June 13, 2008

The Honorable Michael B. Mukasey
Attorney General
Robert F. Kennedy Building
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530-2000

Dear Attorney General Mukasey:

Since the announcement in March of this year, many agricultural producers across the state have discussed JBS's potential acquisition of Smithfield Beef Group, Inc., National Beef Packing Co. LLC, and Tasman Group Ltd. As representatives of the largest cattle state in the nation, we have heard from our constituents the need for a thorough review of this merger by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The largest beef processor in the world, JBS will become owner of the largest cattle feeder in the country if the merger is complete. This unification of companies will also combine three of the top five U.S. beef processors into a single entity. With a price tag estimated to be more than $1 billion, the proposed business transaction is facing close scrutiny from the market and producers.

As supporters of competition in market economies, we urge you to examine closely the ramifications of this merger. We understand a strong procedural system and stringent legal requirements are in place for these types of review and are vital in protecting competition in agricultural markets.

The work of your Antitrust Division in evaluating mergers and acquisitions is much appreciated. Please keep us informed as your investigation proceeds and do not hesitate to request additional information if needed.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples
Commissioner of Agriculture

Susan Combs
Comptroller of Public Accounts

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