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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000
202-224-2035

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May 19, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Once again we wish to congratulate you on your recent confirmation as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and we thank you for your time during our breakfast meeting on May 4th. We both enjoyed discussing issues important to agriculture, and we found the meeting to be very informative.

During the breakfast, we discussed USDA's process for responding to oversight letters from ranking members or other Senators of this Committee. Pursuant to our discussion, neither our Committee Rules, nor the rules of the Senate, prevent the Ranking Member from conducting oversight of USDA or the Administration from responding to such requests. In turn, we fully expect USDA to adhere to all relevant legal standards when responding to congressional inquiries, including those from majority and minority members of this Committee. Further, we request USDA continue in the tradition of past administrations when replying to congressional requests for information. We request you issue informed responses to the Ranking Member's March 22nd letter concerning Brazilian Meat Imports and her March 17th letter concerning the recent Avian Flu Outbreak, as well as any future oversight requests from the Ranking member and our Senate colleagues.

The Committee has much to accomplish in the coming months, and we will continue to foster a cooperative relationship between our Committee and USDA. To that end, as Chair and Ranking Member, we will, when possible, work to coordinate future oversight requests for the sake of efficiency, in order to ease administrative burdens on your end. If your staff has questions relating to the content of this letter, please have them contact Andrew Rezendes or Mary Beth Schultz on the staff of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry at (202) 224-2035.

Sincerely,



Pat Roberts
Chairman



Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member