TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

January 21, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Congratulations on your swift and unanimous confirmation as our nation's 30th Secretary of Agriculture. I am confident you will approach this new challenge with the passion and vigor that has characterized your previous public service.

Texas agricultural producers are anxious to join with you to shape our agricultural policies to ensure our continued national food and fiber security and safety, as well as explore alternative opportunities for agricultural producers. As the second largest agricultural state in the nation, Texas is a leader and offers a great deal of diversity in the production of food, fiber and fuel that differs from many of our sister states.

To ensure producers' continued success, it is vital for policy makers to provide market-oriented initiatives and tools for vibrant rural communities. The following two pages describe several recommendations on matters important to agricultural producers and the consumers of their products, which were previously sent to the transition office in response to a request for issues.

Thank you for your attention to this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information. I look forward to hosting you in Texas and again extend my offer to visit. Additionally, I will be in Washington on February 19 and 20 and would greatly appreciate some of your time to discuss some pressing issues. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

Congratulations & best wishes!

Todd Staples

TS/MWF/mwf

Enclosure

P.O. Box 12847 Austin, Texas 78711 (512) 463-7476 Fax: (888) 223-8861
For the Hearing Impaired: (800) 735-2989 (TTY)
www.tda.state.tx.us