



United States Department of Agriculture

NOV 09 2016

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Mr. Bradley Miller
National Director
The Humane Farming Association
Post Office Box 3577
San Rafael, California 94912

Dear Mr. Miller:

Thank you for your May 5, 2016, letter, to Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack, requesting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency to cease benefits to farmers and ranchers under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) for livestock deaths caused by adverse weather conditions. I have been asked to respond on the Secretary's behalf and I apologize for the delay.

LIP payments are made to eligible livestock producers who have incurred livestock losses due to an eligible adverse weather event that directly results in the death of livestock. Such livestock losses must be in excess of normal mortality over the course of the year despite the livestock producer's performance of expected and normal preventative or corrective measures and good farming practices.

The significant financial consequences to farmers and ranchers that can result from livestock losses due to sudden or unforeseen weather events exceeds the financial assistance available from USDA programs such as LIP. For example, LIP is limited to 75 percent of the market value of the livestock, so the producer bears at least a 25 percent loss not including any indirect costs. Such economic losses are a strong incentive for agricultural producers to provide appropriate shelter or protection for livestock or poultry during adverse weather conditions.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alexis M. Taylor".

Alexis M. Taylor
Deputy Under Secretary
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services