

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2021

The Honorable Kevin Shea
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Shea,

Thank you for your leadership and decisive action during these unprecedented and difficult times. Specifically, we want to applaud the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its swift and effective implementation of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which has provided billions of dollars in direct payments to ranchers and growers who saw a five percent or greater price decline in their commodities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you may already know, agriculture is the leading industry in North Carolina, topping \$92.7 billion. Of that, poultry production remains an economic driver in many communities across the state. More specifically, poultry accounts for \$39.7 billion and supports over 148,000 jobs in our state. While these numbers highlight the significance of poultry in North Carolina, it's even more impressive that over 5,700 families across our state are involved in poultry and egg farming.

These broiler-breeders play a key role in our food system, as they raise the chickens that produce the eggs to eventually become broilers. Unfortunately, broiler-breeders that contract with companies like Mountaire, Pilgrim's Pride, or Tyson are currently not eligible for assistance under CFAP. USDA's position that broiler-breeders do not have ownership or production risk necessary for CFAP aid ignores the reality that procedures at every level of the food supply chain have suffered from decreased commodity prices. Without the survival of broiler-breeders, major chicken processing entities would suffer.

Considering the fact that additional commodities were added between the first and second tranche of payments, we would like to know specifically why broiler-breeders were not included. Additionally, if there is a process to include them as a covered commodity, would you please delineate both the process for adding them and how long that fix would take to be implemented.

As the Biden administration has temporarily halted further CFAP payments, we would ask that your department consider reviewing the eligibility requirements for broiler-breeders in light of their critical role within the chicken supply chain.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Ted Budd

Ted Budd
Member of Congress

Patrick T. McHenry

Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress

Dan Bishop

Dan Bishop
Member of Congress