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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Agriculture**  
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6001

(202) 225-2171

(202) 225-8510 FAX

BOB GOODLATTE, VIRGINIA,  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

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CHIEF OF STAFF

ANDREW W. BAKER,  
CHIEF COUNSEL

WILLIAM E. O'CONNOR, Jr.,  
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 9, 2008

An Open Letter to the Farm Bill Community:

Based on conversations that we've had with different groups in recent days, we understand that there is a lot of concern, based largely on erroneous reports, about where we stand with the Farm Bill. As a result of this, we thought it was important to explain as clearly as possible where we are in this process.

What we have been trying to do for the past several weeks is to arrive at a bill that can pass Congress with bipartisan support and that we believe the President will sign. After all, our common objective is to get a farm law, not just a bill voted out by Congress.

Based on these efforts, we are developing a basic framework designed to accomplish that goal. We believe it is time to put something forward that is realistic and move forward with the conference committee.

What we will propose is a starting place, and we want to work with the Senate to craft a final bill that can pass both chambers and that the President will sign.

We do not believe that any strategy involving a veto will be good for the country. We encourage everyone involved in this process to look realistically at what can be accomplished. We know that this sense of realism will disappoint some people who wanted more out of the Farm Bill. We wanted to do more too, but reality tells us that the possibilities are limited.

We are at a critical time. We must make significant progress and outline a framework that is acceptable to the House, Senate and Administration before the President's Day recess in order to pass a Farm Bill before the expiration of current law on March 15.

We encourage all of the diverse groups interested in the Farm Bill to work with us to find a realistic way to move forward and achieve our common goal of enacting a new Farm Bill as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Collin C. Peterson  
Chairman



Bob Goodlatte  
Ranking Member