

October 23, 2001
Senator Tom Daschle
Senate Majority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daschle:

The following organizations would like to offer our thoughts on the current consideration of the farm bill in the Senate. To date, the debate has reflected the assumption that the additional funding for the bill provided in the FY-2002 Budget Resolution will only be available if the legislation is completed by the end of the First Session of the 107th Congress.

This premise has led a number of interested parties to support a process that would limit the amount of time for consideration and development of a farm bill. The Administration has provided assurances that the resources necessary to fund a farm bill above the current baseline will be available next year. In light of this commitment, we would support the Senate Agriculture Committee continuing a deliberative process with a goal of reaching Senate passage early in the Second Session of the 107th Congress. We believe that a careful and deliberative process will provide an opportunity for all parties involved to fully address the needs and implications of the next farm bill on U.S. agriculture and on consumers at home and around the world.

We believe it is also important to recognize that the attention of the Administration and Congress today is appropriately focused on conducting the war against international terrorism. Rushing the process of developing comprehensive farm legislation at this critical time without full and careful consideration could well result in policies and programs that do not effectively address today's needs.

Based on the Administration's support for a deliberative Committee process and the necessary levels of funding, we urge you to set a goal of finalizing the farm bill by the spring of 2002. We feel this schedule will enable all of us to address the needs of all farmers, ranchers, and other interested parties, and to chart a successful course for agriculture and consumers for years to come.

Sincerely,

American Soybean Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Chicken Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Sunflower Association
National Turkey Federation
United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association
U.S. Canola Association