

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

October 16, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I write to you to request immediate assistance for Wisconsin farmers and producers impacted by the bankruptcy of Pure Prairie Poultry.

In September, Pure Prairie Poultry filed for bankruptcy and has since abruptly closed, leaving farmers without access to feed for their chickens or capacity to process the birds. As the lead federal agency with a significant financial interest in the company, including over \$47 million in investments by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, I urge to use your resources and authority to mitigate this hardship for impacted farms in Wisconsin.

This situation remains urgent due to the hundreds of thousands of animals' lives at risk and the financial hit for the farmers that contracted with this processor. I believe there is a strong case for the agency to intervene based on the animal welfare concerns. There is also an ongoing outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza that poses a serious risk of spreading as farmers have no better option than to give away chickens by the tens of thousands. The hardship for producers and potential threat of this disease underscores the need for timely support for Wisconsin farmers.

Therefore, I request that the agency take the following steps to mitigate the ongoing animal welfare and farmgate emergency in Wisconsin:

1. Engage with the Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to locate all impacted producers;
2. Provide feed and/or financial assistance to all impacted farmers to make them whole again;
3. Provide recommendations for legislative or regulatory solutions to ensure a preventable emergency like this never happens again.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I hope we can work together to provide a solution to Wisconsin farmers who need it.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator