



Durbin Joins Bipartisan Group Of Senators In Urging Indemnity Support For Pork Producers

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, joined Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) today in sending a bipartisan [letter](#) with 12 of their Senate colleagues to Congressional leaders seeking additional funding for programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would assist pork producers faced with depopulating livestock herds because of restaurant and meat processing plant closures during the pandemic.

“The crisis is immediate. Pork producers send to market over two million pigs each week. If twenty percent of processing is idle, that means somewhere around 400,000 animals per week must be disposed of in some manner other than processing,” the Senators wrote.

“Given these significant social and economic consequences, we must prioritize funding to indemnify producers who are depopulating herds due to processing plant closures. Assistance is needed for humane euthanization and disposal which will require the coordination of the human, animal, and environmental health communities,” the Senators continued.

Last month, Durbin [also](#) called on USDA to use all available authorities to purchase, store, distribute, and promote donations of pork to mitigate food waste and help household food security. Last week, USDA announced \$1.3 billion in contracts as part of its \$3 billion program to begin purchasing excess fruits and vegetables, meat, and dairy products for distributions to food banks, community and other non-profit organizations that serve Americans in need.

Along with Durbin and Grassley, the letter to Congressional leaders was signed by Senators Tina Smith (D-MN), Joni Ernst (R-IA), John Hoeven (R-ND), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Gary Peters (D-MI), Todd Young (R-IN), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Mike Rounds (R-SD), Ben Sasse (R-NE), Josh Hawley (R-MO), and Kevin Cramer (R-ND).

Full text of the letter can be found [here](#).