAC’s policy director, Ferd Hoefner, offered these comments:

The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is pleased to join with other farm groups in support of this critically needed legislation to redress the failure of USDA to enforce the longstanding prohibition against unfair and anti-competitive behavior in the marketplace. We also support the basic protections provided in the bill for farmers engaged in contract agriculture. The recently released report released by USDA’s Inspector General documenting widespread mismanagement and circumvention of the law by the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) should serve as a wake-up call to Congress to adopt strong corrective measures. We believe the legislation introduced today, in combination with several related bills already in the hopper, should form the core of a new Competition Title in the 2007 Farm Bill. We applaud Senator Harkin, Enzi and Thomas for their leadership.