TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

November 14, 2008

The Honorable Ed Schafer
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer:

I continue to be very concerned about the spread of the fever tick along the border of Texas and Mexico. More than one million acres of ranchland in the southern region of the state are now under temporary quarantine. Ranchers in this area are shouldering the burden of protecting our nation's livestock industry from infestation by this historically devastating pest.

It is my understanding you are reviewing a request from Texas livestock associations for emergency funding to address the recent and alarming fever tick incursions. This request is a priority for the industry and much needed to provide the personnel and resources to push back the fever tick and prevent its continued advancement.

So you can see firsthand the ongoing efforts in the region, I invite you to join me in Texas in the next few weeks to visit with producers who are dealing with the current infestation on a daily basis. This trip would be an opportunity for you to learn more about the needs to fight this pest and provide time for discussion of further solutions for eradication. If you would like to accept this invitation, Cary Dupuy, TDA's Federal Liaison, can coordinate between your staff and my staff in scheduling an appropriate time for this visit. She can be contacted at (512) 936-0761 or email cary.dupuy@tda.state.tx.us.

I hope to see you in Texas soon and look forward to continued discussions with you on ways we can work together to protect the country's livestock industry.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

Todd Staples

TS/CD/cd

cc: Under Secretary Bruce Knight
Dr. Bill Hillman, TAHC

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