



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRIES

1445 Federal Drive • Montgomery, Alabama 36107-1123

Rick Pate
Commissioner

April 6, 2020

VIA: EMAIL

Senator Richard Shelby
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Doug Jones
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Alabama Cattle Industry Concerns

Dear Senators Shelby and Jones:

Thank you for your continued support of Alabama's agricultural producers. In the face of uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, Alabama's farmers, food processors, and related logistical supply chains are continuing to ensure a safe and abundant food supply chain for our nation.

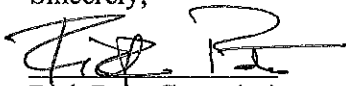
Over the last few days, I have been contacted by many stockyards and cattle producers concerning the seemingly inconsistent drastic reduction in futures prices for cattle while at the same time consumers are purchasing more beef at grocery stores than any time in recent memory, and grocery store shelves are empty of beef. There is concern from many in the cattle industry that the larger beef packing companies are manipulating markets to place cattle producers and local stockyards at a disadvantage during a national crisis. Due to depressed beef prices and uncertainty over COVID-19, multiple stockyards in Alabama will not conduct business this week.

I understand that Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Senator Mike Rounds of South Dakota have recently asked the U.S. Department of Justice and other federal agencies to investigate whether the large packing companies are manipulating beef markets to fix prices at a level that negatively impacts cattle producers. I urge you to join your fellow senators in calling for this investigation to make sure that Alabama's cattle industry is not suffering from artificially low cattle prices.

Again, Alabama's agribusinesses welcome the opportunity to serve our country in this crisis. You can be proud of the efforts that your agricultural community is undertaking to provide every American with safe and readily available food products.

Thank you in advance for any support you can provide for our cattle industry.

Sincerely,



Rick Pate, Commissioner

CC: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue
Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall

Phone (800) 642-7761 • (334) 240-7100 • Fax (334) 240-7190

www.agi.alabama.gov

"We provide employment & services without discrimination."