Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Stop 010
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Over the past several weeks, a great deal of misinformation has been disseminated to the public regarding the high quality lean, finely textured beef (LFTB) that is produced by companies like Beef Products Incorporated (BPI) and used by meat processors across the marketplace. Given the tremendous amount of simply incorrect information that has been released to the public about LFTB, it is no surprise that some consumers have begun to question the quality of this product. However, we understand the truth: LFTB is 100-percent beef, safe, and cost-effective.

We have been watching with great concern as this campaign of misinformation has unfolded and have been particularly concerned about the loss of jobs that's resulted from it. No company should be forced to close its doors due to a smear campaign by a few overzealous individuals in the media. LFTB is a safe product and should be promoted as such.

BPI has long been an industry innovator and leader in beef processing and food safety. Its food safety record is exemplary, and many of the nation's leading food safety experts and consumer groups have served as vocal supporters of BPI throughout this ordeal. We admire the innovative methods that BPI has continued to develop to create new ways to produce safer and healthier beef for the consumer. Not surprisingly, though, this award winning track record and reputation have gone largely unnoticed by those leading the campaign of misinformation.

Also ignored by BPI's detractors is the potential impact this controversy may have on the pocketbooks of middle class Americans. There are already indications that the attacks on LFTB will cause the price of beef to rise across the nation. This isn't just a problem that will impact those who produce beef; every American who buys beef could end up being harmed by this misinformation.

We are writing to you today to inquire about the steps the United States Department of Agriculture, and specifically the Food Safety Inspection Service, has taken to correct the public record and educate consumers about the safety of LFTB. Although we believe the USDA is in a unique position to help bring to light the facts about LFTB, we understand that Congress, too, can play a role. We will continue to do our part to educate the public about this important issue and the significant role that BPI has played in advancing food safety in America, but we also

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believe that we must work in concert with the USDA. How can Congress and the USDA work together to stop the campaign of misinformation about LFTB?

We agree with you that consumers should always have the ability to exercise choice in the marketplace. This is a foundational principle of the American way of life. However, in the current environment of rampant and intentional mischaracterization and misinformation, it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that consumers are able to make choices that are based on the facts, rather than emotion and hysteria.

We appreciate your attention to this important request. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Steve King (IA-05)

Tim Huelskamp (KS-01)

Vicky Hartzler (MO-04)

Tom Latham (IA-04)

Adrian Smith (NE-03)

Lynn Jenkins (KS- 02)

Larry Buschon (IN-08)

Kay Granger (TX-12)

Mike Pompeo (KS-04)

Leonard Boswell (IA-03)

Mike Ross (AR-04)

Jim Costa (CA-20)

Dan Boren (OK-02)

Thomas Rooney (FL-16)

Mac Thornberry (TX-13)

Kristi Noem (SD-At Large)

Michael K. Conaway (TX-11)

Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-09)

Sam Graves (MO-06)

Francisco Canseco (TX-23)

Billy Long (MO-07)

Renee Ellmers (NC-02)

Joe Barton (TX-06)

Mike Simpson (ID-2)

Tom Graves (GA-09)

John R. Carter (TX-31)

Steve Womack (AR-03)

Randy Neugebauer (TX-19)

Robert Schilling (IL-17)

Bill Johnson (OH-6)