

APR 18 2005

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture
Nutrition and Forestry
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of March 24, 2005, to Secretary Johanns, cosigned by Representative Bob Goodlatte, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture. In your letter, you requested that the Secretary facilitate the timely publication of a decision regarding producer-handler provisions in the Arizona-Las Vegas and Pacific Northwest Federal milk marketing orders. The Secretary has asked me to respond on his behalf.

We at the Department of Agriculture appreciate the importance of the issue discussed at the hearing relating to the regulatory exemption for producer-handlers in the Arizona-Las Vegas and Pacific Northwest Federal milk marketing orders. A recommended decision on the producer-handler issue was published on April 13, 2005, in the Federal Register. A copy of your letter, together with this response, will be forwarded to the Office of the Hearing Clerk for inclusion in the docket of this proceeding.

Thank you for your interest in the Federal milk marketing order program.

Sincerely,

/s/

Bill Hawks
Under Secretary
Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
2240 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515