



June 10, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The planting struggles taking place in Ohio this year are well documented. As representatives of Ohio's agricultural community we are appreciative of the attention that this issue is being given, but we would implore you to provide even clearer guidance on what our farmers can expect long term while also addressing short term solutions that may provide needed relief.

Because eligibility for trade assistance payments hinges on plantings in 2019, farmers are having to consider not only potential returns from late-planted crops, but also trade assistance payments, potential disaster aid and prevent plant coverage under crop insurance. Many of our farmers across the state are uncertain how to proceed and are requesting more details so they can make informed business decisions. We fully support the additional questions raised from our respective national organizations as well and ask for additional clarity as soon as possible.

With Ohio at 50% planted corn and 32% planted soybeans as of the June 10th planting report, it is a stark reminder of the historical planting struggles being faced by so many farmers. Unfortunately, it is not just an issue of short-term planting struggles, but we also wanted to bring to your attention to the rapidly emerging livestock feed crisis for farmers across many parts of Ohio. Our dairy and livestock sectors are reporting a very serious forage and feed shortage for this year due to:

- Significant hay winterkill this winter.
- In areas that weren't winterkilled, there has been very poor harvest conditions over the last several weeks during the normal window for 1st cutting hay harvest, and much of that is now past its peak quality and still unharvested.
- Many of those same farms that lost or can't harvest their hay due to excessive rain, also can't plant corn for silage, oats, or other feed crops, and many of those acres will likely be prevented plant.

Significant acres of corn potentially will be prevented plant this year. This presents both an economic as well as a conservation issue. As our farmers have worked diligently to incorporate conservation practices on their fields, leaving these acres bare could marginalize their good work by creating a scenario of increased sediment and nutrient run-off. A solution to address both the livestock feed and environmental challenges is that many of those prevented plant crop acres could be planted to forages for harvest. However, administrative action is needed to allow this to happen.

We are asking you to make the following provisions, immediately:

- Allow planting and normal harvest, that includes making silage and baleage, and grazing of forage crops/cover crops on prevent plant acreage for 2019 without penalty and without date restrictions.
- Allow harvest, that includes making silage and baleage, and grazing of forages on CRP ground and all eligible acres for 2019 without penalty and date restrictions.

We are not asking for a permanent change but rather a one-time allowance due to the unprecedented weather challenges dairy and livestock farmers are facing across Ohio.

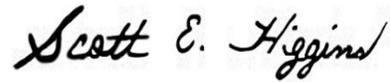
Thank you for your consideration. This is a very time sensitive issue, and needs immediate attention, as farmers across our state are facing some of the most significant challenges they have endured in their entire farming careers. We are proud of the multi-generational history of Ohio agriculture and ask you to stand with us during their trying times.



Elizabeth Harsh
Ohio Cattlemen's Association



Tadd Nicholson
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Assn



Scott Higgins
Ohio Dairy Producers Association



Adam Sharp
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation



Bryan Humphreys
Ohio Pork Producers



Jim Chakeres
Ohio Poultry Association



Kirk Merritt
Ohio Soybean Association



Christopher Henney
Ohio AgriBusiness Association



Roger High
Ohio Sheep Improvement Assn.