



VIA FAX AND EMAIL

October 18, 2017

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) and National Farmers Union (NFU), we relay our concerns and hopes for the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

UFCW represents 1.3 million hard-working members in the U.S. and Canada, including 250,000 people in the meatpacking and food processing sectors and over 1 million people in the retail grocery sector. NFU represents 200,000 family farmers and ranchers and the rural communities where they live. Together, we form the backbone of the American farm and meatpacking economy.

NAFTA has failed the U.S. beef industry from the farm to the meatpacking plant to the grocery store. It is essential that we negotiate a better NAFTA for hard-working men and women across the country.

NAFTA has contributed to a huge increase in the U.S. beef trade deficit with Canada and Mexico, as well as a steep decline in the number of beef cattle operations in the U.S. Since implementation, the total U.S. beef trade deficit with its NAFTA trading partners has increased 131 percent. At the same time, the number of farms raising cattle and calves fell 15 percent, while the number of the largest ranches – those with 5,000 or more head – increased 60 percent.

These harmful effects have cost us dearly. Since 1995, 50 American beef plants have been forced to close, leading to the loss of tens of thousands of good-paying, family sustaining beef packing jobs. Since 2010, nearly 17,000 jobs in slaughter and processing have evaporated. These losses are attributed to the increased beef imports and live cattle imports. This has been exacerbated by the unfair practice of packers buying cattle from Canada and Mexico outside the open market, further disrupting the U.S. cattle herd cycles.

As a country, we cannot afford to see these trends continue. Representing many of the men and women most impacted by NAFTA, we recommend the following:

1. **Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)**
NAFTA renegotiation should restore COOL for U.S. beef. The reinstatement of COOL for beef products would provide consumers the opportunity to know the source of their food and family farmers and ranchers the ability to differentiate their product.

2. **Strong and Enforceable Labor Rules**
NAFTA must ensure all workers can exercise fundamental labor rights reflected in the International Labor Organization (ILO) labor conventions, including the bedrock right to form unions and bargain collectively. To achieve this, negotiators should embed strong labor obligations in the text and establish an independent enforcer with innovative tools and penalties to overcome entrenched indifference to worker rights.

NAFTA has consistently failed the farmers, ranchers, independent business owners, workers, and consumers who depend upon the U.S. beef sector. We ask that you seriously consider these recommendations and make NAFTA a better trade deal.

Sincerely,



President
United Food and Commercial Workers
International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC



President
National Farmers Union