



# **RMFU Rocky Mountain Farmers Union**



November 4, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

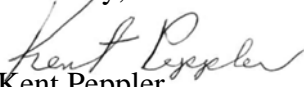
Dear Secretary Vilsack:

As representatives of family operations rather than a commodity association representing international corporations, the members of RMFU strongly support you and President Obama in your efforts to enact GIPSA rules. Our members understand how inaccurate the ridiculous claim is that rules regulating concentrated corporate industries will "cost us jobs." When in history has the announcement of an industrial concentration or merger not been followed in a few days with announcements of sweeping layoffs? Agricultural concentration like that challenged by the GIPSA rules creates corporate profits, not jobs. It takes money from the struggling middle class of farmers and lines the pockets of executives, shareholders, and speculators. Small, family-owned ranch operations are surviving on a thread of revenue because of corporate shenanigans the GIPSA rules will curb. Without those rules, we will see the same decimation in producers that we saw among packers after the industry-friendly HAACP regulations.

With your background in agriculture, you are in a position to carry to President Obama and his policy watchdogs the message that small producers are not regulation-hating anarchists. We don't hate "regulation." American agriculturists are thoughtful adults who understand that citizenship requires rules that apply fairly to all. We depend on regulations to see that we are not cheated at the scales. We depend on regulations to ensure water rights and guarantee the safety of our highways, our medicine, our schools and food. Our children need and deserve clean air and water as much as anyone. We don't hate "regulation," we hate having the government refuse to implement regulations, like COOL and the GIPSA rule, because corporate interests, with their lobbyists and PR firms, get the first hearing. We hate having necessary regulatory machinery, such as the Food Safety bill, gamed by lobbyists into yet another way to disadvantage local producers and family operations. GIPSA is good, necessary regulation, and we want it.

A few years ago, our nation voted for change, and many of us need reassurance that we aren't going to get another decade of business as usual. The foundation of the GIPSA rules is legislation that attempted to deal with corporate abuses eighty years ago. Eighty years is a long time for comments. Let's get this done.

Sincerely,



Kent Pepler

President , Rocky Mountain Farmers Union